

Highway Construction Materials Group

How to Give an Effective Facility Tour

A tour of your company's operations is one of the most effective ways you can get to know your Members of Congress, while at the same time educating them about important issues facing the industry. Below are some tips to help you make the most of a visit by your legislators.

Scheduling a Visit. Put your invitation in writing. Follow-up with the legislator's appointment secretary. Invite your legislator well in advance at a time when he/she is expected to be in the district/state. (The weeks of Memorial Day or Independence Day, or the month-long August recess, are good-weather times when legislators will generally be in town). Be flexible and cognizant of busy schedules. Be willing to provide local transportation for the legislator, if necessary. Advise the appointment secretary that the legislator should dress in comfortable clothes. Contact your association's government affairs department if you run into roadblocks.

Good Housekeeping. Follow general good housekeeping procedures to impress your legislator and make his/her visit more pleasurable. Make sure you sweep or hose down the yard to control dust, wash equipment, and properly dispose of waste that cannot be recycled or reused.

Regulatory Compliance. Make sure that your operations are in compliance with federal regulations...especially safety and environmental regulations!

Competent Spokesperson. Ensure that the person giving the tour is personable and knowledgeable about the company's history, operations and activities.

Toot Your Own Horn. Explain innovative compliance techniques or equipment in which you have invested. Point out where you have gone above and beyond what is required. Discuss good safety records, community relations activities, or awards/recognition your company has received. Prepare a written summary of the impact your company has on the district/state (including number of people employed, amount of production, etc.).

Use Examples. When discussing legislative and regulatory issues with your legislator, use specific examples to demonstrate how your operations could be affected.

Publicity. Have a photographer take pictures while the legislator is visiting. Consider inviting local media. Be sure to coordinate with the legislator's press secretary on any media arrangements.

Follow-up. Send a thank you letter to the legislator for visiting your plant. Include a small memento (value of \$10 or less) of the visit...such as a photograph, company or bumper sticker. Continue to cultivate your relationship by visiting or calling your legislator periodically. Consider working on your legislator's next campaign or making a financial contribution to his/her re-election efforts.

Tell your association! Let us know you had a legislator visit so we can also follow-up. Send us a photograph so it can be printed in a future issue of an association publication.