



TOUR TOOLKIT:

# Hosting a Member of Congress at Your Terminal



# HOSTING A TOUR OF YOUR TERMINAL

Hometown “in district” engagement is a vital way to provide a first-hand account and illustrate how you work, day in and day out, in the trucking industry. Tours allow your elected officials to see the direct impact of your company on the economy, local community and how federal policies are impacting the growth and success of your business. Members of Congress are precisely interested in the thoughts and opinions of their constituents back home.

Showcasing your business firsthand is a great way to build working relationships for your company and increase support for the trucking industry. Likewise, these relationships enable you, your state association, and ATA to build on the story of trucking on Capitol Hill. Staying engaged with your elected officials and regular follow-up can make for a mutually beneficial relationship between you and your member of Congress!

*This template can also be used for local and state legislators.*

Legislators enjoy getting the opportunity to visit constituents at their place of work. Hosting is a great way to educate them about issues. During recess periods, members of Congress are in their home states to hold events, meet with constituents and work out of their local offices. It is during this time that you have an extraordinary opportunity to reach out to your legislators and educate them about issues that affect our industry. Following are some tips on how to orchestrate a memorable visit.

**It's as easy as 1-2-3-4.**

## 1 Invite

- **Choose Timeframe:** Pick a range of dates to accommodate busy legislative schedules, location and topic for your event. The length of a recess can vary from a few days, a week, or over a month. Consult the current recess calendar for exact dates. Don't host the tour in your off season or when everyone is out of the office or terminal. Find the best time for the most amount of people to be present.
- **Reach Out to ATA Staff:** First, let your State Trucking Association Executive know you are interested in hosting a terminal visit. They may already have an existing relationship with the member of Congress and can help with the request. Next, reach out to the ATA Office of Legislative Affairs (POC: Abbey Schroeder, Grassroots Program Manager, [aschroeder@trucking.org](mailto:aschroeder@trucking.org)). ATA Staff in D.C. has great relationships on the Hill and want to help support your efforts. We can provide you with the best POC for your legislator and can help with your request.
- **Submit Tour Request:** Effective scheduling is the most important aspect of your event. We suggest emailing the invitation to the office scheduler and ccing ATA staff so they can follow up with their connection in the office. If you have previously met with a relevant member of the legislative team, we also recommend sending the same invitation to them, letting them know that you have already made a request with the scheduler. Be sure to call to follow up.



## 2 Before the Tour

- **Devil is in the Details:** Share clear logistic information with the Congressional office, including what to wear and not wear (close-toed shoes, rubber sole bottom shoes, etc), an address a GPS understands, where to park, and a name and cell phone number of who will be greeting them.
- **Arrange for Photos:** It's important to designate someone on your team to take photos of the event with permission from the legislator's office. Make sure they know where, when and of what within your operation they are allowed to take photos.
- **Create a Run of Show:** Work with ATA staff on the planning logistics of the visit. Ask the scheduler how long the Member will be onsite, times may range from 30 minutes to 2 hours, which significantly changes the flow.
- **Determine Roles:** Who in your organization will be involved with planning and executing the meeting and tour? Hold prep meetings to assign duties and touch base on status.
- **Choose the Tour Guide with Care:** The guide should be articulate, knowledgeable about the operation as well as issues that concern the company and know by name everyone the legislator is likely to meet. We recommend having 1 Rockstar and 2-3 staff members to help make things run smoothly and answer questions.

### Notify All Company Team Members about the Upcoming Visit:

- **Share in Memo:** Who is coming, date and time, purpose of the visit. Explain how this is a visit for official, not political business.

### The Week of the Tour, Ask Employees To:

- Keep work areas neat and tidy
- Wear company gear with logos
- If employees want to say anything during the tour, who should they contact

- **“Do’s and Don’ts”:** See “Do’s and Don’ts” document for hosting an elected official.

- **Prepare Key Equipment and Safety Gear Ahead of Time:** Ensure that equipment is operating to provide a clear demonstration. Provide safety gear to all participants when necessary.

- **Review Industry Priority Issues:** Check out the latest on the issues that your company is most concerned about and their impact on our state. To create a strong narrative, focus on a couple topics to consistently touch on throughout the tour. ATA staff is more than happy to help you prepare.



**Map Out the Tour:** Develop a tour route and schedule that illustrates the objectives you set for the visit. Allow for extra time if the legislator wants to remain longer in one location. Consider these 4 points of engagement:

- **Participate** in a hands-on activity such as riding along in a truck, looking at driver routes, or other daily tasks drivers/ staff do day to day will have a BIG impact and leave a memorable impression on the legislator.
- **People** are who elect legislators, remember, employees are the legislator's constituents, allow for interaction. Encourage them to have topic specific stories practiced for the visit.
- **Pause** throughout the tour to discuss your site's economic profile and the impact it has on the legislator's district. Reach out to ATRI or ATA staff to support your research.
- **Practice** your route, comments and prepare for possible questions.







### 3 Day of Tour

- **It's Tour Time!** Implement the Run of Show and Tour Map you developed in pre-planning. You most likely will run through this right before the tour with whoever is the advance staff from the legislator's team.
- **Welcome the Legislator:** Have everyone who will be participating on the tour assembled ahead of time and ready to greet the legislator when they arrive. Confirm when the legislator has to leave, schedules changes, adjust the flow as needed.
- **Begin With the Legislator's Remarks:** Allow the legislator to make remarks and answer a few questions from employees prior to you starting the tour. After, while employees return to their stations, you can prepare the legislator for the tour.
- **Provide \$, % and #'s and Brief Company Overview:** Before you start on the tour, take a few moments to highlight what a legislator needs to know about your business. (See "5 Facts Your Member of Congress Needs to Know")
- **Tour Time!** Implement the Tour Map you developed.
- **Conclude the tour with a brief discussion.** Provide the opportunity to sit and chat with the legislator. Encourage questions and reemphasize key message points!\*
- **Share Photographs:** Send photos taken during the tour to the legislator's staff, and include thank you remarks. Many legislative offices have newsletters of happenings in the district and social media they may post to. Look out for the office's newsletter that week, and social media for resharing opportunities. ATA would also like to highlight your advocacy! Tag, share, and send ATA Staff everything so we can help share your successful visit.



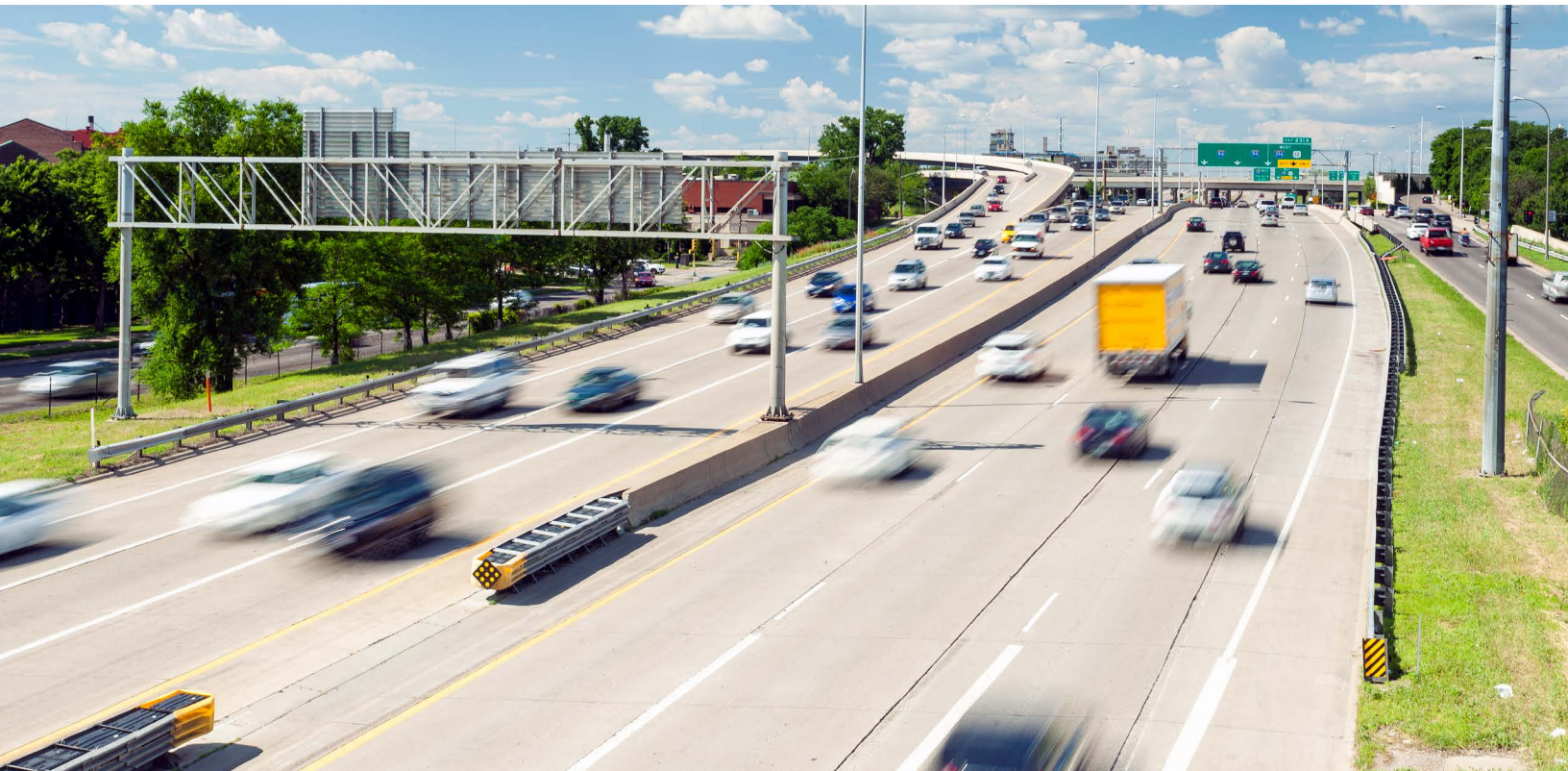
## 4 Follow-Up After the Visit

- **Send a Thank You:** Following your event, send the member of Congress, and their staff, a hand-written thank you note for attending the meeting. If you promised follow-up information, this is a prime opportunity to send it. If the member agreed to take action on legislation, politely remind them or thank them again for taking action. (No later than a week following the meeting)
- **Debrief with ATA About Your Meeting:** Email [aschroeder@trucking.org](mailto:aschroeder@trucking.org) to tell ATA about your meeting. This information is important in our continued communications with members of Congress. ATA Staff is more than happy to set up a debrief call to go over how the visit went and lessons learned for future visits.

***\*Please note:** Companies often like to give Members of Congress a branded item from their visit, which is allowable. Please just be aware that House of Representative ethics rules state that a Member or congressional employee may not accept any gift valued over \$50, with a limitation of \$100 in gifts from any single source in a calendar year. Gifts having a value of less than \$10 do not count toward the annual limit.*

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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## DO'S

- **Be Flexible for the Date/Time of your Tour.** Members of Congress maintain busy schedules. Demonstrating respect to the Congressional scheduler and their workload goes a long way.
- **Do your Homework.** Ask ATA Staff for the Member's bio, any relevant committees, and scour their official social media page to identify key messages, values, and priorities. Ask the Congressional staff if there is anything in particular that the Member of Congress would like to better understand. Adapt your presentation points and legislative asks accordingly.
- **Connect with ATA.** Early Identify relevant policy issues of the day that would impact your company and any pertinent information about that member/staffer. ATA Staff is happy to assist in any of the prior planning and the day of the visit.
- **Write a Briefing Memo.** A week out from your event, provide a one page memo to Congressional staff with key information that will get the member up to speed on your company. Include:
  - Background on your company
  - Key individuals on tour, a brief bio, and their photo (include links to LinkedIn pages. It saves staffers the step of having to find you and connect.)
  - Any key messages (asks) that you will cover. This helps the Member prepare for a conversation, rather than just a presentation.
- **Sell the Visit to your Staff.** Many of your team members may be unfamiliar with the political process or what this visit means. Use this opportunity to build up your team. Let them know what an honor it is that they've been selected for a tour, and explain that this is something to be proud of. This will instill confidence in your team and pave the way for a positive interaction.
- **Gather %, \$ and #s.** For example, include the total number of employees on the road as well as the # employees in offices, amount of payroll, taxes, the products your company produces, what typical routes drivers run, amount of and local expenditures for materials and services beyond trucking you support by being in business (example: goods transported, miles driven in a year, larger companies your company supplies). These are all great facts to weave into the tour discussion.
- **Ask to Continue the Conversation.** Tell the Legislative staff and the Member of Congress you are always happy to join upcoming roundtables or industry discussions on any of the topics covered in the visit. Let the Member know you want to be a resource to staff.



## DONT'S

- **Try to Do Everything on your First Visit.** Your objective is to establish yourself as a trustworthy and reputable resource to the office both now and in the future.
- **Invite more than One Representative/Senator**
- **Invite the Press the First Time Out**
- **Stray Away from your Key Topics.** Master the art of pivoting back to your key points. Now is not the time to weigh in on your political opinion or try and persuade the member on a non-relevant topic (ex. Making your elementary school a national historic site).
- **Make up the Answer.** You'll likely be asked something that you don't know the answer too. That's ok! Let the staff member know that you'll look into it and get back with them. Do not come up with an answer on the fly, especially if it is not factual.
- **Ignore Employees.** Be sure to introduce employees, they are the legislator's constituents too and the backbone to your company.
- **Over Script the Visit.** While an outline of topics to discuss is important for the visit, trying to overcontrol all aspects of the visit is not worth it. Focus on practicing your story delivery so you are confident to tell it when the timing is right in the conversation during the visit.

# 5 FACTS YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS NEEDS TO KNOW

Before your Member of Congress joins you at your operation, there are a few “quick facts” you should have at the ready for your tour. Being prepared fosters a successful meeting and helps you make the most out of the Legislator’s trip to your business. These may be facts you gloss over at times, but don’t forget to lay the foundation for them.

## 1 Provide History and Overview

Before you jump into key issues, take a moment to provide background about you, your organization, and the impact on the legislator’s district or state.

## 2 Share %, \$ and #s

For example, include the total number of employees in the field, in the office, or in your organization.

## 3 Explain your Reach

Share how your operation affects the entire community, state, and across the country. What type and how many jobs in the community does your business support? Think broadly.

## 4 Give them the Facts

Members of Congress will want to know the basics: years in operation, locations, number of drivers, miles typically driven, who you do business with, your drivers backgrounds, etc. Give them facts they can relate to or visualize.

## 5 Let them Know How they Can Help

What are the biggest federal regulation challenges that you face? How would you do business different if certain laws or policies were changed?

