

Guidelines For Conducting TMC Meetings In a Virtual Format

The key to running a seamless virtual meeting meeting is proper planning. The following step-by-step guidelines are designed to help Council leaders conduct TMC meetings that maximize time and efficiency in a virtual environment.

Step 1— PREPARE

- **Get familiar with the tools that TMC provides for virtual meetings.** TMC will provide access to communications tools/software to conduct official Council meetings. This could include simple voice-only conference calls, the TMC Connect collaborative work platform, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, or other virtual meeting/event tools. Take time to get familiar with the package that will apply to your event, well in advance of the meeting. Note that for the 2021 Spring Meeting - A Virtual Event, we will be using two platforms. Leadership, Study Group and Educational Sessions will take place on Cisco Webex and all Task Force Sessions will take place on Microsoft Teams.
- **Designate a leader/facilitator to manage the meeting.** In most cases, this will be the chairman of the specific study group, task force or committee. It is crucial to have someone who is in charge to manage the flow of the meeting.
- **Prepare an agenda.** Agendas must be submitted to TMC staff prior to the meeting according to deadline outlines in Presenter Preparation email..
- **Review TMC's Speaker Presentation Guidelines and Study Group/Task Force Chairman Guidelines.** Most of the principles offered in these guidelines also directly apply to virtual meetings. These can be found on TMC's website (<http://tmc.trucking.org>) in the Speaker Ready Room and/or on TMC Connect (<http://tmconnect.trucking.org>) in the Meeting Planning/Study Group Committee Community Site.
- **In advance of the meeting, post any preparatory meeting materials you wish to share for a specific amount of time.** Tell everyone that comments can be made in advance of the meeting for a set duration. Use TMC workspace collaboratively in advance.

Some best practices for on-screen presentations (i.e., Powerpoint, etc.) include:

1. Keeping text concise and use graphs, images, icons, charts, and other visual elements.
2. Sharing information apart from the text content on the slide.
3. Maintaining the assigned font sizes within the TMC PowerPoint template to ensure ease of viewing for the audience.
4. Having brief notes off to the side of your laptop/desktop will help you remember key points you need to cover.
5. Ensuring there are no animations in your PowerPoint or that the final state of your animation conveys your message. Webex removes all animations from uploaded presentations. If animations are absolutely necessary, we can share the PowerPoint presentation from your desktop rather than using the uploaded version.
6. Removing any embedded videos from your presentation. Videos work best when uploaded as separate elements to Webex submitted as a separate MP4 video file and should be 640 pixels wide X 480 pixels tall and 30 FPS or less.

Step 2— TEST

- **Once you are familiar with the platform you will be using, be sure to conduct testing in advance.** Perform multiple sound and/or video checks with several participants. Understand how to properly share your screen. Understand how to mute participants, and “call on” attendees.
- **Practice private messaging within your meeting software to assist with soundcheck testing.** This will eliminate “can you hear me now” type conversations.
- **A mandatory rehearsal is required for all Webex Sessions outlined per the Presenter Preparation email.**

Step 3— CONDUCT

- **Make sure you are logged-into your session** and ready to go at least 30 minutes prior.
- Close applications running in the background of your computer.
- **Have a glass of water nearby** and if possible, use a straw.
- Ensure that all laptop/desktop-accessory batteries are fully charged, and keep device charging during session.
- **Wear business casual attire with simple designs.** Avoid bold patterns and dangling/noisy jewelry.
- Standard makeup is appropriate — the features should be natural, subtle and non-shiny.
- **Choose a clean, professional and organized backdrop.** Avoid any windows behind you.
- Stick to your agenda during the meeting. Assign a timekeeper to ensure that any presentations delivered in the meeting stick to the time constraints. The timekeeper makes sure the meeting ends on time as well.
- **Prior to the meeting, assign an attendance taker** — this can be an automated or manual process based on available resources. Usually, this should be the Study Group, Task Force or Committee Secretary.
- **Conduct a role call by announcing names.** Have an email address on the screen for attendees to email if their name is not called. This will eliminate excess time wasted. This may be an automated feature in some platforms.
- **Mute devices that are not necessary for the Microsoft Teams or Cisco Webex Session** (e.g., cell phones, tv). Inspect your room for anything that produces noise.
- Make sure your presentation area is inaccessible to pets and children.
- **If possible, use a good headset and microphone or earbuds that have a built-in mic and are fully charged.**
- Be aware of sounds like loud typing or shuffling papers during the presentation.
- **Have your webcam at eye level** so you're not looking down at the audience.
- As attendees speak during the meeting, be sure they identify themselves and who they represent. This may be an automated feature in some platforms.
- **Make sure you have proper follow up procedures established.** For TMC Task Force or Study Group meetings, note that the Task Force/Study Group Secretary may follow up with participants to clarify comments for minutes.
- **Have a clear adjournment to the meeting** and close/ exit your software program immediately to avoid side conversations.

Other Tips To Consider

Here are a few additional tips to consider based on input from veteran TMC members and communications expert/trainer Deborah Boswell:

- **Use visuals but limit words.** Keep it simple. This is the best way to have attendees focus on your message.
- **Have a plan for technical difficulties.** If your software crashes during the middle of your meeting, have another platform readily available to send to attendees. Our support hotline is (703) 838-7919; MISadmin@trucking.org
- **Encourage meeting attendees to fully focus on the meeting.** Ask them to go to a quiet space, close their email program, and minimize all distractions.
- **Use video whenever possible.** Why? Video keeps participants engaged and personalizes the connection. Accountability increases when others can see you.
- **Implement some basic ground rules for all meetings** (e.g., be on time, identify yourself when entering the meeting, everyone mutes their microphone when not talking, etc.)
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help!** TMC staff and volunteer members are there to help you make the most of your virtual meeting event. Contact TMC staff if you have questions.

**Technology &
Maintenance Council**
A Technical Council of
American Trucking Associations



950 N. Glebe Road • Arlington, VA 22203 • (703) 838-1763 • <http://tmc.trucking.org>

ATA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS