

Capitol Hill FAQ

Whether you are new to Hill visits or have come to visit with your representatives for years, NPMA is committed to helping you navigate Capitol Hill like a pro. Below are some of the frequently asked questions we hear every year. NPMA also has specific guides on [How to Request a Hill Meeting](#) and [How to Conduct a Hill meeting](#). Have a question not covered below? You can contact Ashley Amidon VP of Public Policy at aamidon@pestworld.org.

What do I wear? Business attire is recommended. Wear comfortable shoes, as you will be walking long distances on marble floor and may have standing meetings in a hallway.

What is the security like getting on to the Hill? You will go through metal detectors to enter any federal building. You will place any bags, coats etc on the scanner and weapons of any kind (including pocketknives) are absolutely not allowed. You will only need to remove your shoes if asked (generally only women's heels that have a metal spike in the heel). You may bring food or drink in with you. During peak fly-in times or when contentious hearings are occurring, security lines can stretch around a building, so arrive at least 30 minutes before your first appointment.

How do I get to the Hill? Parking is extremely limited so plan on catching a cab or Uber/Lyft.

What should I bring with me? NPMA staff will provide you with copies of our one pagers. You should bring business cards to give to staff. It is recommended you bring water, and if your schedule is very busy, a snack.

Where will I eat? Can I leave the building for food? Both House and Senate have cafeterias, as well as smaller shops to grab snacks. On the House side the main cafeteria is in the Longworth building, and on the Senate side the cafeteria is in Dirksen. If you have enough time, there are several restaurants on First St. SE outside of the Cannon House building, or you can walk to Union Station on the Senate side. You will need to go back through security every time you need to re-enter a federal building.

How long will a meeting go? Plan in 30-minute blocks; meetings average about 20 minutes.

How do I find the office for my Member of Congress? When you enter any Congressional office building, there will be a list of all members and their office numbers by the elevators. Once you have the room number, you can take the stairs or elevators to the correct floor (keeping in mind that during session, some elevators will have an electronic sign above them indicating they are reserved for members only). On every corner will be signs that indicate which way to turn for which office numbers.

What are the buildings I will be in? Meetings will be in Cannon, Longworth or Rayburn (House) or Dirksen, Hart or Russell (Senate). Very rarely you may have a meeting in the Ford or O'Neill buildings (both House). Members in leadership (like Speaker or Whip) maintain two offices – their personal office will be in the above-mentioned buildings, and their leadership office in the Capitol. You will not be able to enter the Capitol without either an appointment or a member/staff guide.

How do I navigate between meetings? Please note, there is no way to go directly from the House to the Senate building without walking through security again. House Buildings (Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn) all connect, as do Senate buildings (Dirksen, Hart and Russell). Ford and O'Neill are approximately a 10 minute walk from the other House buildings, and you will need to re-enter security.

Can I schedule meetings back to back? You should not schedule meetings back to back unless they are on the same floor of the same building. Should a meeting run the whole 30 minutes, you will need time to get to another floor and possibly another building. It is recommended to book meetings on the hour or half hour and allow a 30 minute break in between. For example, if a meeting runs from 10 to 10:30 AM, you would want to book the next meeting at 11 AM. If you need to go from House to Senate or vice versa, you will need to allow at least 30 minutes, as you will need to re-enter security.

I'm running late for my meeting or cannot attend. If you organized the meeting, please notify the office as soon as possible. If NPMA organized the meeting, let Ashley Amidon (aamidon@pestworld.org) know. Please be respectful of the time staff and Members are setting aside for you; if you can make a meeting please do so. A no-show reflects badly on you and on NPMA.

I don't have an appointment - can I just stop by? It is possible to stop by, but keep in mind that you are interrupting a staffer's day, and they may not be available to meet with you. Dropping by is done but is considered a little rude, so please attempt to request a meeting if at all possible.

Why am I not meeting with my Member? Members get thousands of constituents requests every year and cannot physically meet with everyone who requests it. In addition to meetings, they are also required in committee hearings, which are generally scheduled to begin at 10 AM and 2 PM. It is important to get a request in as early as possible; for more information on how to request a meeting please see the NPMA Resource.

I want to give a contribution to my member when I meet them. Is that ok? If you are meeting with a Member of Congress or their staff in a federal building (like any of the House or Senate office buildings), you cannot make a political contribution to them in person. If you meet with them in a non-federal building (like a restaurant or one of the political clubs near the Hill) you can give a check. However, it is strongly

recommended that you separate any policy discussions from any fundraising discussions; you don't want to put the Member in a position of mixing money and votes. Please do not tie contributions to voting; for example, saying "If you support this I will write you a check" should not be done. If you have questions on how and when to give, you can contact Ashley Amidon at aamidon@pestworld.org.

What do the titles of staffers mean?

A member of Congress (Senator in the Senate and Representative in the House) is supported by paid staff. The Chief of Staff (or Chief or CoS) is directly below the Member. Under the Chief is the Press Secretary (supported by any other communications staff), Scheduler (who is responsible for keeping the Member's schedule) and the Legislative Director (or LD, who oversees all of the policy work done in the office.) The LD oversees the Legislative Assistants (or LA, who each have policy portfolios over specific sets of issues) who are in turn paired with a Legislative Correspondent (or LC, who deal with all constituent correspondence in those specific policy areas). Special Assistants or Fellows may also be attached to an office and are often seconded by the military or other organization for a set amount of time on a specific policy area.

