

## Zoom Etiquette

Have you ever attended a video conference and watched what other people are doing in their video? Some of it is distracting, some of it downright distasteful, and some of it just plain annoying. Below are some guidelines to follow when attending a Zoom meeting.

- **Maintain eye contact** – Participants should remain focused in the camera’s direction, avoiding shifts in attention (looking out the window, typing on your computer, multi-tasking, etc.) It is especially important to maintain eye contact by looking at the camera when speaking. Hosts should consider the camera as another person and look at it during their discussions.
- **Mute the microphone** – The microphone may be muted when you sign in. If not, setting your audio to mute eliminates all annoying and unexpected background noises in your environment. The host has the option to mute everyone’s microphone and then unmute them when the time for questions arises.
- **Position the camera & use proper lighting** – Participants do not want to see the top of your head (camera facing down on you) or up your nostrils (camera facing up). Instead, the camera should be at eye level. Your room should be well-lit with no bright light directly behind you or in the camera’s view. Make your face visible by having a strong light behind the camera, but try to avoid light reflections in eyeglasses. To accommodate small screens, your camera and seating position should be adjusted to fill the frame as much as possible.
- **Use your normal voice** – Speak strongly and clearly. Because there might be a one second audio delay for some conferencing, use a brief pause between speakers to assure the full audio signal has been transmitted. When many people are speaking at once, it is difficult for participants to discern both the conversation and the person speaking. Repeat questions or comments to be sure that all participants heard them.
- **Allow time for others to answer or to make comments** – Often participants will wait to see if the host has a comment or answer to the question before they will respond. When questioning a participant, identify them by name first, and then ask the question so they have a chance to unmute and respond.
- **Avoid interrupting**
- **Raise your hand to speak** – or better yet, use a nametag to get the host’s attention.
- **Limit distracting side conversations**
- **Be aware of the microphone placement** – The microphone can magnify sounds that normally occur during meetings. Don’t rustle papers or tap on the microphone or table.
- **Keep body movements to a minimum** – Avoid distracting movements like swaying, rocking, or pacing. Move and make gestures naturally a safe distance from the camera.
- **Restore eye contact after an audio-visual presentation** – After a slide presentation or screen/document sharing, restore eye contact with the participants.
- **Sharing on-the-fly writing** – Zoom has a built-in whiteboard, but be sure you are very familiar with it before attempting to use it.
- **Family issues** – Inform the family that you will be on a video call to reduce interruptions or distracting sounds (spouse or children shouting, dog barking, baby crying, etc.)
- **Using the Chat room** – Keep all chats short and on topic. Do not ask about lunch, drinks after work, or “did you hear...” It’s very difficult for the host monitoring the chat room to weed out real questions through a maze of small talk.

- **Leave the keyboard alone** – No one wants to hear the clicking of your keys on the keyboard. The only acceptable reason to use the keyboard is to type questions or responses in the chat room.
- **No personal grooming** – Be careful of what you do in front of the camera. Participants don't want to watch you comb your hair, pick your nose, clean your teeth, etc. Turn off your video and microphone if you need to do anything at all personal or distracting.
- **No eating** – Unless the meeting is about sharing food, no one wants to watch you eating. It is distracting and unprofessional, not to mention crumbs will fall into your keyboard.
- **Dress appropriately** – You should wear something similar to what you would wear to an in-person meeting. If you choose to not have appropriate clothing on from the waist down, DO NOT get up in the middle of the meeting with your camera running.
- **Stay inside** – Wind and background noise makes your device's microphone adjust and your voice may sound muffled.
- **Choose an appropriate environment** – Make sure it is uncluttered (no unmade beds), appropriate (no bathrooms), and where you are less likely to be interrupted. If your device can handle the processing requirements, use a virtual background - but keep it simple.
- **If you must step away** – Turn off your video and microphone.
- **Leaving a meeting** – Always sign off with a formal goodbye so people know you aren't coming back.