CUBICLE ETIQUETTE

Life in a cubicle presents certain challenges. These ground rules will help you remain productive and neighbourly.

Privacy

- Try not to startle someone working in a cubicle. Announce yourself at their doorway or lightly knock on the wall.
- Never read someone’s computer screen or comment on conversations you’ve overheard. Resist answering a question you overheard asked in the cube next to you!
- Be respectful of your coworkers’ workspace. Just because there’s no door doesn’t mean you can help yourself to their paper clips.
- Post a sign or flag at your cubicle entrance to signal when you can be interrupted.
- Don’t loiter outside someone’s cubicle if the person is on a phone call. Come back at another time.
- Keep your personal belongings within your cubicle, not draped over the cubicle walls.

Phones

- Try to pick up your phone after one or two rings. Set the ringer volume at a low level.
- Limit the use of speakerphones. If you must use one, keep the volume as low as possible. Use a meeting room for conference calls.
- Watch your volume when talking on the phone.
- When you leave your cubicle, turn your phone ringer off and let it go to voicemail or forward your phone number to your new location.
- Never leave your cell phone behind in your cubicle without first turning it off or to vibrate.
- With personal or sensitive calls, be aware that your neighbours can hear your end of the conversation.

Talking

- Use your inside “library voice”.
- Don’t talk through cubicle walls or congregate outside someone’s cubicle. For impromptu meetings, go to a conference room or break room.
- Don’t bring clients to your cubicle to meet with them. Go to an office or conference room.
- Don’t yell across the cubicles. Get up and move to the other person’s location.

General noise

- Use email or instant messaging to communicate silently with your coworkers.
- Play music only with the use of a headset.
- Set your computer volume to a low level and turn off screensaver sound effects.
- Eat quietly. Avoid gum-popping, humming, slurping and pen tapping.

Scents

- Don’t eat hot food at your desk. Food odours can bother your hungry or nauseous neighbours.
- Avoid perfume and cologne. Your neighbours may have allergies or chemical sensitivities.
- Be aware of personal odours and minimize their effects on others (this includes clothing, shoe, body odours, dental hygiene and food odours).
- Keep your shoes on at your desk.