

Best Practices for Conducting a Successful Video Conference

The following tips will help to ensure your video conference is successful.

Before beginning the video conference, be sure you know:

1. How to establish a connection to another endpoint or to the CSSD video bridge.
2. How to mute and un-mute your microphone.
3. How to accept an incoming call.
4. How to call out from the video conferencing unit.
5. The telephone number for each conference location.

Additional Tips:

Before the meeting:

- Be sure to allow sufficient lead time before your meeting to establish the necessary telephone and video connections.
- When room scheduling permits, have the conference locations call into the video bridge at least 15 minutes before the conference begins. This step will allow problems to be identified and resolved prior to the start of the meeting.
- Check all cameras to be sure that important conference elements (such as the table where the participants will sit, whiteboards, and sketch pad easels) can be displayed as needed. Know which camera you are using. If you switch to an auxiliary camera to show a whiteboard or a graphics stand, switch back to the main camera when the discussion turns to other topics.
- Provide good lighting. Avoid back lighting. Make sure that overhead lights and any other reflections do not show. Make sure any blinds and doors are closed.
- Ensure the microphones are properly positioned before dialing into a video conference.
- Eliminate background noises (such as fans) near microphones.
- Label your site clearly with a banner so other people know who/where you are. Make sure you remove the banner and place your camera on the participants once the conference begins.
- If written, graphical, or computerized information will be used during the meeting, communicate the information with all sites, either by sending it in advance of the meeting or by using the system to transmit the material during the meeting.

During the meeting:

- Introduce yourself and other participants when your site joins the conference.
- Many systems have a voice activated switching feature to automatically switch the camera to the speaker. Announce your name when you start speaking. Speak calmly and slowly, allowing the camera to adjust and focus on the speaker. Do not interrupt. Interrupting another speaker may cause the voice activated switching to become confused.
- Use names to direct questions to specific people.

- Make it a standard practice for all sites to mute their microphones when not speaking. This practice enables the current speaker to be heard by all sites without interruption.
- Be aware of the transmission delay and allow a sufficient pause for others to comment. When speaking, do not hesitate because you see or hear something unexpected. Small delays are always present.
- Small noises can be big distractions. Avoid shuffling paper, covering the microphone, tapping fingers, or clicking pens. These noises can be picked up by the microphone and can be transmitted to the conference participants.