



2023 Hill Meeting Day: DOs and DON'Ts

Before the meeting, DO:

- Confer with your group and assign roles for each meeting. Make sure you know who is taking the lead, who is going to talk about which issue, and that you are all on the same page.
- Arrive early. You have to go through a metal detector and security check to get into the House and Senate Office buildings, and sometimes the lines can be long.

During the meeting, DO:

- Introduce yourself and make clear how your work affects their constituents.
- Offer yourself as a resource. Invite the staff or Member to visit when they are in the area.
- Be flexible. Schedules on the Hill are always changing. Your meeting may be pushed back or cut short, you could be meeting in a hallway, or walking and talking. This isn't a reflection of how important you are to the office – it's just the reality of meetings on Capitol Hill.
- Stick to the script. We have chosen our legislative priorities carefully and you will be most effective if everyone is unified. Don't raise other issues or share additional material.
- Leave your business card, and thank the Member and staff for their time.

During the meeting, DON'T:

- Be disappointed if you are meeting with staff instead of a Senator or Congressman. Staff are the decision-makers, and their bosses will look to them for recommendations.
- Assume the person you are meeting with knows anything about the legislation or will recognize it by bill number.
- Multitask during the meeting. That includes looking at another device, checking email, sending a text, or taking a phone call.
- Talk over each other, or talk over the Member or staffer.
- Make things up. If you don't know the answer to a question, say, "I don't know, but let me get back to you."
- Talk about politics or other polarizing issues. Avoid talking about campaigns, elections, political contributions, your past political support of the Senator or Congressman, your opinion of the President, etc.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I get the meeting started?

A: Introduce yourself to the legislator or their staff members. Thank them for the time and tell them who you are, what you do, and where you live or work. Then you can say, “I’m here today to talk to you about....” and launch right into your talking points.

Q: Will I have a leave-behind packet for each office?

A: No. The majority of Hill staffers nowadays prefer electronic documents rather than paper copies. The staff will have received the Requests to Congress via email ahead of time. If the staffer can’t find the email, let him or her know that the documents are also attached to the email invitation the staffer received from EMSontheHill@wswdc.com confirming the meeting.

Q: What if there is a disagreement over an issue?

A: If the Member or staffer disagrees with you, respond politely, but do not become overly argumentative. Ask if there is additional information that would help them understand your position. Always try to end the conversation on a positive note, even if you have to agree to disagree.

Q: If I am running late for a scheduled meeting, what should I do?

A: If you know you are going to be more than 10 minutes late, contact the office directly. The phone number for each office is on your schedule.

Q: If one of my congressional leaders says that he/she will support one of the bills, what should I do?

A: Please contact Kim at Kim.Krenik@naemt.org and let her know.

Q: Do I have to go through security at every office building?

A: The House offices are connected to each other underground, so you can travel between the House office buildings without going back outside. The Senate office buildings are also connected to each other underground, so you can travel between Senate office buildings without going back outside. If you have to go from the House to the Senate or vice versa, you will have to go outside and go through security again.

Q: Where do I eat?

A: Take a break if you have time between meetings to grab something to eat. You can bring small items in your purse or bag, or there are vending machines in all the office buildings, as well as the following eateries:

- On the House side: Rayburn café (B-357) or Longworth café (B-223)
- On the Senate side: Dirksen/Hart Senate Chef (ground level) or Dirksen Cafeteria (basement level)

Other questions? Contact WSW’s EMSHD help desk at 202-589-0800.