CPA Telephone Meeting Suggested Guidelines

To the CPA Telephone Meeting Chairperson

Thank you for leading a CPA telephone meeting. The telephone meeting is a safe place for CPA members to come and listen and/or share their experience, strength and hope with one another. As a trusted servant to CPA, giving of your time and energy is a great way to meet other members and experience the joy of service work. It is suggested that you be a member of CPA for a minimum of 6 months when you assume this service role. Before leading for the first time it is recommended these guidelines be reviewed with a more experienced CPA member to answer questions and offer support to you.

These guidelines are suggestions and were created to help new leaders through the process of chairing a telephone meeting. Keep in mind that each group has its own meeting format and these guidelines are intended to supplement that format. You will find helpful hints for leading a successful telephone meeting, especially for people who call in for the first time and are unfamiliar with telephone meetings. We hope this helps to answer your questions so you can feel confident in this service position. On the last page you will find a reference guide listing the teleconference service keypad controls. This page can be printed out for you to keep nearby and have easily accessible for use during a meeting.

Telephone Conference Call Operation Instructions

As leader of the meeting, you will dial into the meeting as the Conference Organizer. This will give you access to useful functions, such as muting the call when there is static or other background noise.

To dial in as a Conference Organizer:

Dial into the meeting using the conference telephone number as usual. When asked to enter your access code, dial the asterisk (star-shaped symbol) * and then the access code.
A. Conference Modes

There are 3 modes available during a conference call. Here is a description of the three modes:

1. In **Conversation mode**, all lines are open and un-muted (you hear everybody at once)
2. In **Q&A mode**, only the leader can be heard but participants can un-mute their phone by pressing *6.
3. In **Presentation mode**, participants are muted and have no option to un-mute themselves. You can only hear the Conference Organizer.

The Conference modes are a three position toggle that works by pressing *7 for each mode. The first *7 is Conversation mode, 2nd *7 is Q&A mode, third *7 is Presentation Mode and the 4th *7 will cycle back to Conversation mode again. A voice prompt will alert you to the current mode each time you change the configuration.

Participants can mute and un-mute in Conversation and Q&A Modes. When a speaker wishes to share, they can un-mute themselves by pressing *6 and return to mute by pressing *6 after they share. Presentation mode does not allow anyone to un-mute.

When you begin the call is in Conversation mode. Static, echoing and other noise on a conference call are disruptive and can be introduced by one or more participants. Our conference hosting company strongly recommends conducting the meeting in Q&A mode. Therefore, the suggested mode to use for CPA telephone meetings is Q&A Mode. In this mode all participants are muted, which should prevent noise disturbances and other technical difficulties. This can only be done if you are the Conference Organizer by dialing into the conference using the access code with the * in front. After calling in, by pressing *7 it will change the conference mode.

As the chairperson, you do have the option of using Conversation mode and asking participants to mute their phones individually. However, if a participant fails to mute their phone or there is still background noise, you can mute the entire conference by entering Q&A Mode. **For Example:** If asking everyone to mute while a person is trying to share, and there is STILL disturbing background noise, follow these steps:

1. Politely interrupt the person sharing and advise the person sharing that there is background noise.
2. Tell the person sharing that you are muting the conference line and ask them to come back and finish their share by pressing *6 to unmute. Mute the conference line by pressing *7 until the voice says Q&A mode. (**Participants cannot hear what you hear on the conference line.**)
3. You may also need to unmute your phone by pressing *6 to be heard on the conference call after entering Q&A Mode.
4. Ask the person to continue sharing. If they don’t respond remind them to press *6 to unmute.

B. VoIP, SKYPE, VONAGE, AND OTHER CABLE COMPANIES

The conference call company has advised us that problems sometimes arise if participants are using VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) services to dial in such as Skype, Vonage, or other phone service provided by many cable TV companies. If a Conference Organizer is using one of these services and the conference call does not respond to * commands, sometimes simply pressing the key a bit longer can help. Also, speaking over some of these services can distort the participant’s voice so they are difficult to hear. Unfortunately, there are no recommendations to remedy voice quality issues when using VoIP. In extreme cases, the best solution is to simply use a standard landline.

HELFPUL HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

A. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Call from a quiet location.
- Disable call waiting by dialing *70 before dialing into the conference, otherwise the beeping may disrupt the call.
- You want as strong a connection as possible. When available a landline often sounds clearer to participants than a cell phone or VoIP line.
- If using a VoIP connection and your voice is not clearly understood, members will have a difficult time understanding you. The only way to correct this is to use a landline.
- Arrive a few minutes before the designated start time so others don’t have to wait and the meeting can begin promptly.
- To save time, ask for volunteers to help with the meeting tasks prior to commencing the meeting.
- Start promptly at the hour the meeting is scheduled. If it is a literature meeting, select a reading prior to the meeting and announce to everyone what book you will be reading from so they can have it ready.
- Keep your own phone on mute *6 to block out background noise.
- If it’s your first time using the service, consider conducting a test session with another member to familiarize yourself with the touch-tone commands and other functionality that is available.
- When there is an echo on the line or voice distortion of any kind, try using the Q&A mode to correct the situation.
B. INTRODUCTIONS
To keep the opening introductions concise, ask participants to limit their introductions to what is listed in the meeting format. Most formats ask members to announce their name, where they live and whether they live with chronic pain or chronic illness. For the sake of time, you can ask members to please hold any personal comments for when they share rather than when they introduce themselves. This will allow you to move through the introductions briskly and get to the meeting topic. If two people share at once and you hear them both, welcome them both and move on to the next person. It is important for the chairperson to simply acknowledge members announcements so they know they are being heard and not muted.

C. SHARING
It takes time to get ready to share as a member contemplates what was shared or read, then organizes their thoughts to share with the group, and finally un-mutes their phones so they can be heard. The process of a member preparing to share can take anywhere from 10, 20, 30 or more seconds. Allowing time for the members to go through this process sometimes creates silence on the line, which is to be expected.

The meeting participants don’t need to ask if they can share. If they want to share, they simply state their name and say they would like to share. Since there are no visual cues it is important to acknowledge the person by saying something like, “go ahead” or “okay,” which will help the person know they are heard.

After a member shares, a simple response such as “thank you” is enough to let the person know they were heard. Refrain from comments of any kind or expressing exuberance about a share. Making any comments after somebody shares is cross talk. As the leader, it is especially important that you set the example. It is natural to want to say “great share.” However, if it isn’t said to every person who shares, then some people might think their share isn’t as good as the one prior or after. Simply say “thank you” or some other indication in the same tone of voice for every person that has finished sharing. Again, since visual cues are absent, it will open the line for the next person to speak.

D. TIME
Keep an eye on the clock and remember the meeting is 60 minutes. Consider that the meeting opens with several readings and introductions, lasting 15 - 20 minutes. If the meeting format calls for newcomers to share at the end of the meeting for 5 minutes, this can leave 30 minutes or less to introduce a topic, read the selected reading and sharing guidelines, which leaves limited time for members to begin open sharing. It is important to allow time for as many people as possible that wish to share during the meeting.
E. TIME KEEPER
Emphasize that shares are limited to what is listed on the meeting format in order to allow everyone time to share. Encourage folks to watch their own time while sharing prior to asking for help from a time keeper. However, if after pressing * and #, you note there are very few members attending, or conversely, there is a significant number of people attending, you have the option of adjusting the share time to accommodate the number of participants. (Pressing * and # will announce the number of members in the meeting to the Conference Organizer.)

F. FELLOWSHIP TIME
After the meeting is a good time to welcome newcomers, share personal details, get numbers, connect and share with other members, find a sharing partner or sponsor, make other announcements and enjoy fellowship. It’s a good time to remind members to come to the meeting early for the same reasons.

MODERATOR-CONTROLS INSTRUCTIONS
CONFERENCE TOUCH-TONE REFERENCE GUIDE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZER
KEYPAD CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS
Your telephone touchtone keypad is all you need to activate Instant Conference functions. Below is a guide with the most frequently used commands. Please note that some actions, such as muting the other callers, are accessible to the Conference Organizer only. Only the chairperson logs in as the Conference Organizer.

*4 = hear the help menu
You will hear all of the commands available. However, CPA only uses the commands listed here. All members have access to this command.

*5 = lock or unlock the conference
Although CPA does not use this command, it may inadvertently be locked accidentally. If you accidentally lock the conference, pressing *5 again will unlock the conference. Only the Conference Organizer has access to this command.

*6 = mute or unmute yourself
All members can use this command.
*7 = change muting mode
This gives you access to the three modes, which are announced each time you press *7. This command is available only to the Conference Organizer. (See below “Conference Mute Modes.”)

*# = number of participants in conference
Pressing * and # will announce the number of members in the meeting.

**Conference Mute Modes:**

1. In Conversation Mode, all lines are open and un-muted.
2. In Q&A Mode, only organizers can be heard. Non-organizers can mute/un-mute their phone by pressing *6.
3. In Presentation Mode, non-organizers are muted and have no option to un-mute themselves.

The Conference Mode is a three position toggle accessed by pressing *7 repeatedly in this order:

   Conversation Mode => Q & A Mode => Presentation

A voice prompt will alert you to the current mode each time you change the configuration. Participants will not hear the voice prompts, only the person who signed in as Conference Organizer.