

The Bowling Center

The size of a bowling center is defined by the number of lanes. While the average center is 24 lanes, there are centers ranging from just two lanes to over 100 lanes.

When you walk into a bowling center, one of the first things you'll see is the customer service desk, also known as the *control desk* or *control center*. The control desk is the place where you will be assigned a lane, get your bowling shoes and pay for your games. Have you ever wondered why special bowling shoes are required? Bowling shoes have a special leather sole that will allow the bowler to "slide" on the wooden floor when releasing the ball.

After you have received your shoes and lane assignment, you'll need to pick out a ball. Bowling balls are really colorful and range in weight from 6 to 16 pounds. How do you know which ball is right for you? There are two things to consider: First, the weight of the ball should be about 10 % of your body's weight. So if you weigh 100 pounds, you should pick a 10 pound ball. Second, the finger holes should fit. To check for proper fit, put your thumb in the thumb hole. Extend your middle two fingers out over the finger holes. The middle of the finger holes should line up with middle of your knuckles. Make sure that your thumb fits snugly, but not tight.

The *concourse* area is where the spectators sit to watch the bowlers. Most centers allow food and beverage in this area. The *settee* area is the area where the bowlers sit to wait until it is their turn to bowl.

The bowling lane is normally 41 inches wide and 60 feet long from the foul line to the pins. On the lane, you will see locator dots and target arrows to help bowlers aim their shots. Did you know that bowling lanes are oiled daily? This helps protect them and reduce the friction caused by the ball rolling down the lane. The *approach* area is the portion of the lane behind the foul line. This is where the bowler lines up to deliver the ball. The approach must be at least 15 feet long. Along each side of the lane is a *channel*. A channel is there to catch a ball that rolls off the lane. To prevent your ball from going into the channel, and increase your score, most bowling centers offer bumper guards. *Bumper guards* can really help while you're perfecting your game! The last three feet of the lane is known as the *pin deck*. The ten pins used in bowling are arranged in a triangular formation, twelve inches apart. The front pin is called the head or *Number 1 pin*. Once the ball has been delivered down the lane, it is returned to the bowler by an *automatic ball return*. A *pinsetter* clears the pins that are knocked down after each delivery and resets all 10 pins at the end of the frame.

