



How to Select the Right Stainless Steel Utility Cart to Fit Your Needs

Choosing the right utility cart for a foodservice operation—whether it's a K-12 school, college or university, hospital, senior living community, casino, or hotel—may seem like a minor detail. However, the wrong choice can result in inefficiency, frequent repairs, or even unexpected injury claims.

This guide was developed to help you understand the options available for utility carts, pinpoint their specific needs, and make informed decisions. A utility cart isn't just a tool—it's an investment in efficiency, durability, and safety.

Why Utility Carts Are Essential

Utility carts are the backbone of any food service operation. They enable transporting ingredients, meals, equipment, and more with ease, protecting staff from unnecessary strain. However, not all utility carts are created equal. Different tasks and environments require different designs, materials, and capacities.

You'll need to consider key details like weight capacity, ease of maneuverability, type of floor surface, and durability—and we'll cover these considerations in-depth here.

Choosing the Right Cart by Weight Capacity and Durability

When selecting a cart, one of the most critical factors is its **weight capacity**. The wrong choice can lead to inefficiencies or equipment failures. Thankfully, utility carts are available with a variety of capacities to meet specific needs. Here's how to decide which to choose.

Durability Index	1 300 LBS STANDARD DUTY	2 500 LBS MEDIUM DUTY	3 700 LBS HEAVY DUTY	4 1000 LBS TOUGH TRANSPORT	5 1500 LBS EXTREME DUTY
Maximum Weight	300lbs / 135KG	500lbs / 230KG	700lbs / 320KG	1000lbs / 450KG	1500lbs / 680KG
Weight Visualization	75 plates	150 plates	250 plates	100 12oz. cans	30 cases of wine
Vinyl Tile	●	●	●	●	●
Indoor Concrete	●	●	●	●	●
Ceramic Tile	○	●	●	●	●
Carpet	○	○	●	●	●
Outdoor Uneven	○	○	○	●	●
Daily Hour Usage	Up to 3	4 to 9	9 to 12	10 to 18	Up to 24 hours
Ideal Usage	Dining area bussing, set-up tray station, soiled dish station	Dining room bussing, set-up tray station, soiled dish station.	Receiving goods, moving loads for warewashing	Receiving dock and storage room, loading and moving dishes and flatware.	Casinos and correctional facilities, receiving dock and warehousing
Legs Steel Gauge	20	16	11	11	11 or 14
Shelf Steel Gauge	22	20	18	14	14
Caster Size	3-1/2" to 4"	4" to 5"	5" to 8"	5" to 8"	6" to 8"



1. Standard Duty Utility Carts (up to 300 lbs. spread evenly per shelf)

Lightweight and compact, these carts simplify small-scale tasks like transporting supplies, organizing items, and quick cleanups. Designed for durability and easy maneuverability, they assist in environments where convenience and functionality are essential.

Ideal for:

- Using as equipment stands and bussing stations.
- Transporting lighter loads like bus tubs, utensils, or trays.
- Assisting with dining area bussing, setting up trays, and maintaining a soiled dish station.
- Smooth indoor surfaces like indoor concrete or vinyl flooring.

Features to look for:

- Stainless steel design ensures cleanliness, disinfection of surface, and durability in high-use environments.
- All-welded frame for long-term use.
- Noise-reducing features to keep meal service areas calm and distraction-free.
- Typical Usage: Up to 3 hours per day.

2. Medium Duty Utility Carts (up to 500 lbs. spread evenly per shelf)

Built for heavier tasks, medium duty utility carts offer increased capacity and reliability. Their design enables dependable performance across a variety of foodservice segments.

Ideal for:

- Bussing dining areas during peak dining periods or cleaning up after corporate gatherings.
- Transporting soiled dishes back to the dish room without frequent trips.
- Operations with medium-sized cafeterias or high-traffic areas.
- Smooth indoor surfaces like vinyl and ceramic tiles or indoor concrete.

Features to look for:

- Durable all-welded leg frame to handle the demands of a dynamic environment.
- Reinforced hemmed front that adds strength where the cart is most vulnerable to stress.
- Typical Usage: Up to 4-9 hours per day.

3. Heavy Duty Utility Carts (up to 700 lbs. spread evenly per shelf)

This category excels at supporting large-scale operations and handling outdoor transport needs. Made to perform throughout the day, these workhorses deliver heavy duty support in demanding environments.

Ideal for:

- Tasks requiring several hours of cart use in receiving docks, storage rooms, and moving dishes and flatware.
- Moving heavier equipment or bulk supplies such as cases of milk, canned goods, or cleaning products across different floor surfaces, including vinyl or ceramic tiles, indoor concrete, and buildings with carpet.

Features to look for:

- Durable frame and construction for long-lasting performance.
- Fixed larger front wheels to help guide the cart in a straight line on uneven surfaces.



4. Tough Transport® Utility Carts (up to 1,000 lbs. spread evenly per shelf)

These high-capacity carts excel in managing heavy-duty tasks and outdoor operations. Their durable construction tackles challenging workloads across diverse settings.

Ideal for:

- Receiving deliveries in areas like indoor/outdoor docks and transporting them into storage rooms.
- Navigating uneven or rough floors, including sidewalks or asphalt near loading zones.
- Facilities operating 24/7, such as prisons, hospitals, hotels, and casinos.

Features to look for:

- Increased capacity for handling cases of food, cleaning chemicals, or catering setups for large, specialized events.
- All joints are full bead welded to better withstand heavy loads and frequent use.
- Fixed larger front wheels to help guide the cart in a straight line on uneven surfaces.
- Typical Usage: 10-18 hours per day.

5. Extreme Duty® Utility Carts (up to 1,500 lbs. spread evenly per shelf)

Typically reserved for extreme hauling needs, these carts are designed to handle specialized scenarios in casinos, hotels, the hospitality sector, and large K-12 buildings.

Ideal for:

- Moving heavy kitchen equipment for daily operations, occasional use, or maintenance tasks.
- Handling massive deliveries that need to be transported across uneven terrain, outdoor concrete, thresholds, or carpets.
- Round-the-clock use, especially for large casinos and correctional facilities.

Features to look for:

- Engineered for durability in challenging environments.
- Tubing reinforcement under shelves to withstand heavy object drops, even on shelf edge.
- Typical Usage: Up to 24 hours per day.

Design Features to Prioritize

When choosing your cart, ensure it includes the design features that align with your operations. Here are some key features to prioritize based on task and usage.

Wheel Design and Size:

- Larger wheels help guide carts on uneven surfaces while minimizing vibration.

Ergonomics:

- If employees use carts for extended hours, ergonomic designs with properly positioned handles and safety height shelves can reduce strain, prevent injuries, and boost productivity.

Noise Reduction:

- Sound-deadening materials improve the working environment, especially in K-12 schools.

Easy to Clean Materials:

- For industries like K-12 and healthcare foodservice, stainless steel makes sanitation simple.



Other Cart Types to Consider

Beyond material and weight capacity, some cart designs cater to specialized needs. They may be critical to niche applications:

- **Ergonomic Carts:** Designed for safety and comfort over long shifts. Helps to prevent back strain and injury.
- **Tubular Carts:** Perfect for navigating narrow spaces.
- **Guard Rail or Deep Well Carts:** Prevent items from falling during transport. Ideal for coffee and beverage service.
- **Motorized Utility Carts:** Electric powered, effortless to use and great for transporting heavy loads across long distances. Increases labor efficiency and reduces strain on operator.
- **Push-Pull Utility Carts:** Converts from pushing to pulling with the ability to tow multiple trailing utility carts with clear visibility of the path ahead.
- **Trailing Utility Carts:** Transports up to 3x more in 3x fewer trips when towing multiple carts from the leading Push-Pull Utility Cart.

Benefits of Stainless Steel

Stainless steel is the gold standard in foodservice equipment and for good reason. Its durability, cleanliness, and resistance to corrosion make it a reliable and lasting investment for any professional kitchen.

- **Proven Performance in Foodservice:** Stainless steel resists cracks, stains, chips, and peeling, making it a top choice for surfaces like countertops, sinks, shelving, and utility carts. It's easy-to-clean finish is perfect for maintaining hygiene standards.
- **Unmatched Strength and Durability:** Known for its incredible strength, stainless steel ensures long-lasting performance in demanding environments. Its ability to withstand high-impact use makes it the preferred material for various foodservice applications.

Making the Final Decision

When selecting the perfect utility cart for your operation, evaluate the following questions:

- What **weight capacity** is required for your tasks?
- How many **shelves** will you need, and what size?
- What types of **floor surfaces** will the cart travel over?
- How many hours will the cart be in **use daily**?

By focusing on these considerations, you'll be well-equipped to choose a cart that enhances your operations, withstands your daily demands, and supports your staff.

Remember, the right utility cart is not an expense—it's an investment in the efficiency, safety, and success of your foodservice operations.