

Conference Calling Tips

To help ensure the success of your conference call, we have put together the following suggestions.

For the best quality during your conference call:

- If any locations will be using a speakerphone, sit key participants near the speakerphone.
- When participants are using speakerphones, have them mute their phones when they are not speaking. Ideally callers should pick up the handset and go off of speakerphone when they are speaking.
- Remind participants not to utilize their phone system's hold feature. "Hold music" could disrupt your conference. If they must put the call on hold, they should use the call mute feature.
- If at all possible, participants should not use cell phones, particularly if they are driving or otherwise moving and the signal could change. If cell use is unavoidable, have callers mute the cell phones when not speaking.
- If you are having technical problems during the call, utilize the *0 feature for operator assistance at any time during the conference.
- If you are experiencing unexplained noise or bad quality, the operator can identify the exact caller the noise is originating from and help you determine the best solution. In some cases this may mean a particular caller will need to hang up and call back in to try to get a better local connection.

For better call facilitation:

- Do a roll call at the beginning of the call and review the agenda points to be discussed.
- Inform participants as to the expected length of the call, and if this is flexible. If key participants must leave at a specific time, notify everyone of this up front.
- Be conscious of the number of callers active at any given time if a quorum is required for voting. A call that has just enough participants for a quorum at the beginning of a call may not have one if callers drop or leave the call.
- Remind participants not to type, play music or otherwise add noise to the call. If these types of noises are heard during the call, the host should address the issue immediately.
- If the call is being recorded, inform participants of this at the beginning of the call or as part of the call in instructions. If new callers join the call, instruct them as well.
- If appropriate, encourage participation and stimulate discussion.
- Ask participants to speak naturally, identify themselves while speaking, and pause for others to comment. Direct questions/comments to specific individuals or locations.
- Spell out unusual terms, names, and numbers.
- Summarize next steps, deadlines and action items clearly. Choose a date and time for your next conference call while everyone is still on the line.