Video Conferencing Guidelines

As we settle in to our "new normal," many of us are navigating the challenges (and perks!) of working from home. A major part of this transition is mastering the fine art of the *virtual meeting*. Here are some guidelines, tips and resources for city employees.

The basics

Here are some tips for making sure your video meetings are professional and productive.

Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted.

Use a microphone, headphones or earbuds for the best sound quality.

Push the mute button when you are not speaking.

Plug your laptop or device into a power source. Disable automatic software updates.

If using a phone, enable the do not disturb feature.

Remember you are always "on camera."

If you are new to online meetings, practice with friends or family first.

Virtual meeting etiquette

Unless you absolutely cannot, **turn ON your video**. Video is crucial in building trust and engagement in virtual communications. Don't skip this step just because you don't love the way your hair looks today.

Be on time. This should be standard with any meeting, video or otherwise. However, when you're dialing in to a video conference, it's especially important. You might be used to slipping into a physical meeting late, but everything is more visible in a video conference.

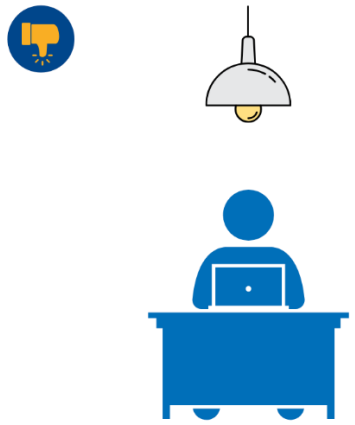
Wear work-appropriate clothing. Sure, you may be tempted to work in your pajamas all day, but please take it up a few notches when you're on a video conference, even if it's internal. Your appearance helps convey a sense of professionalism and normalcy to everyone on the conference.

You are ALWAYS on camera. Someone is watching you as you take a big, wide-mouth yawn, stretch, eat or wander around the room. All of your movements are exaggerated because they are more close up. This can be distracting to the audience and disruptive to the speaker. Try to stay still and be attentive – or at least seem attentive!

Mute microphone when not speaking. Even though you may not be speaking and think you're being quiet, most microphones can pick up minor background noises like coughs, sneezes, typing, traffic, family, pets, etc. These sounds can be distracting to other participants or to the presenter.

Looking your best

Lighting matters
Position yourself so that most of the light is coming from in front of you (behind your monitor) or from the sides, not from behind or above. If you have a window behind you, shut the blinds. Otherwise, you will be backlit and hard to see.



Overhead light

Light source in front or to each side

Window behind you

Window in front or to the side

Looking your best

Frame the camera correctly
We've all been on video calls where we end up looking up someone's nose or seeing just the top of their head. When you're on video, make sure you frame your camera in a way that feels natural and allows you to look at the camera. Placing it too high leaves other participants staring down at you, and putting a camera too low can lead to unflattering and awkward angles.

Camera below eye level

Camera at eye level

Too low

Middle center

Too far away

Too close

Backgrounds

Consider your environment
A clean and **simple background** is preferable. Zoom also has a **virtual background** feature to help you disguise even the most cluttered environment. But if you use a virtual background, be mindful of your positioning! If you back away too far from the camera, or constantly move around – you go out of focus and it can be distracting.

Cluttered background

Plain background

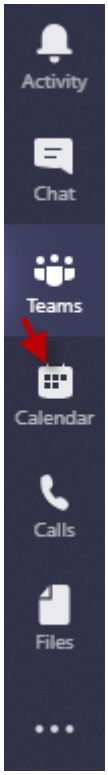
Check the communications page on the Intranet for available city approved templates.

Microsoft Teams meetings / video conferences

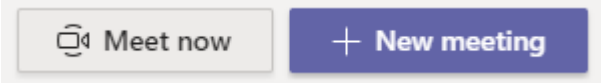
Microsoft Teams is a collaboration tool which includes a meeting component where you can:

- Open your Outlook calendar within Microsoft Teams to schedule a meeting and invite participants
- Conduct meetings using web conferencing (video and audio) to share screens or even record meetings

To open Teams and SCHEDULE a Microsoft Teams meeting:

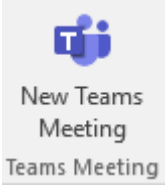


1. Connect your laptop to a wireless internet connection.
2. Click the Windows icon at the bottom left of the screen and type Microsoft Teams. The Microsoft Teams app should display. Click on the app name to open Microsoft Teams
3. When the Microsoft Teams screen displays, choose "Calendar" from the selections on the left side of the screen.
4. Your calendar activities from Outlook appear in the Microsoft Teams application. Choose either
   - "Meet now" to host an ad hoc meeting and invite people to attend
   - OR "+ New meeting" to schedule a meeting in the future – a New meeting form appears for you to complete. The form includes a field to enter names of invitees



5. Choose "Schedule" at the bottom of the screen to save the meeting invite and email meeting invitations

Please note: if you are using the Outlook client, you can also schedule a Microsoft Teams meeting using this button on the Calendar – Home screen.

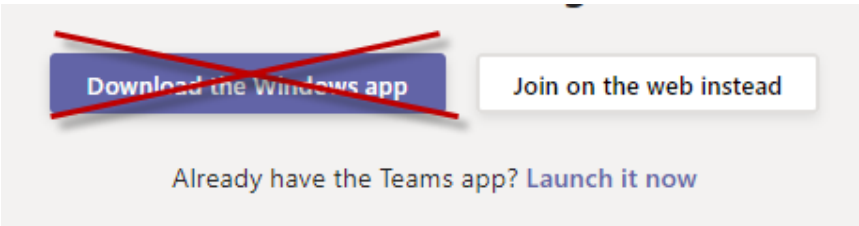


To JOIN a Microsoft Teams meeting:

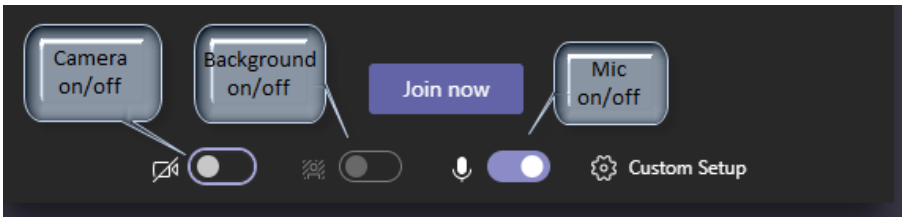
1. Open the meeting invitation in Microsoft Teams or Outlook
2. Click "Join"

If you receive the prompt below and are using a city-issued laptop, choose "Launch it now" and the Microsoft Teams client (app) is installed.

Otherwise, choose "Join on the web instead." This will open a cloud-based Microsoft Teams session – functionality should be the same experience as using Microsoft Teams client.



Once you enter the meeting "room" choices appear for audio and video (*Note: the Lenovo laptop and Panasonic Toughbook comes with a built-in camera and microphone.)*



Once you've made these selections, choose "Join now" to enter the meeting. You can always update audio and video selections once you've begun your meeting.

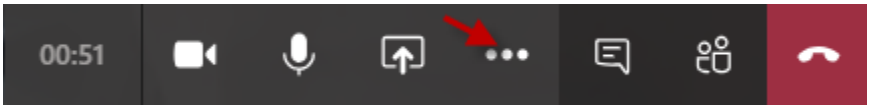
For more help with Teams: [Training videos for Microsoft Teams]

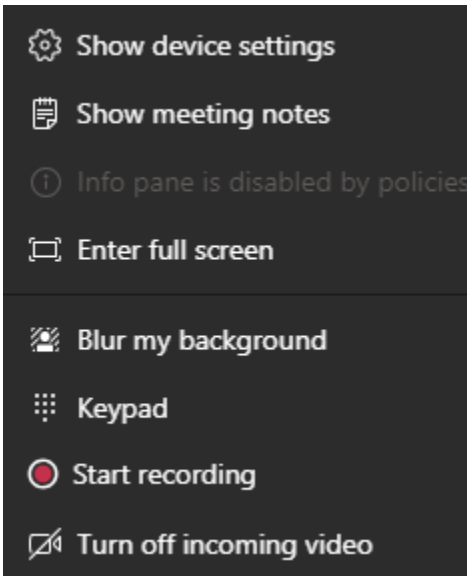
Tips for a Safe and Secure Microsoft Teams Meeting

When scheduling a Teams meeting using the Outlook Plug-In, there is a small button for Meeting Options on the meeting invite under "Join Microsoft Teams meeting"

- Who can bypass the lobby? This allows the organizer to choose
  - Everyone
  - People in my organization and trusted organizations → these are external attendees
  - **People in my organization**
- Who can present?
  - Everyone
  - **People in my organization**
  - Only me

Within the meeting, participants who join the meeting can use the More Actions button (shown below)





Blur my background will focus on the participant and not their surroundings.

Turn off incoming video will prevent any video streaming from to or from your device which will also save some internet lag time and possible improve all quality.

Zoom Security

Be careful when sharing a link to a meeting. Do not share a link to a meeting on an unrestricted publicly available social media post. Provide the link directly to specific people.

Use a unique meeting ID for important meetings. Avoid hosting large meetings or public events using your Personal Meeting ID, which is your permanent online meeting space. Zoom suggests using random meeting IDs for your larger meetings.

Set a meeting password. While scheduling a meeting, under Meeting Options, check Require Meeting Password. Participants will be asked for this password in order to join your meeting.

Disable "Join Before Host." Leave this option turned OFF. If you are scheduling a meeting for someone else and will not be joining the meeting, you should make sure to set a strong meeting password so only users who know the password can join the meeting. If you can start the meeting, you can designate a co-host once it has started and then leave the meeting.

Enable waiting rooms. Zoom recommends enabling "Waiting Rooms" to secure your meetings. When this feature is enabled, attendees stay in a virtual "waiting room" until the host admits them. Meeting hosts can customize the Waiting Room settings to gain further control over which participants join a specific meeting and when.

Become familiar with the "manage participants" features. This control is at the bottom center of your Zoom meeting screen. You can lock your meeting once all participants have joined. You will not be alerted if a missing participant attempts to join meeting after it's locked, so make sure all your participants have joined before locking the meeting.

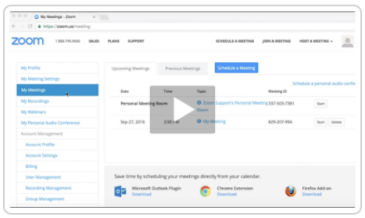
Remove unwanted attendees. Select "Manage Participants" at the bottom of the Zoom window. Find the participant you wish to remove and select "More" beside their name. Select "Remove" from the menu that appears.

Disable share screen and chat. Other features you may wish to disable are the ability to share content, the ability to chat privately and the ability for removed participants to rejoin. For more information, please watch the videos titled "Manage Participants" and "Meeting Controls."

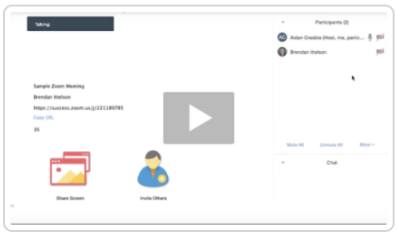
Zoom support

Join a meeting

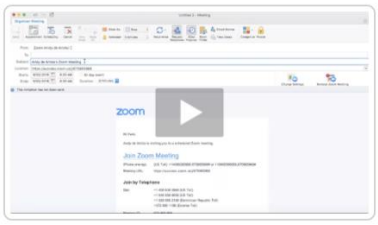
Schedule a meeting on Zoom website



Meeting controls



Schedule a meeting with Outlook



Share your screen

Zoom help page