

## SEMCOG Tools for Working Offsite | Information Technology

Staff may need to work remotely, potentially with little notice. The following is a summary of instructions and tools available to staff in the event they cannot work in SEMCOG offices. **Please use How To documents on SERG** for detailed instructions on preparing for working offsite.

### Working Remotely

All staff have the ability to work remotely, using a virtual private network connection (VPN). The [instructions to work](#) remotely are on SERG. Here are some important things to consider and plan for:

- Test working remotely while you are in our building. Do so by disconnecting from Ethernet and our Wi-Fi (perhaps go to the building lobby), and connect via a hotspot. Make sure you see all the necessary connections to accomplish your work.
- If you plan to use your home computer, use the How To document above to prepare that machine and test connections prior to the day you will need them. If you have problems, you can bring that laptop into the office and IT will help you.
- Test your connection doing the sort of work you would be doing if in the office. Your ability to work is reliant on the internet connection you have at your onsite location. You may decide to boost your bandwidth with your internet provider.
- If you need to connect to our servers while in a remote location, SEMCOG will temporarily add a hotspot to your agency phone. The hotspot would be available in the same way you discover and connect to Wi-Fi networks. A good data connection is needed on the phone, so be positioned in an area where this is available. Use the Support Portal to request a hotspot; call someone in IT if you are not able to access the Support Port. Allow 48 hours for the hotspot to appear on your phone.
- Never work remotely using a public computer.
- Avoid using public Wi-Fi, such as Starbucks.
- You may access email via web browser when Outlook is not available, such as your local laptop.  
Go to: <https://ms4.semco.org/owa/>
- Staff may take their monitors home while we are all working offsite. Home TVs might be connectable through Blue Tooth or an HDMI cord. There is a How To on how to set up dual monitors on SERG.
- IT staff will be able to assist during SEMCOG's normal business hours.

### Helpful Tools

Staff will need to participate in meetings remotely. SEMCOG has tools in place to accomplish this.

- See above for tools to connect to SEMCOG servers remotely.
- Up to five callers can be merged into a call on our cell phones.
- [Conference calling](#) is available everyone. The host sets up the call using FreeConferenceCall.com and sends call connection information to participants via email, text, etc.
- [GoToWebinar](#) is available for staff to host groups over 25 people. Prior to setting up your meeting, go to the Virtual GoToWebinar calendar within the Outlook and reserve your time, as there is only one license. If you skip this step you risk having two groups expecting to have an online meeting at the same time. If you need assistance using this tool, beyond what you see in the How To, contact our agency experts: Trevor Layton, Rachel Yamakura, Rachael Barlock, and Katie Grantham
- [GoToMeeting](#) is available for staff to host groups of fewer than 25 invitees. Prior to setting up your meeting, go to the Virtual GoToMeeting calendar within the Outlook and reserve your time, as there is only one license. If you skip this step you risk having two groups expecting to have an online meeting at the same time. Credentials are the same as for GoToWebinar.
- Free GoToMeeting is available for anyone to create an account using their SEMCOG email and host a meeting. There is a limit of 3 attendees, plus the presenter.
- Free [Zoom](#) videoconferencing allows 100 attendees, and meetings up to 40 minutes. As the host, create your own username and password. The Help Feature contains FAQs.
- Paid Zoom will be available soon. We will obtain 4 paid zoom licenses that allow up to 100 attendees and up to 24 hour meetings. Prior to setting up your meeting, go to a Virtual Zoom calendar (1-4) within Outlook and reserve your time, as sessions are limited to one meeting per license at one time. A How To Use Zoom will be posted on SERG.
- Slack is available for internal teams. Check out the [How To Use Slack](#) document.
- There are other free online tools you may already use, such as Skype, Google Hangouts, which you may be able to arrange with the group you need to meet with.

## Troubleshooting Tips for browsers

Basic browser troubleshooting steps to take if you are having difficulties viewing or loading a page on your personal, home device.

1. Check that your [browser is up to date](#). You should be using the latest available version of operating system.
2. Open or log into your site in a different browser. If you don't have the same problem, the issue is likely isolated to the first browser.
3. Try opening your site in a private or incognito window, this way potential interference from browser extensions and add-ons are turned off.
4. [Clear your cache](#).
5. If you have another device available try opening or logging into your site with them. If you don't have the same issue then it's likely your first device causing the issue.

If you've tried all of the steps above and are still experiencing difficulty, please reach out to the SEMCOG IT Staff.