

PAPERLESS MEETINGS TOOLKIT

OBJECTIVE:

A paperless meeting is characterized by the absence of paper copies of the agenda, minutes, presentations or other documents. The goal is to decrease paper use by eliminating the practice of printing documents to hand out at meetings.

WHY PAPERLESS MEETINGS

A paperless meeting eliminates paper and its related expenses. Required documents are distributed digitally ahead of time so people can review them or project them onto a screen. When a paper version is required, stop and think about how many copies you actually need: can people share or can they read on a laptop or from a projector? Paperless meetings can also assist your department in eliminating the risk associated with printing confidential information. If you can use virtual meetings, this further reduces expenses related to travel and employee impacts.

STEPS:

Step 1

Discuss holding paperless meetings with your manager or supervisor and highlight the benefits. Discuss the best way to approach the idea of paperless meetings with your department, either through an email or at a staff meeting.

If your department does not have all of the electronic tools necessary to support a totally paperless meeting, go as paperless as you can. Even not printing out agendas, minutes and copies of presentations will save a lot of paper every year.

Step 2

Have a discussion with your team about having paperless meetings and send out the following email as a reminder:

Subject: Moving towards paperless meetings

Each year the Lower Mainland Health Authorities uses over 260 million sheets of paper. As part of our department's effort to waste less paper, we'd like to make the commitment to hold paperless meetings. A paperless meeting is characterized by not having paper copies of the agenda, minutes, presentations or other documents. Most of that paper is looked at once (if at all) and then thrown away.

If there are documents that need to be reviewed during the meeting, please project them onto a screen, transcribe key points onto a whiteboard or print minimal copies (double-sided!) have people share. All of these actions will help us waste less paper and make our department more sustainable. If you have any ideas for how to improve our paperless meetings, please let me know.

Step 3

Prior to the next few meetings speak with the meeting chair and anyone who is presenting during the meeting to remind them of the new paperless meeting policy. Offer to help them make the meeting paperless if they are unsure how to proceed.

You will need to help out at the first few meetings until everyone in your department gets used to the new practice of paperless meetings.

EVALUATION

Prior to initiating use of the tool, try to determine how much paper your department is using. This information can be found from purchasing data (how much paper is your department buying). Try also to get a general sense of how much paper is used during meetings. If necessary, count the number of sheets used at a couple of typical meetings to use as a baseline. In December, review paper usage and quantify what improvements have been made. How much less paper is being used at meetings? As well, try to get a qualitative indication of the tool. What are people's personal reactions to paperless meetings? Are there any issues with paperless meetings? How do they like the tool? What can be improved in the future?