

# Usage Guidelines: Google Chat

## Purpose of these Usage Guidelines

These usage guidelines are meant to:

- accompany user training information and FAQs for each tool;
- guide employees in best practices for using the tool;

## Introduction: Moving to an Environment of Collaboration

With the move to Google Apps for Work, the City of Edmonton (CoE) is embracing new ways for employees to collaborate with each other and with external clients, and supports our Leadership Principles such as "[We are one City](#)". Google features and tools now available to City employees translates to ample opportunities to better collaborate and integrate with each other, be it between colleagues or across branches and departments.

## Welcome to Google Chat

Google Chat is a communication tool that lets you send and receive instant messages to individuals or a group of people. Chat can be initiated from most of the Google apps such as Gmail, Documents, Spreadsheets, Presentations, etc. In addition to instant messaging, you can also hold audio and video chats and calls.

## What does Google Chat replace or add?

Google Chat complements existing messaging tools such as Microsoft Office Communicator by providing a free and easy method of day-to-day instant communication between employees.

## How to use Google Chat:

To initiate a chat session through Gmail, simply [invite someone to chat](#), and [start a chat](#). Detailed [step-by-step instructions](#) and a [video tutorial](#) are also available for your reference. In addition chat functionality is also available to the online collaborators of any Google Drive App. [Learn more](#) about chatting in Google Drive.

## Key Chat settings:

- **Availability:** Google Chat allows users to set their availability to indicate how they appear on other's contact lists. When you set your status a colour-coded icon will appear next to your name. The different options are "available" (green icon), "busy" (red icon), "idle" (yellow icon) and "invisible" (grey icon). In addition, you can also set a custom status message; for example: "Out for lunch".
- **More:** In this drop-down menu, a number of important features are housed, including:
  - **Go Off the Record:** With this feature, users can choose whether to have their chat records/logs saved within their Gmail account. Chat logging has been completely disabled in the CoE domain - so all chats are off the record even when you don't pick the option to "Go off the record".
  - **Block a User:** This allows you to block someone in your Chat list, By clicking this feature, you will disable any incoming chat from that user.
- **Add Voice/Video Chat:** In your chat window, you will notice the options to add a voice- or

video-based chat. These capabilities will be formally rolled out at a future time. While some users will be able to use these features (called Hangouts), others, depending on their computer configuration and profile space, may not yet be able to use this functionality. If you encounter issues, please understand that voice and video will be addressed at a future date; until then support will be provided only on a best-effort basis.

### **Best Practices:**

Please refer to the following guidelines when using Google Chat:

- Chatting is a form of communication and collaboration and should follow the best practices for email and other tools used within the CoE environment.
- Set your status as per your availability and interact with others as per theirs.
- Chat logging feature has been disabled, within the City of Edmonton. Please disregard any menu options referring to “off-record” within a chat session. Chat is an informal mode of communication - that lacks any logging and tracking capability therefore it **must** not be utilized for communicating formal decisions and requests.

### **Benefits :**

- **Multitasking** - Google Chat is seamlessly integrated within the Gmail interface, making it possible to truly multitask.
- **Accessibility** - A Chat session can be initiated in a number of ways, whether it's from Gmail, a document, or a presentation.
- **Collaboration** - The tool gives users multiple mediums like text, voice and video to exchange ideas, notes and comments.

### **User Etiquette**

User etiquette is an important consideration when participating in voice/video Chat at the City of Edmonton. Please consult the City of Edmonton Employee [Code of Conduct](#) for information about appropriate behaviour. If using video chat \* Employees should appear professional and courteous at all times. Proper posture, attire and camera positioning is recommended.

### **Guiding Policies and Principles for Use**

Communication technology is provided to employees for the purpose of conducting City business activities. Employees must use discretion and act responsibly and professionally when using communication technology, and must take steps to ensure the security of City information. Use of all City of Edmonton communications technology, including Chat, is subject to the [Acceptable Use of Communication Technology Directive](#) and [Employee Code of Conduct](#).

When using voice/video chat in a public space, wear headphones and do not disclose confidential information. Be mindful of your surroundings and ensure that your conversation is not visible or heard by others.

Recording and logging of Chat within the City of Edmonton domain has been disabled; however be aware that external participants may have the ability to record it from their device. Exercise discretion when participating in chat sessions with external agencies to ensure the privacy and security of City information.