

NPMA GRASSROOTS RESOURCES

How to Schedule a Hill Meeting

When you come to DC, it can be daunting to figure out how to set up a meeting with your members of Congress and/or their staff. This guide will walk you through how to find your members and request a meeting.

How to Find Your Members of Congress:

You can go [here for House members](#) and [here for Senators](#) and plug your address in. You will have one Representative (House Member) and two Senators.

How to Contact your Members of Congress:

You can go to your member's website by either clicking the links above or googling their name and "DC office"; official websites will end in either house.gov or senate.gov. Once you have reached the official website, look for "DC office contact information" often found under a "Contact Me" or "Office Locations" tab or at the bottom of the website. Now you will need to decide whether to pursue a visit with the member or with a staffer. It is more difficult and time consuming to get a visit with a member because it requires you to go through a scheduler; however, be sure you to mention you are a constituent to increase your chances of a meeting. Be aware that the member may not be available, and scheduling is much easier with a staffer.

Important Items Before You Request:

- Make sure you identify yourself as a constituent! This makes your visit more of a priority than a non-constituent. You will often be asked to provide your town or full address to show you reside in the district.
- Staff versus Member visits: Staff is easier and quicker to schedule and will give you more time for detailed discussion. You will likely meet with a Legislative Assistants (LA) who has a portfolio of issues. Member visits are harder to get and will take much more time to schedule. You may not know if the meeting is confirmed until a week or even a few days before.

To Request A Visit With A Member Directly:

Online: Congressional websites will generally have a "Request a Meeting" and/or "Scheduling Request" tab. These tabs will either take you to the email of the scheduler or an online form.

- Fill out the online form with all the requested information or send an email to the scheduler with your name, address, your availability, and what you'd like to discuss.

Calling the Office: You can ring the main line, using the DC number from their website, and a receptionist will pick up.

- Explain that you are a constituent and would like to schedule a meeting with the member on X day(s). If it's short notice they may bump you directly to the scheduler; if it's further out and there is an online form, they may request you fill out on the website or send an email.

Curious where your request stands and it's more than a week out? You can call the office or email the scheduler two weeks after your request to check on your meeting status.

Haven't heard an answer and it's a week or less out? Call the office and explain you have submitted a request and would like to know where it stands, as you will be visiting on X date. The receptionist will transfer you to the scheduler/scheduler's voicemail or request that you email the scheduler.

Please note: Bothering the scheduler repeatedly when it's more than a week or two out will not help your case. The scheduler holds a great deal of power and you want to be respectful of the massive numbers of constituent requests they are processing.

To Request A Visit With A Congressional Staffer:

You will first need to identify which staffer you should request a meeting with. The easiest way to figure out who to talk to is to call the office using the DC number identified on the member's website. A receptionist will answer:

"My name is (insert) and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I would like to schedule a meeting with whoever in the office handles (insert issue)."

They will likely have to check on who this is and will generally offer you their voicemail or an email address to directly send the request; very occasionally will your call be transferred immediately.

- Need to leave a voicemail for the staffer? Ensure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about, when you'll be in town and how to contact you.
 - EX: My name is (insert); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I would like to schedule a meeting when I'm in town on (date) about (insert issue). You can reach me at (phone number) and (email). I will also send you an email so you have all of my information. Look forward to talking with you.
 - You can then send an email with the information below.
- Need to email the staffer? Most staffers prefer email over VM. Make sure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about and when you'll be in town. House emails always follow the same format [firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov]
 - EX: Dear (staffer name), My name is (insert); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I would like to schedule a meeting when I'm in town on (date) about (insert issue). I'm available (morning/afternoon/specific time block of hours) if you have some time in your schedule then. I hope to meet with you soon, and you can reach me at (phone number) and (email) if you have any questions.
- Get transferred to speak with the staffer directly? Ensure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about, when you'll be in town and how to contact you.
 - EX: Hello (staffer name), My name is (insert); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I called to hopefully schedule a meeting when I'm in town on (date) about (insert issue). I'm available (morning/afternoon/specific time block of hours) if you have some time in your schedule then?
 - Offer to email them the information at the end of the conversation: this is a good method of accountability for both of you, to confirm you heard correctly on the time and location.

Legislative Day: Every year, NPMA members visit DC to walk the Hill to educate Congress on our issues. NPMA will make all Senate appointments but NPMA members are responsible for making their own House Appointments.

Having trouble requesting a meeting? Contact NPMA VP of Public Policy Ashley Amidon at aamidon@pestworld.gov or 703-999-8463