

## Anatomy of a Bowling Lane

The game of bowling is played by rolling a ball along a bowling lane towards a set of ten pins, with the objective of knocking down as many pins as possible to score the most points. Bowling lanes are constructed under tight requirements to maintain their uniformity among all lanes.

There are four parts to a bowling lane. The approach leads up to the foul line at the beginning of the bowling lane. The foul line marks the end of the approach and the beginning of the lane. The lane is the majority of the planks where the ball is released and travels towards the pins. The final part of the bowling lane is the pin deck where the ten bowling pins are set. Bowling lanes were originally constructed of planks of hard maple and pine wood. However, lanes are now constructed of approved synthetic materials similar to wood. In total, the standard bowling lane is 41 to 42 inches in width and 77 feet, 10 3/16 inches in length.

The approach is a 15-foot starting point where the bowler takes aim and begins their movement forward towards the bowling lane. Two sets of approach dots assist bowlers in aligning themselves to the pins for proper aim.

The foul line is between 3/8 and 1 inch in width. This indicates the end of the approach and the beginning of the bowling lane. Players are not allowed to cross this mark; if they do, they are awarded no points in their bowl. The foul line must stretch the entire width of the lane at a minimum.

The bowling lane comprises 60-feet from the foul line to the center point of the head pin, or first pin. The bowling lane is regularly conditioned with an approved oil to reduce the friction and wear of the boards caused by the constant traffic and impact of bowling balls. Because oil is a slick substance, this causes less friction between the ball and the lane, and therefore minimizes any motion from the ball due to the spin the bowler applies to their delivery. There are several patterns by which to condition a lane, but the oil used must be the same from edge to edge of the lane. The oil is generally applied beginning at the foul line and continuing along the lane until a point several feet before the pin deck. This allows for additional friction where no oil is present to increase ball movement into the pins. The length of the bowling lane is bordered on both sides by a 9 1/4 inch gutter that catches balls that do not stay on the lane.

The pin deck is the final 2 feet, 10 3/16 inches of the bowling lane. This is the section of the lane where the pins are set equidistant from each other in equilateral triangle formations. Each pin is 12 inches apart from the next, measuring from center to center of each pin.

Maintaining uniformity from one bowling lane to the next is extremely important in order to allow a level playing field for all bowlers. Although the oil on the lanes can be pushed around the lane by rolling bowling balls, these guidelines give bowlers the confidence that each bowling lane they play on will offer the same consistency as the next.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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