

Guide to Virtual Meetings with Members of Congress

Updated: October 30, 2023

Scheduling Tips

- Submit a scheduling request to your lawmaker's office through one of the following methods:
 - Lawmaker's website (most common);
 - Email to DC or district scheduler (NDA can provide you with this information); and
 - Call the DC or district office and ask for their preferred method for receiving scheduling requests.
- Information to include in your request:
 - A flexible range of dates that you are available to meet with your lawmaker virtually;
 - Relevant background on you and your company; and
 - Brief description of what you hope to accomplish during the tour and why it will be beneficial to the lawmaker.
- If you do not hear back from the lawmaker's office within a week of submitting the request, be sure to follow up with a call or email.
- Be willing to meet with staff if the Member of Congress is unavailable.

How to Prepare

- **Virtual meeting platform access.** Before you request a virtual meeting with your lawmaker's office, ensure you have access to a virtual meeting platform (i.e. Zoom, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Teams, etc.) and are comfortable navigating it.
- **Ask office about their preferred platform.** Once a meeting is confirmed, ask the lawmaker's staff which virtual meeting platform works best for their office. Most congressional offices prefer using Zoom but some Senate offices prohibit Zoom and will require an alternative platform.
- **Share virtual meeting link.** Prior to the meeting, make sure you and your lawmaker's office both have access to the virtual meeting link and that it is operable.
- **Select a quiet space for meeting.** When virtually meeting with your lawmaker, select a space at your home or office that has minimal visual and noise distractions. Try to pick a backdrop that is free from glare.
- **Give offices relevant information in advance.** Since the meeting will be virtual, email their office any relevant information and meeting materials in advance.

Tips for Having a Successful Meeting

- **Be prepared.** Members of Congress respond best when constituents come prepared to the meeting. Constituents who present thoughtful arguments, sound data and relevant personal stories are the ones congressional offices remember.
- **Tell a personal story.** Members of Congress are always seeking personal anecdotes about the impact Washington is having on their constituents. Be sure to make the connection as to how federal policies are affecting your company, fellow demolition contractors and you community as a whole.
- **Use numbers if possible.** It's helpful to quantify the affects policies in Washington are having back in the district and state. Where possible, discuss the amount of jobs, number of constituents or economic impact a policy is having or could have on the community.
- **Be respectful.** Confronting or arguing with an elected is not an effective method of persuasion. Congressional offices are more likely to respond favorably to you if you are friendly and respectful of their time.
- **Group Meetings.** Your elected representatives are more likely to pay attention to NDA's issues if the constituents they meet with are well-prepared. For groups meeting with lawmakers, it is important that you agree on who will open and close the meeting, as well as any questions you might ask.
- **Engage the staff.** Typically Members of Congress have someone from their staff attend the meeting. Talk to them about the issues you would like to discuss prior to the meeting, engage them during the meeting and be sure you have their contact information.
- **Ask for firm commitments.** It is important to make "the ask" and seek commitment from elected officials.
- **Be sure to follow-up.** Politely following up is more likely to persuade lawmakers. Congressional staff are often over-worked and respond best to individuals who follow up their meeting with a phone call or email.
- **Take Photos.** Make you take photos of the meeting.



- **Debrief NDA staff if necessary.** Should an office request further clarification on NDA’s policy positions or express a willingness to work with NDA on a particular issue, please contact NDA’s government affairs staff with this information.

Thank you for your continuing work on behalf of the demolition industry. For any questions, please contact NDA’s Director of Government Affairs Alex McIntyre at amcintyre@demolitionassociation.org or 202-367-2346.