

Help minimize noise in your office

The workplace should provide you with speech privacy, comfort and freedom from distracting noises, and enable you to work without disrupting others. Developing a set of shared expectations regarding noise can help create this type of environment and contribute to the development of successful relationships with coworkers. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:



Conversation

- Watch your speaking volume at all times. When you are in a workstation setting, anytime someone talks above normal levels, it is fair game for everyone to hear.
- When you speak with a coworker, ensure that you are close enough to them to talk at a normal volume. Don't speak over or through workstation walls or shout across the office.
- Don't hold sensitive meetings in your workstation, or at least try to keep them brief. Take visitors to an area reserved for such activities.

Telephone

- Don't use a speaker phone, except for conference calls in an enclosed room. If you need to use your hands while on the phone, ask your manager for a hands-free headset.
- Set your phone's ringer to a low level and pick up after one or two rings. Set voicemail to pick up after a maximum of three rings.
- If possible, use the vibrate feature on your cell phone or pager, or turn it off while in the office. Ensure that you take it with you when you leave your workstation.

Workspace

- Avoid walking through workspaces. Whenever possible, use the main corridors.
- Avoid noisy screensavers or setting your email to announce every time a message appears in your inbox. If you need to use sound for your work, set the volume to a low level or use headphones.
- Avoid hanging a lot of pictures and notes on your workstation panels. Reducing the number of reflective surfaces will help to ensure that the partitions can absorb noise.
- Request that squeaky chairs, drawers, doors or other items in your area be fixed.
- Respect your coworker's concentration. If they are visibly occupied with a task, return later or send them an email.
- Be conscious of the things that you do that create noise and might be distracting to those around you and if a coworker is making noise that is disrupting your concentration, speak to them about the problem. Be direct, but be kind, because they might not realize that they are causing a distraction.



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