Meet Securely

Technical Concerns

- The simplest way to prevent unwanted attendees and hijacking is to set a password for your meeting. Passwords can be set at the individual meeting, user, group, or account level for all sessions.
- When creating a new event, you should choose to only allow signed-in users to participate.
- Do not allow others to join a meeting before you, as the host, have arrived.
- Once a session has begun, "lock" your meeting as soon as every expected participant has arrived. This will prevent others from joining even if meeting IDs or access details have been leaked.
- No-one wants to see pornographic material shared by a meeting bomber, and so disabling the ability for meeting attendees to share their screens is worthwhile.
- You should not use your personal meeting ID if possible, as this could pave the way for pranksters or attackers that know it to disrupt online sessions. Instead, choose a randomly generated ID for meetings when creating a new event. In addition, you should not share your personal ID publicly.
- Be careful with the file-sharing feature of meetings, especially if users that you don't recognize are sending content across, as it may be malicious. Instead, share material using a trusted service such as Box or Google Drive.
- If you find that someone is disrupting a meeting, kick them out.
- As security issues crop up and patches are deployed or functions are disabled, you should make sure you have the latest build.

Pay attention.

- It is more polite to leave the meeting if you have something else to do than it is to stop paying attention. Additionally, if you switch to another app during a meeting, others may know because the Zoom app, for example, has a setting that lets hosts see if you have switched away from the meeting for more than 30 seconds — a dead giveaway that you aren't paying attention.

Limit the number of video conferences.

- Nobody enjoys sitting through back-to-back-to-back meetings. A good rule of thumb is to book video conferences sparingly. Ideally, reserve them for discussions that require visual aids, like presentations and documents.

Limit who can join your meeting.

- Send an invite only to those who need to attend the meeting. If you use a conference line, make sure you have a meeting ID that only your attendees will know to prevent uninvited participants from crashing your meeting.

Test your setup.

- Be aware of your default video settings. Some video conferencing programs are set to automatically display your video when you join the meeting. These default settings can generally be adjusted to meet the user's preference. However, if you are unable to adjust the settings within your tool, a post-it note placed over your laptop's webcam can be a simple solution.
- Preview your video using your computer's camera. Make sure the camera is in a stable position and focused at your eye level to allow for more direct engagement with the other meeting participants. Adjust your lighting: natural side lighting is usually the best to ensure you are neither too lit up or too dark to see. Dress as if you were in the office. Most importantly, be mindful of what's in the background!
- Test your microphone. The best audio comes from a headset with a built-in microphone because the microphone included on laptops can produce poor sound for your listeners. The easiest way to test your is to video call with a friend or coworker and make adjustments accordingly.
- Make sure the device you are using for the call is either plugged in or fully charged.

Find an appropriate place to have a call.

- The best place to participate in a video conference is in a room with a door to block out the noise and presence of others in your home. If you do not have a separate physical location, set boundaries with those in your home so they know to respect your space while you are on a call.

In group meetings, mute yourself by default.

- In most video-chatting services, you have the option to turn off the microphone before joining a meeting, and everyone but the person leading the meeting should do it. Unmute only when it is your turn to speak. This will prevent sounds like barking dogs and screaming children from interfering in the call. Be mindful of when you are muted so you don't tell a whole story no one will hear.
- If you participate in a conference call without video, it is generally polite to announce yourself before speaking. While several web-conferencing programs can show you who is talking, conference line numbers will not.
- During a video call, it is easy to accidentally interrupt others. It is appropriate to wait for a few moments of silence before speaking to account for any delay in video or audio. You may also use the chat feature of your software to ask questions or make comments.

- When you speak while on a video call, look into the camera instead of looking at yourself talking on the computer screen. It will help others on the call feel like you are fully engaged and present. Speak slowly and clearly so others can understand you, but there is no need to shout.