

WFNS's Statement of Inclusion

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) strives to offer inclusive physical and virtual spaces where all feel welcome. To this end, we require that all participants of WFNS events and of member-organized events in WFNS spaces (1) refrain from speaking, typing, or behaving in racist, xenophobic, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and/or other discriminatory ways and (2) provide reasonable advanced warning before sharing violent or traumatic subject matter, which always has the potential to distress others.

If any event participant violates this statement of inclusion, WFNS staff, volunteers, and contractors and hosts of member-organized events in WFNS's spaces have the right to ask that participant to leave. WFNS's full Code of Conduct is available from WFNS staff upon request by email.

The basics

WFNS's virtual events & workshops are conducted through the Zoom video-conferencing platform.

Joining a Zoom event does not require a Zoom account: **a one-click link to join the event will be provided to you by email.** If you are missing this email, please contact WFNS staff (communications@writers.ns.ca) as soon as possible before the event's start time. Please note:

- Links to virtual workshops may be sent as little as three or four days before those workshops begin.
- In general, we are able to provide support through email up to 15 minutes after a virtual event has started.

Virtual events are conducted in one of two Zoom formats: 'meeting' or 'webinar.'

- In **meetings**, all participants can—and are encouraged but not required to—broadcast their video & audio. You will have individual control over your camera & mic and the ability to share your screen.
- In **webinars**, a distinction is drawn between 'hosts' & 'speakers' (who can broadcast their video & audio) and 'attendees' (who cannot broadcast either). Used for larger events and presentations (e.g., readings), this format minimizes processor & bandwidth load on attendees' devices, increasing accessibility. Attendees are encouraged to contribute through Zoom's chat, reaction, and Q&A functions. When possible, we also invite attendees to contribute by audio, granting temporary permission to control your mic.

Preparation for a virtual event

If you are a 'meeting' participant or a 'webinar' speaker, please prepare for video & audio broadcast:

- **Set up your device in a quiet room.** Smaller, well-furnished rooms with lower ceilings will best muffle background noise and reduce audio echoes.
- **Have nearby headphones or earphones with a built-in mic.** If disruptive background noises or echoes emerge during a virtual event, switching to headphones/earphones will often quickly resolve the issue.
- **Position your device's camera** (1) at or only slightly above eye level and (2) between you and your main light source. This will ensure your neck is comfortable and your face is evenly lit.
- **Exit unneeded applications, programs, and browser windows.** Zoom's performance can be adversely impacted by processor- and bandwidth-hungry email programs, streaming services, games, file editors, etc.
- **Ask those sharing your internet network to reduce usage** during the event (e.g., avoid downloading large files, streaming media, or gaming online) so that your bandwidth capacity is not strained.

During a virtual event

- **Habitually mute your mic** when not speaking so that others can hear the current speaker clearly. Please avoid eating, rustling papers, or addressing co-habitants (or pets) while your mic is unmuted.
- **Be mindful of your video presence**, which may be broadcasted to all participants even when your mic is muted. You are always welcome to stop broadcasting your video if it may be distracting to others.

General recording practice & justification

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) does not record video or audio of virtual events. This practice encompasses all types of virtual event (workshop, reading, talk, panel, meet-up, or otherwise).

We recognize that video & audio recordings can provide convenience for event attendees with scheduling conflicts or lower-speed internet connections and can improve accessibility for those with auditory, visual, or textual processing barriers.

However, several other considerations make the recording of virtual events inadvisable:

- **Intellectual property:** Event speakers (hosts, instructors, performers, and other contributors) should retain ownership of their intellectual property. Audio & video recordings, however well they are handled administratively, effectively remove speakers' control over how, when, and to whom their ideas are shared.
- **Author compensation & registration fees:** It is ethical to provide an event speaker with additional compensation if a recording of their contribution will be later distributed publicly. WFNS events often require a careful balance among accessible registration fees, reasonable caps on participant number, and adequate speaker compensation. The additional expense of recording would increase registration fees for all.
- **Privacy:** All should feel welcome to participate in WFNS events fully, without concern that the ideas, experiences, and questions they share with a closed group may later be made publicly available.
- **Principles of prior & informed consent:** To record an event upon the request of a single participant (e.g., a writer who will miss one session of a multi-week virtual workshop) would require changing the terms of that event, post hoc, for all other participants. Additionally, it is logistically and ethically challenging to request unanimous consent to record while also providing each participant with the right to withhold consent (either explicitly or by not responding to the request) and with assurance that their response or non-response will be kept anonymous.

Exceptions to general recording practice

WFNS makes two exceptions to the above general practice:

1. **If a WFNS virtual event is intended for WFNS staff, board members, and/or volunteers only,** WFNS may determine that portions or the entirety of the event will be recorded for later access by staff, board members, and/or volunteers only. In this case, the recording will be made available for a period of one week, after which it will be deleted.
2. **If a WFNS virtual event is presented in partnership with another organization,** that partnering organization may ask WFNS to record the event. In this case, the event will be conducted via Zoom as a 'webinar,' meaning that attendees (all those other than event hosts & speakers) will not be permitted to broadcast video & audio and will, therefore, not be recorded in these formats; however, attendees' text-based contributions through Zoom's chat or Q&A features may be read aloud during the event, effectively entering their text into any audio recording. Before the event, the partner organization who requested the recording must describe its purpose and use to all speakers and obtain their consent. After the event, a download link will be emailed to that partner organization, which will have one week to download any recording files, after which they will be deleted.

In the case of any recording of a virtual event, all hosts, speakers, participants, and attendees will be notified through Zoom's user interface that a recording is in progress.