

# 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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