

TELECONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

There are several things elements of teleconference etiquette, please review these before you call. They include:

- 1. Mute Button** - Use your mute button, if there is one. Background noise, the dog barking, radio, etc., could be a problem for the other participants. If you don't have a mute button, don't worry. Just try to call from a quiet location, no visitors and not typing on the keyboard without the mute button on.
- 2. Breathing** - Some people breathe 'heavier' than others. Most of the heavy breathers don't realize it. (Who, ME?) So, we ask everyone to hold the mouthpiece or telephone headset away from their mouth and nose, until they are speaking. This sounds pretty silly, but when you're on a call with a heavy breather, you'll know why!
- 3. 2-line phones** - If you have a two-line phone, please turn the ringer off of the second line. If you don't, and you get a call during the Teleconference, it can really be a shrill noise that everyone hears.
- 4. Pets** - If you're on a smaller Teleconference (like 10-30 callers), your dog will probably woof at exactly the time needed for some comic relief, so it's not usually a problem. But if you're on a larger Teleconference (30-100 callers), please put pets in another room.
- 5. Speakerphones, Cell phones and Cordless phones** - Please don't use them. Speakerphones are wonderful things, but we ask that you not speak into them when sharing. Pick up the handset when you share and put the mute button on when you're just listening. The clarity/quality simply isn't good enough on any of these phones.
- 6. Sharing** - The leader will usually ask for callers to share or respond, throughout the call. However, please wait to be prompted -- don't just speak up, unless invited. If/when you do share, say something like, "Thom (or the leader's name), this is Frank from Omaha." The leader will say, "Yes, Frank, go ahead." Then you can say whatever you'd like to. Always use the leader's name and wait until they respond, indicating that you can proceed. On smaller calls this formality isn't usually needed and there is a natural flow to people sharing and discussing.
- 7. CrossTalk** - If another caller says something that you want to comment on or ask more information about, go through the leader, don't speak to the person directly, at least at first. Let the leader play traffic director. You could say something like, "Sara, can I ask that Pat rephrase the point she just made?" Again, on smaller calls, this isn't as necessary, but on the large calls, it really is.
- 8. Early/Late** - Please don't call the teleconference number before the scheduled time -- another conference may be in session. If you're late to the call, no problem, just dial in and be silent until you catch on to what's being discussed. The leader may or may not officially welcome you -- but probably won't so as not to disturb the flow of the call. That doesn't mean you're not welcome! And, finally, if you're more than 10 minutes late, be really careful about asking questions, as they may well have been asked earlier.