Best Practices for Securing Your Zoom Meetings

City of Ottawa

Zoom is an easy way to stay connected during these times of social distancing, allowing for collaboration within the City of Ottawa. As more people use the platform, we want to ensure everyone joining an event does so with good intentions. Like most other public forums, it is possible to have a person (who may or may not be invited) disrupt an event that is meant to bring people together.

The new term that is circulating in the media is Zoom Bombing. Zoom Bombing is a type of cyber-attack which occurs when someone hijacks a Zoom teleconferencing chat.

There have been many instances of this documented in the news, and this "Best Practices" list will help deter this from occurring, and give you steps to act fast if it does.

1. Pre-Meeting Settings

Initial setup and securing of your Zoom Meeting before your event begins will allow for a smother and more secure assembly.

Turn on the Waiting Room Feature
This will provide a virtual waiting room for your attendees and allow you to admit individual meeting participants into your meeting at your discretion.

As attendees arrive, you will have a list of those in the meeting, as well as those still in the waiting room, allowing you total control of who else joins.

Create a new Public Meeting ID
When new meetings start, they use a default meeting referred to as your Personal Meeting ID. This ID does not change and can be re-used for different meetings over time.

Instead make sure you create a new public meeting ID which is randomly generated when you create the new meeting.

Require a Password to Join
To secure your meeting even more, make sure you require a password to join. This will make it harder for an uninvited guest to join.

Allow only signed-in users to join

If someone tries to join your event and isn't logged into Zoom with the email they were invited through, they will receive a message stating only authorized users can join.

2. During the Meeting

Once your Zoom Meeting is off and running, you will have access to features that will allow you total control.

Lock the Meeting

Once all of your attendees have arrived, you can easily lock your meeting from the security menu, to prevent additional attendees from joining.

When you lock a Zoom Meeting that has already started, no new participants can join, even if they have the meeting ID and password.

Control Screen Sharing

Allowing participants to share their screen maybe a great way to collaborate but may leave you with unwanted interruptions. Have your setting set so that you are the only one with the screen sharing capability.

Zoom bombers need to be able to visually take over a meeting to be effective. Preventing anyone from sharing their screen aside from the meeting host stops them from being able to go on the attack.

Disable Video

Remember that you can turn off someone's video. This will allow you to block unwanted or distracting gestures on video.

Disable Private Chat

To keep people focused and limiting distraction, you can disable and enable chat at your discretion throughout your meeting. This will also prevent anyone from getting unwanted messages during the meeting.

Turn off File Transfer

In-meeting file transfer allows people to share files through the in-meeting chat. Toggle this off to keep the chat from getting bombarded with unsolicited pics, GIFs, memes, and other content.

Turn off Annotation

You and your attendees can doodle and mark up content together using annotations during screen share. You can disable the annotation feature in your Zoom settings to prevent people from writing all over the screens.

Mute Participants

Zoom allows you to mute all participants. You can also enable Mute Upon Entry in your settings to keep thing quieter during large meetings. For an added layer of security, you can also disable the participants ability to unmute themselves. Once you are ready for the meeting to be interactive again, you can simply hit the "Unmute All" button or allow participants to unmute themselves.

Removing Participants

Once you've admitted an attendee into your meeting, you can easily push them back to the waiting room, or remove them all together, including preventing their return.

3. I'm being Zoom Bombed – What to do?

You are happily running your meeting and have taken all precautions; but you find yourself in the situation of being Zoom Bombed. Most people will be taken off guard and forget how to handle the situation. Below are items to remember that were discussed above, along with the steps to take.

Take back Screen Control

If you had allowed screen sharing with participants, take back control so you are the only one with screen sharing capabilities.

1. In the host controls, click the arrow above **Share Screen** and click **Advanced Sharing**.

2. Under **Who can Share?** Choose **Only Host**.
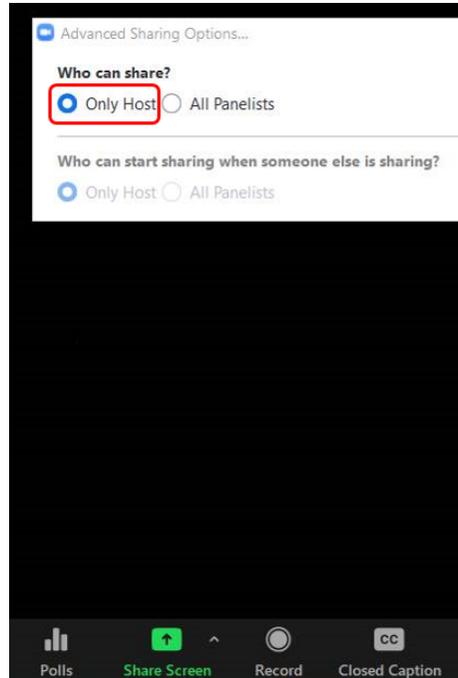
Disable Video

Remember that you can turn off someone's video. This will allow you to block unwanted or distracting gestures on video.

1. Choose **Participants** in the meeting controls to see the list of participants.

2. Hover over the **participant's** name and click **More**, and then choose **Stop Video**.
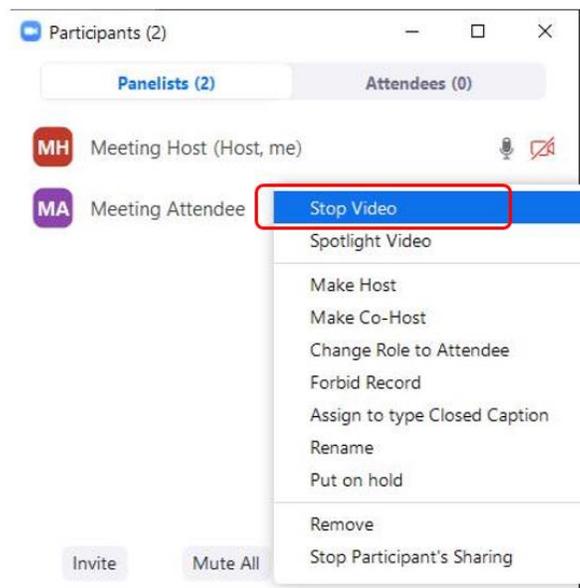
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1. Choose **Participants** in the meeting controls to see the list of participants.

2. Hover over the **participant's** name and click **More**, and choose "**Remove**".
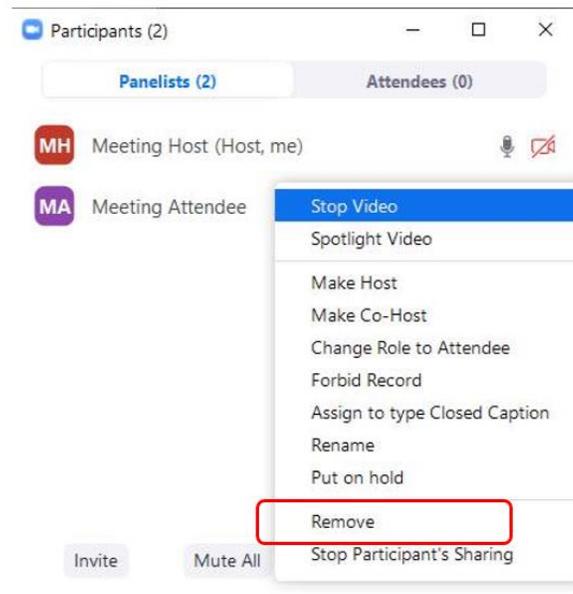
4. Final Thoughts

Make sure to take some time and familiarize yourself with the Zoom features and even set-up a "test" meeting so you can get accustomed with the options and settings that will allow you to host an informative and secure meeting.