



To a prospective pew chair purchaser:

Purchasing the right pew chair for your facility can be a daunting task. This seating will be a legacy that you and your committee will leave to your church so the decision needs to be an educated one!

To that end, ChurchPartner has prepared a list of frequently asked questions that may come up during your evaluation. These questions are the result of many customers' needs and can be a guide for any pew chair purchase not just our chair! If you have others, please do not hesitate to contact us.

1) How durable should a pew chair be?

The pew chair you purchase should be capable of lasting at least 10 years without noticeable wear to fabric and frames. This means that it should be built well enough to withstand regular stacking and moving without chips and gouges to the frame as well as no rub spots on the fabric that would potentially wear through during that time. It should not change appearance over time due to collapsed foam, wrinkled fabric or bent metal.

2) What is foam density and how do I know when it is correct?

Foam density determines both comfort and durability. Density is measured as pounds per cubic foot typically determines the softness or firmness of the seat and back cushions. While comfort is a subjective idea, durability is not. Foam should have a minimum of 5 years before breakdown and preferably 10 years. Higher density does not necessarily mean high durability. Our Summit Series Pew Chairs have been engineered with the highest quality pure virgin polyurethane foam with a multi-density approach. Seat foam includes 2.5" of 2.02 lb foam over .5" of 2.4 lb foam allowing for a soft, yet firm seat. The seat back features 1.5" of 1.28 lb foam with additional .5" at the lumbar point to provide added support.

3) What factors should I look for in a well-constructed frame?

Frame construction is critical to a chair's durability. A steel frame should manage both for and aft stress as well as lateral stress. This means checking for support members that span front to back – typically front to back legs created from one piece of steel bent to become both front and rear leg, and lateral support – typically one, preferably two "stringers" or cross-members, welded to front and rear legs. Steel is measured by gauge with the lower gauge actually being heavier steel. Typically a well built chair has an 18 gauge frame. A frame is only as strong and rigid as its welds. Look for multiple spot welds securing stringers legs and backs to legs. Our Summit Series Pew Chairs add U-bracing across the back of the chair providing maximum rigidity. Most tubular frames are capped on the back. This adds torque or flex to the chair that stresses welds. Accept nothing less than 1" square tubular frame. This can severely affect the overall rigidity and load bearing nature of the pew chair.

Finally, and of great importance, check how seats and backs are secured to the frame. A common method is to use wood screws to attach seats and backs. Over time, this will result in loosened backs and seats and stripped screws. Well constructed chairs, feature what is called T-nut construction. This method has screws attached to a metal t-nut imbedded into the wood seat and back. This allows for metal-to-metal tightening of the screws creating a more secure attachment that cannot possibly be stripped out of wood. This is an important feature of our Summit Series!

4) What type of internal seat and back support is best in a pew chair?

Due to the fabric finish on pew seating the composition of what is used to support the seat and back of a pew chair can be a mystery. Most support is some type of wood while some manufacturers have gone to mesh seating. Mesh is advertised as a comfort and durability factor, but may actually be a way of reducing costs associated with quality and higher density foam. Mesh can break down over time resulting in seat sag. Ideally, the manufacturer has used a plywood composite for both seat and back. Plywood is relatively light, strong and flexible, giving the chair what it needs to be moved, stacked and, most importantly, supportive of weight. This plywood should be at least 3/8" to 1/2" in thickness for support and weight factors. Avoid particleboard cores or thin plywood often used by manufacturers to keep the cost down. Ultimately these will break and need replacement as pew seating is typically moved and used more frequently than other flexible seating.

5) What should we know about fabric?

Critical to the beauty of the chair, fabric becomes a key consideration regarding both composition and durability. The pew chair industry has followed the lead of pew manufacturers by using high quality open weave fabrics as a primary choice on most chairs. Solid colors are generally considered a better selection over patterns due to the desire to blend well with multiple color schemes found in sanctuaries.

Durability is measured by a fabric's abrasion or rub factor measured in double rubs. In lay terms this is a measurement of how many times the fabric is rubbed by a 100 lb. bag of sand before the fabric shows evidence of wear. Fabrics used on pew chairs are considered high quality if the rub factor is no lower than 50,000 double rubs and generally in the 100,000 to 250,000 range. Our Summit Series rates at 122,000 double rubs minimum.

Another major factor is clean-ability. This is determined by the composition of the fabric. Most fabrics in general use are polyolefins or olefin. The advantage of polyolefin is that it is flexible yet retains its original shape, is lightweight, does not absorb water therefore dries quickly, is resistant to chemicals, and thus staining and can be easily cleaned with soap and water, and retains its color well in sunlight.

6) What is meant by ganging?

Ganging is simply the industry term for linking chairs together primarily to maintain rows easily. California has recently enacted legislation directed toward dealers and new facilities requiring ganging where earthquakes are possible. This was done to minimize damage associated with chairs that move about during an earthquake.

Gangs are either optional or come standard on pew seating. The Summit Series Pew Seating offers these as standard equipment.

7) What type of frame finish should we consider?

Metal frame finishes have changed dramatically in the last few years. Previously, most frames were either chromed or painted. With the advent of polyurethane, a wide variety of both color and texture has been introduced that provide a much more

durable finish than simple paint. Key among these has been the advent of veined finishes such as silver vein, copper vein and gold vein. In addition to chip resistance, these finishes have a metallic look that actually masks chips when they happen keeping the look newer longer. Other popular finishes include wrinkle and texture or Tex finishes. All of these offer the added advantage of masking fingerprints, something chrome and standard gloss painted surfaces do not offer.

8) What is the best way to store and move pew chairs?

Weighing in around 25 lbs, pew chairs are often difficult to move by using a standard folding chair cart. Generally, the best and most efficient way to move pew chairs is to first stack them to 7 or 8 high and use a chair mover or truck to lift the rear feet of the chairs and tip the stack rearward. This balances the stack onto two wheels and allows it to easily be transported and placed wherever storage exists. It also minimizes the number of carts needed. Usually a couple of people dedicated to moving chairs and most people dedicated to stacking chairs can make short order of 100-200 chairs! ChurchPartner offers the SW20 Chair Dolly as an excellent mover specifically designed for this task.

An important feature of any good pew chair is how much the fabric touches or rubs against any part of the metal frame. If the frame rubs the side of the seat fabric when it is stacked and unstacked, it is much more likely to accelerate wear at that point. A well made pew chair will not rub at that point.

9) What options are available that would meet my church's needs?

Most manufacturers offer options to accommodate for your specific church needs. These include sown on card holders on the chair back, book storage that also attaches to the back of the chair, under seat book storage either permanently welded or, ideally removable from the chair. Ganging may be optional or standard. Chairs may also be offered with enclosed or exposed back (showing steel support) depending the look and how much a church wishes to spend – closed back chairs tend to cost more than open backed chairs.

10) How much should I spend on a well made pew chair?

As you complete your research you will find a wide range of pricing for pew seating. Some are as low as \$25.00 per chair – and usually you get what you pay for. These chairs are poorly made and will not last long enough, nor sit comfortably enough to merit the savings.

A good value on a quality pew chair will likely cost between \$40.00 and \$60.00 depending on quantity. Some options may raise this price to \$50.00 to \$70.00, but rarely higher than this.

At one time, consideration of an off shore chair would have been a mistake due to quality issues as well as replacement parts. This is no longer the issue as many manufacturers have representatives on premises in other countries supervising and maintaining product quality and consistency. They likewise assure that those people involved in the process are being paid and treated fairly and that no child labor is being employed. That being said, ask questions of your prospective dealer to confirm this with them!