Any small flat surface, you don't want more than 2 or 3 polys because too many will result in pointless amounts of processing that just lags the game.

However, large flat surfaces (like ceilings, floors, ground, ect) require a lot more polys to look good, even if it is completely flat. The reason being is that you wont be able to do any vertex lighting or have any fog on your map.

Fog and lighting works on a per-vertex basis. The more polys (and vertexes) you have, the better looking and more accurate the lighting and fog spread will be. If you barely have any polys, it will end up looking horrible.