

OA FOOT STEPS VIRTUAL INTERGROUP

Suggested Guidelines for Dealing with Zoom-Bombings

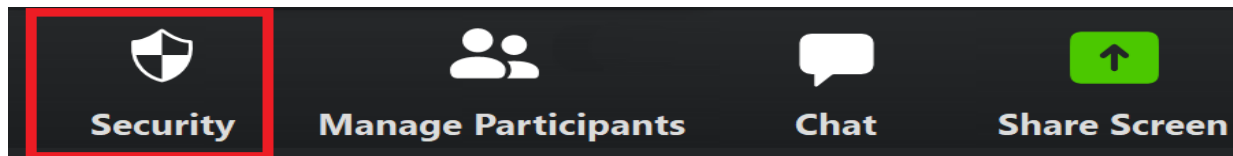
When the zoom-bombers hit, they hit hard! At a recovery meeting, it can feel like a violation of our vulnerable selves. It is important to have strategies in place to mitigate the danger, and to safeguard the interest of all those in attendance. This document has been designed to help navigate these emergency situations, and to lock it down as quickly as possible to ensure our meetings remain safe and secure, no matter what the zoom-bombers might throw at us!

WHAT ARE ZOOM-BOMBERS & HOW DO THEY WORK? These are normally a swarm of people that come in and hijack a meeting with undesirable behaviours, such as: pornographic words and images, racial slurs, abusive comments, and insults. We have determined that internet 'Zoom-Bombers' usually send a few scouts (2-5) ahead into a meeting. They come in to see what security features are in place. They will test the system to see what is available to them. If the meeting is not protected, they will then call in their friends. Anywhere from 10-15 more zoom-bombers can then storm in all at once to cause as much havoc as they possibly can.

We have also ascertained that if we take away their 'toys', or their ability to cause disruptions at a meeting, they get bored and move along. Once our meetings were locked down and monitored, the attacks seemed to dissipate right away.

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION IF YOUR MEETING IS UNDER ATTACK!

1. Click on Security Shield at the bottom of screen and **Suspend Participant Activities**
2. Pause for a few moments and watch the attendee numbers lower as Zoom-Bombers get bored and leave! {Breathe}
3. Scan screen for suspicious participants and private message cohost with name[s] to monitor. {Breathe}
4. Enable chat (under Security shield) and type a short greeting to members. {Breathe}
5. Monitor the chat for leftover intruders. Look for insults or slurs. {Breathe}
6. When you are comfortable, Start Video (under Security shield) and turn on your video to signal others to do so. {Breathe}
7. Keep other security features enabled. {Breathe}
8. Resume meeting. {Breathe}



HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR ZOOM-BOMBING

If your meetings have come under repeated attacks, we recommend that the leaders of the meeting temporarily implement some of the following measures to protect your members:

1. Gather 4-5 cohosts who are familiar with the security features, including the **“Suspend Participant Activities”** button (the shield control button at the bottom of the zoom window).
2. Ask your co-hosts to arrive 10-15 minutes early to assign tasks, and ensure that everyone is familiar with the **“Suspend Participant Activities”** feature.
3. Co-hosts are there for security only – Don’t use them as readers, or for other activities during the meeting.

SECURITY SHIELD: If the meeting is under threat, it is recommended that your meeting sets up all of the following security features located under security shield **before the meeting begins**, until such a time, the threat lessens.

1. Leave the **“Lock Meeting”** feature unchecked.
2. Check **“Enable Waiting Room”** {if it is not already}
3. Leave **“Hide Profile Pictures”** unchecked
4. Uncheck **“Share Screen”** {if it is not already}
5. Uncheck the **“Chat”** feature
6. Uncheck the **“Rename Themselves”** feature
7. Uncheck the **“Unmute Themselves”** feature
8. Leave the **“Start Video”** checked, to view members as they come in
9. **Remove Participant – DO NOT USE – if anything, place them in the Waiting Room only.**
10. **Suspend Participant Activity**

SUSPEND PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES: If you are the host (or co-host) of the meeting and suspect a meeting is being bombed, go to the Security shield at the bottom of the screen. Immediate action can be taken using the fail-safe **“Suspend Participant Activities”**. This will immediately suspend all active video and audio. Everyone is still in the room, but nothing can happen. The hosts and cohosts can still use the chat and the audio features to reassure members and ask for their patience for the meeting to resume.

COHOST I: Waiting Room Duties

- Pay attention to the waiting room entrance room as it starts to fill up.
- Look at their names first. Bombers often use slurs in their name, insulting terms, or weird spellings. You may have to make a judgment call, but notice: Do they have a real name, phone number, picture, where they’re from, last initial? (These are good signs.) If in doubt, check with another co-host. We have members from around the world, so often we do see a wide assortment of names. An unusual name does not mean they are a zoom-bomber.
- Make all entrants wait 10-15 seconds or so. Real OA members will be patient and wait. Bombers usually won’t wait.
- Bring them in, one by one, and watch them as they enter. Do they turn their video on? Are they going to disrupt the meeting? As you bring them into the meeting room, hover your mouse over the three dots to be ready to remove them to the waiting room, or be on the ready to utilize the **Suspend Participant Activity** feature if the need should arise.
- Co-hosts should keep scanning to look for issues and unusual activities throughout the meeting on camera. Bombers will often test the meeting to see what they can get away with, before they call in their buddies.

COHOST II: Un-Muting and Muting Duties

- When the “**Unmute Themselves**” feature has been disabled, only Co-hosts and Hosts can mute or unmute themselves.
- Members are required to raise their hands if they wish to speak or participate in the meeting.
- Keep a close eye on the participant list to see who has raised their hands, and also on the video, as some members may not know how to use the raise hand feature but may be trying to get your attention to be able to share.
- Keep hovering your mouse over the member’s microphone after they have been unmuted to share, especially for anyone that you do not recognize, in case you need to remove them to the waiting room, immediately.

COHOST III: Chat Box Host

- The Chat Box cohost will screen share the following notice before the meeting starts, to keep everyone informed regarding the security issues.
- This cohost will scan the chat box to make sure there is nothing inappropriate going on throughout the whole meeting. Bombers will often test the meeting to see what they can get away with, before they call in their buddies.

DUE TO REPEATED ZOOM INTRUDERS THE FOLLOW PROTOCOLS HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY INSTATED:

ROOM SECURITY: *Due to the extreme number of repeated attacks during OA Zoom meetings, we are currently taking higher security precautions to ensure the safety of our members. During our meeting today, we have disabled chat and the ability to unmute. Please use the “**Raise Hand**” feature if you would like to share or offer service during the meeting. When it is your turn to share, you will be asked to un-mute yourself. When a member has been unmuted, if a host or co-host hears anything inappropriate, the meeting will be immediately suspended until the intruder has been removed. Please note that these measures will remain in place until the current, high threat of intruders has lessened.*

ROOM SECURITY: *During a meeting suspension, the entire meeting will freeze. All video capabilities will be disabled. The chat and the ability to unmute yourself will remain disabled. The meeting will be locked, and no one will be allowed to enter the room for the duration of the meeting. It is recommended that we do not reopen the meeting again, until the end of the meeting, although some of the features may be re-started once the threat has passed.*

ROOM SECURITY: *Similar safety measures like the ones we are implementing at this meeting would be taken if we were face-to-face as well. We must feel safe. You will be/are able to leave the meeting at any point if you choose. You are not locked in the meeting. If you decide to stay, please be patient as the host and co-hosts secure the meeting. The host or co-host may or may not communicate with everyone in the chat box or by speaker, depending on the situation. Please take this time to breathe and remain calm.*

ROOM SECURITY: *The likelihood of an intruder is very high at this time. Zoom attacks can be a traumatic event which could include disturbing audio or visual intrusions. As trusted servants of this meeting, we have taken every precaution to shut down this behavior, to keep everyone safe, but if you are susceptible to trauma you may wish to use another tool of OA besides meetings at this time. Thank you for your patience and understanding.*

- Each time a new member enters the room, paste each paragraph (one by one) of the statement below throughout the meeting to ensure that all those joining late are aware of what is going on. Zoom-Bombers often come into a meeting after it has started. If they see all these measures are in place, they are not likely to stay.

RESUMING THE MEETING: It is recommended that the hosts wait for 5 minutes or so, so that the bombers will leave, after all activities have been suspended. Don't say "we'll be back in five minutes." Because the bombers may decide to stay around. To fill this time, the cohosts might reassure the members that are present, to encourage them to breathe. They can leave messages in chat or speak to the members even while the meeting is in lock down. They might suggest that this time be spent in a quiet meditation. Alternatively, the cohost might lead the Serenity Prayer, or read from one of the daily readers or favourite passage, while the remaining leaders take measures to safeguard the meeting.

After the meeting resumes after the suspension, the hosts can test the waters by encouraging the members to start using the chat feature again, to see if anything happens. If that goes well, then turn the video option on again after that. If warranted, it may be prudent to keep the chat off for the rest of the meeting, and to continue to use the raise hand feature, to unmute when it is their turn to share, like at the start of the meeting.

ENDING THE MEETING: If your room was locked during the meeting, be sure to adjust the settings to unlock it again before leaving, or others will not be able to get into the zoom room after you. To do so, make sure the **"Lock Meeting" is unchecked** in the security shield area.

FINAL NOTES: If appropriate in this situation, allow members to ask questions before starting the meeting, even if it is after the official start time. It is important to communicate openly to allow our members to feel safe.

If your meeting was invaded, after the meeting (and after the intruders are no longer there) encourage members to stay for fellowship to "debrief". It is important for members to talk, reach out and support each other, to help process emotions and to maintain their mental health. It is recommended that members are asked to continue using the raise hand feature to mute/unmute to continue to safeguard this time of fellowship.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Q: How do we differentiate people connecting to the meeting by phone?

A: *Their behavior will be monitored the same way as if they were connecting by desktop computer. Our job is to help people feel safe.*

Q: Should I remove a ZOOM-Bomber from the meeting? Why not remove a person?

A: *It would go against the Traditions of OA. We can too easily make a mistake and end up banning a fellow sufferer from attending a meeting on this platform ever again!*

Q: Do we really need that many Co-hosts?

A: *The more co-hosts the better!! Especially if it is a very large meeting during a time of crisis.*

Q: Will meetings always be like this?

A: *These measures will only need to be in place temporarily until we get past this hurdle. Zoom-Bombers are thrill seekers, they will soon get bored and move on. At least we have an action plan in place that will help thwart their activities so that they might move along sooner rather than later!*

Q: What if I think someone is a zoom-bomber, and I can't message a host to tell them my concern?

A: It depends on what security level we are currently at. If it is a high security level, then the hosts and co-hosts are encouraged to use these procedures to safeguard the meeting. If it is a regular meeting, you should always message the host if anyone ever makes you feel uncomfortable at a meeting **in any way**.

Q: I don't want to be locked in with a Zoom-bomber! How does this help?

A: *If a meeting is locked, no one can come in, but they can leave. That is our aim, to take away the 'fun' for them, so that they choose to leave our meeting in peace!*

Stay Safe!
Together, we Recover!

OA FOOT STEPS
VIRTUAL INTERGROUP #09670

Based upon the transcripts of the Zoom-Bombing Safety Workshop 2021

Presented by Renée H.

Transcribed by Steve S. / Edited by Alix S.