



Town Hall Meeting Format

What is a Town Hall Meeting?

There are several formats in which to conduct a public meeting. A public meeting can be used to communicate information when the level of interest or concern is high and/or there is a large amount of information to be shared. A “town hall” meeting is simply one public meeting format. A town hall meeting, like all public meetings, is open to the general public and can serve small or large groups. It is a more formal format than an open house public meeting and less formal than a public hearing.

Pros

- All attendees receive the same information at the same time
- All participants can hear all questions and comments
- Format can be a good way to share visual aids like graphs and images

Cons

- Information provided can be limited by format and time constraints
- Answers provided likely will not meet the information needs of all attendees
- Format limits participation of audience members who do not want to speak in public, due to a fear of public speaking or a reticence to disagree with a more vocal majority
- Format can be used by some participants to steer a meeting away from the intended meeting topic



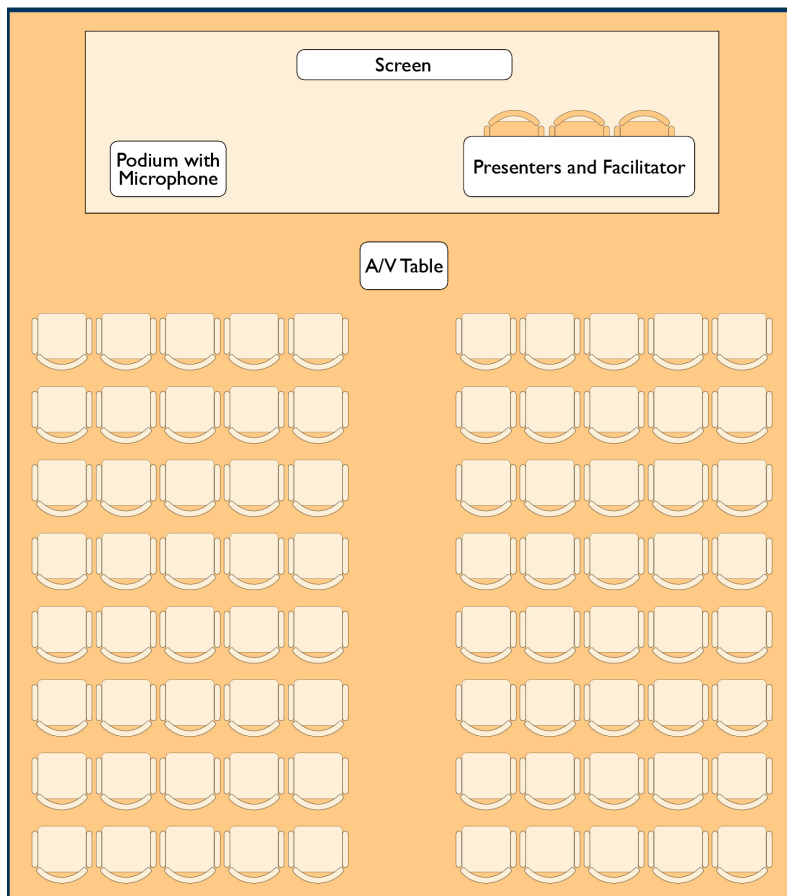


How is the Room Prepared?

Participants are usually seated in rows facing the facilitator and presenter(s), who are at the front of the room. Typically, the meeting starts with a brief presentation followed by a question/comment and response session, led by the facilitator, in which one person can speak at a time. Town hall meetings are usually scheduled for a specific amount of time and follow an agenda. The majority of the time is spent on the question/comment and response session, and questions and comments may be recorded on a flip chart at the front of the room. There is not usually a court reporter present at town hall meetings.



The project team should be prepared with the presentation, agenda, speaking points and a flip chart. In addition, developing a set of key messages and practicing responses to frequently asked or anticipated questions will prepare the team for the question/comment and response session. Responses should be clear and consistent.



Tools Checklist

- Appropriate meeting space with enough chairs for attendees and presenters
- Audio-visual capabilities (i.e., projector, laptop, cords, screen and microphones)
- Presentation
- Flip chart, easel and markers
- Agenda and other handouts

For more information:

CONTACT:

Navy & Marine Corps Force Health Protection Command
 620 John Paul Jones Circle, Suite 1100,
 Portsmouth, VA 23708
usn.hampton-roads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcfhpc-epriskcom@health.mil