

## Information Technology Services Audio Teleconference Participant Best Practices

**Here are some ideas and tips to use when participating in a conference call. To have the best experience please follow these tips:**

### General Call Ideas and Tips

- **Be on time (be prepared early).**
  - Dial in at least a 5 -10 minutes ahead of the scheduled time to test your connection.
- **Choose a quiet spot and a good phone.**
  - Background noise and poor phone quality is disturbing to everyone on the call and makes the call less productive. If a **land-line** is available, use it, rather than cell phone. If you're in the office, dial in from a private room; in public places, choose a quiet spot.
- **Avoid Skype** and similar free services unless you've confirmed that you get consistently good quality.
- **Cell Phones.**
  - Avoid using cell phones if possible. The probability of dropped calls, noise and distractions increases when you're dealing with business travelers and other mobile users. Plus navigating a mobile device makes joining a meeting even more difficult, between switching applications, cell phone towers and minding your surroundings.
  - Place cellular devices on mute when not speaking.
  - Avoid speaking on cellular device while windows are down to avoid wind interference.
  - Avoid multi-tasking (walking, conducting chores and etc...) while speaking.
  - Speak directly into phone. Try to avoid using speakerphone or bluetooth devices. Sometimes using a speakerphone or bluetooth device can diminish the sound quality of your conference call. The sound quality being heard in the conference room will be poor.
  - When possible use quality headsets to avoid "tinny" sound. Lightweight headsets with microphone are the best tool to use for audio teleconferencing (example: Koss CS100 Binaural Headset, Gear Head AU3700S Headset, Insignia On-Ear Analog Mono Headset, Logitech H151 981-000587 Headset, Panasonic Kx-tca400 Headset, Plantronics M 214C On-Ear Headset, Plantronics Blackwire C225 Stereo Headset, VXi BlueParrott B350-XT Headset).
  - Ensure phone volume is turned up at a good level for the conference.
- **Land-line Phones.**
  - Don't use a speaker phone. Speaker phones can sound distant and echoey. Speak directly into handset.
  - Don't turn your phone volume all the way up. Having a very loud phone can sound distorted to other callers and participants on the call and potentially create an echo.
  - Speak at a normal conversational volume. Don't shout, and don't speak too softly.

- Slow down. When in a virtual meeting, it's more difficult for people to follow you. Enunciate your words and take a little extra time getting through your material.
- If you are primarily listening, mute yourself except when talking.
- Avoid low quality cordless phones as they sometimes create a buzzing background sound.
- Don't use the hold button if your phone system has built in background music or announcements. Doing so causes the music to be heard on the conference call.
- Ensure phone volume is turned up at a good level for the conference.
- **Eliminate noisemakers.** Avoid paper rustling. Turn off PC speakers, radios, mobile phones – anything that might produce noise that will distract from the conference.
- **Announce** if leaving or returning to the call.
- **Speak clearly.** Slow down if you are a “fast talker”.
- **Use muting.** If you are primarily listening, mute yourself except when talking.

### **Troubleshoot Poor Call Quality Issues (No Signal or Service, Dropped Calls, One Way Audio, Inaudible or Garbled Speech, etc.)**

- Landline
  - Try using a different phone and ensure the speaker is turned off.
- Cell Phones
  - Check the signal strength. The signal strength meter is a visual indicator of how well the phone is picking up the wireless network, which is directly related to your location within the coverage area. At least two bars need to be displayed on the signal strength meter to properly connect to the Internet and place or receive calls.
  - If you are indoors and there are no signal bars displayed, step outside and see if the signal improves. If the signal improves then indoor coverage is not available at the current location. Move to open areas that are less likely to block the signal to increase the phone's signal strength. Confined areas such as tunnels, mirrored buildings, and elevators are known for blocking wireless signals.
  - If you are outdoors and there are no signal bars displayed you should relocate to another location.
  - Please contact your Phone Provider if problems persist.

**To test your phone or audio device connection before the meeting, please call Michael Simmons, at Office number 850-412-7310 or cell number 850-339-0032.**