



FAMILY VIDEO CALLING GUIDE

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Department of Information Technology

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INTRODUCTION

This guide provides an overview of six commonly used video call applications. Its purpose is to help you stay in touch with friends and family during this period of limited travel and in-person contact. The applications highlighted in this guide were selected for their cost (all are free), ease of use, device compatibility, and minimal need to create user accounts.

Features and requirements of video call applications change constantly. The information in this guide is current as of the date of publication. You are welcome to share with friends and family members, but please note that Dakota County does not promote or support any tools included in this document.

Notice to Dakota County Employees



The applications discussed in this booklet are intended for use on personal computers, smart phones and tablets. They should never be used for conducting personal business on Dakota County computers or the Dakota County network. County staff should *not* contact the County IT Help Desk for support with personal video call applications. All employees must also to the following requirements:

- Do not use your County Microsoft Skype or Zoom account to participate in personal video calls.
- Do not use Apple Facetime on your county-issued mobile phone to participate in personal video calls.
- Do not attempt to install personal call applications on a County provided device.
- Do not use personal video calls while logged into the County's Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Refer to Dakota County Policy 6001- Acceptable Use of Technology Resources (available on DCWorks) for more information.

Video Call Best Practices

Video calls can go badly if your participants do not know how to use the application. Here are some tips to help your call go well.

 <p>DO's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare participants who are inexperienced or not tech savvy. ▪ Ensure your WiFi connection or mobile data service is strong to prevent freezing and disconnections. ▪ Ensure PC users have a webcam and speakers. ▪ Ensure users know how to manage their camera direction. ▪ Ensure participants know how to mute and unmute their audio. ▪ Place phones, tablets, and laptops on a stand or stack of books. This will avoid shaking and make your face eye level with the camera. 	 <p><small>Examples of icons to switch camera direction.</small></p>
 <p>DONT's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid having multiple people join the call from different devices if they are physically in the same room together. This will prevent audio feedback issues. ▪ Keep virtual backgrounds to a minimum. They can be distracting and confusing to new users. ▪ Plan calls in advance and make sure that all participants know how to connect. ▪ Don't forget to turn off the chat when you're done. 	

OVERVIEW OF VIDEO CALL APPLICATIONS

The table below summarizes the key differences among the video call applications discussed in this booklet. Not all applications offer the same functionality, and some can be used only by people with certain types of computers or devices. Also, be aware that some applications offer additional paid features above the base service offerings described below. Examples include longer meeting times and additional participants. This information will help you choose the application that best fits your participants' needs and device capabilities.

Application	Maximum Participants	Meeting Time Limit	Download Requirements	Account Requirements	People Can Call in from a Land Line Telephone
Apple Facetime	32	None	Mobile App	Apple ID	No
Facebook Rooms	50	None	None	Host: Yes Participants: No	No
Free Conference Call	1,000	None	Mobile App	Host: Yes Participants: No	Dial in toll number or Host can buy a toll-free number for 2¢/min/caller
Google Meet	100	24 hours	Mobile App	Gmail account	No
Microsoft Skype	50	24 hours	Mobile App	None	For a small per-use fee
Zoom	100	*40 minutes	Mobile App PC/Laptop Client	Host: Yes Participants: No	If host has a paid audio plan subscription

*As a courtesy during the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom is temporarily removing the 40-minute limit on Zoom calls from midnight on November 26, 2020, through 6 AM (ET) on November 27, 2020. This will allow family video meetings to run unlimited on Thanksgiving Day.

APPLE FACETIME

Overview

Facetime is Apple's video and audio calling service. You can use it from any iPhone, iPad, iPod touch or Mac, to call anyone else using any one of those devices. Facetime is a good option if all the people you want to include in your video call have an Apple device. FaceTime is *not* available on Windows computers or Android mobile devices.



Device Requirements

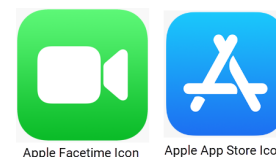
People can participate in Facetime video calls if they have one of the following devices:

- Computers: All models of Apple Mac and Apple MacBook
- Mobile Devices: Apple iPhone, Apple iPad, iPod Touch and Apple Watch

Family members can only join a Facetime meeting from an Apple device.

How to Install Facetime

The Facetime app is installed by default on all Apple devices. If you deleted the app, you can reinstall it from the [Apple App Store](#).



How to Use Facetime

Start a Facetime call by opening the app and inviting people from your contacts list or by entering their mobile phone number or Apple ID email address.

- [Apple Support](#)

FACEBOOK ROOMS

Overview

Rooms is a new feature within Facebook's Messenger video, audio, and call tool. You can use Rooms from nearly any device, including computers, laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. You can use Rooms from a web browser on PCs, laptops, and mobile devices. The person who initiates the Room must have a Facebook account. Participants do not need a Facebook account.





Device Requirements

People can participate in Rooms video calls if they have one of the following devices:


- PCs and Laptops: Any computer with a web browser
- Mobile Devices: Any smart phone or tablet with a web browser or the Facebook Messenger app


How to Install Messenger

You can use Rooms from most web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) on computers, laptops, or mobile devices with no installation requirements.

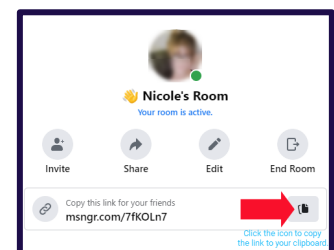
If you are using a mobile device and prefer to install the app, download it at your device's app store. Look for the Messenger app with the  icon. If you need a Facebook account to host a Room, you can create an account from a web browser at facebook.com or by downloading the Facebook app with the  icon from your device's app store.

How to Use Rooms

Go to messenger.com on your web browser or open the Messenger app. Alternately, you can open Messenger by clicking on the  icon on your Facebook app or facebook.com.

To create a video call, click the  icon (the icon's color may vary). Invite others to join the Room through your contacts list (if they have Facebook accounts and you are friends with them) or by sharing a link.

- [Messenger Support](#)
- [Facebook Support](#)
- [Introduction to Facebook Rooms](#)



FREE CONFERENCE CALL

Overview

Free Conference Call is a lesser known application for video calling. You can use Free Conference Call from nearly any device, including computers, laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. You can use Free Conference Call from a web browser on a PC or laptop. You must download an app to use Free Conference Call on a mobile device. Free Conference Call offers features that include screen sharing, a dedicated call-in phone number, and call recording.

Device Requirements


People can participate in Free Conference Call video calls if they have one of the following devices:

- PCs and Laptops: Using a web browser or a web client
- Mobile Devices: Using the Free Conference Call app
- Telephone: Calling into a designated phone number (not toll-free) or host can purchase use of a toll-free number at 2¢ per minute per caller



How to Install Free Conference Call

You can use Free Conference Call from most web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) on computers and laptops with no installation requirements. There is a web client you can download for enhanced performance, but it is not required.

If you are using a mobile device, download the app from your device's app store. Search for the Free Conference Call app with the  icon.

How to Use Free Conference Call

Go to freeconferencecall.com on your web browser if using a PC or laptop. Open the Free Conference Call app if using a mobile device.

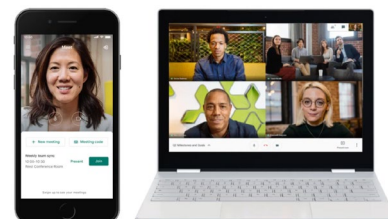
To create a video call, click the Host Meeting button. Invite others to join the video call by sharing a link or by sending an invitation email.

- [Free Conference Call Support](#)

GOOGLE MEET

Overview

Google has multiple video call options, including Hangouts, Duo, and Chat, but Google Meet is the most versatile option. You can use Meet from nearly any device, including computers, laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. You can use Meet from a web browser on a PC or laptop. You must download an app to use Meet on a mobile device. You must have a Gmail email address to participate in a Meet video call.




Device Requirements

People can participate in Meet video calls if they have one of the following devices:

- PCs and Laptops: Using a web browser
- Mobile Devices: Using the Google Meet app

How to Install Meet

You can use Meet from most web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) on computers and laptops. You may be prompted to download the Google Meet Client.

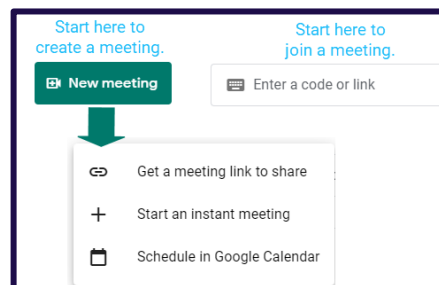
If you are using a mobile device, download the app from your device's app store. Search for the Meet app with the  icon.

How to Use Meet

Go to meet.google.com on your web browser if using a PC or laptop. Open the Meet app if using a mobile device.

To create a video call, click the New Meeting button. Invite others to join the video call by sharing a link.

- [Google Meet Support](#)



MICROSOFT SKYPE



Overview

Skype is Microsoft's video call application. You can use Skype from nearly any device, including computers, laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. You can use Skype from a web browser on a PC or laptop. You must download an app to use Skype on a mobile device. You do not need a Microsoft email address to host or participate in a Skype video call.


Device Requirements

People can participate in Skype video calls if they have one of the following devices:

- PCs and Laptops: Using a web browser
- Mobile Devices: Using the Skype app
- Telephone: [For a small per user fee](#)

How to Install Skype

You can use Skype from most web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) on computers, laptops, or mobile devices with no installation requirements.

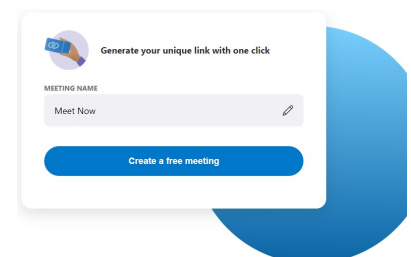
If you are using a mobile device, download the app from your device's app store. Search for the Skype app with the  icon.

How to Use Skype

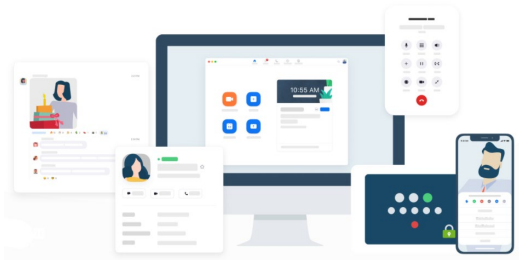
Create a meeting at skype.com/en/free-conference-call. If you have a personal Microsoft account (e.g. MSN, Hotmail, Outlook, Live, Passport), you can log into your email account at outlook.com, then create a meeting at skype.com.

To create a video call, click the button titled Host a Meeting or Start a Conversation. You can invite others to join the call by sharing a link.

- [Skype Support](#)



ZOOM



Overview

Zoom is a video offers a wide variety of features, including screen sharing, group and private calls, recording, and whiteboard. Its interface is easy to use, however, and has become one of the most popular video chat tools. Zoom's main drawback is its *40 minute limitation on meeting length.

*As a courtesy during the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom is temporarily removing the 40-minute limit on Zoom calls from midnight on November 26, 2020, through 6 AM (ET) on November 27, 2020. This will allow family video meetings to run unlimited on Thanksgiving Day.


Device Requirements

People can participate in Zoom video calls if they have one of the following devices:

- PCs and Laptops: Any computer with a web browser
- Mobile Devices: Any mobile device with the Zoom app

How to Install Zoom

You can use Zoom from most web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) on computers and laptops. You may be prompted to download the Zoom Client.

If you are using a mobile device, download the app from your device's app store. Search for the Zoom app with the  icon.

How to Use Zoom

Go to zoom.us on your web browser if using a PC or laptop. Open the Zoom app if using a mobile device. You must create a personal Zoom account in order to host meetings.

To create a video call, click My Account. Click Schedule a Meeting, select your settings, then click Save. A link to your meeting will be provided. Invite others to join the video call by sharing the link.

- [Zoom Support](#)

Friends

Stay Connected



Family
