



Plant Tours Guidebook

"Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you." – Thomas Jefferson



Miles Fiberglass & Composites employees with Sen. Wyden (D-OR)

Plant tours provide a unique vehicle to solidify relationships with elected officials, showcase the importance of your company's work and demonstrate your company's quality commitment to the community. Plant tours also give legislators a feel for their constituents and the effect of proposed legislation. Formulating healthy relationships with the legislators who represent us is vital to our industry. Plant tours will help you advance the interests of your company as well as the composites industry. ACMA has devised this guidebook to help manufacturers prepare and plan tours for their Members of Congress.



Hughes Brothers employees with Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE)

ACMA is working hard for the representation of composite manufacturers on Capitol Hill; but we need your help! Conducting a plant tour for your company is an excellent way to help the cause of the composites industry. Take time to read this guidebook. It offers you an essential key to getting your voice heard by those who shape our nation's agenda. ACMA hopes the information provided will give you the tools to help eliminate encumbrance and promote success with legislators. ACMA wishes your company great success with plant tours and all future actions on behalf of the industry.

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Initiation

Planning

Setting up a plant tour involves intense planning; you want your tour to be efficient and worth the Member of Congress' time. The best way to ensure efficiency is to delegate a member of your staff to be in charge of carrying out all facets of the tour.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Plan the tour during one of the many Congressional recesses.
- ❖ Most Congressional recesses occur during the traditional 12 holiday periods, August, after elections, and before the next legislative session.

Invitations

When inviting a legislator to your plant, be flexible in scheduling. Members of Congress are extremely busy both on the Hill and during their recess. Scheduling a plant tour will inevitably be a difficult task; but you want to accommodate Members of Congress as best as possible. When scheduling, be sure to contact Members of both political parties for a tour. It is strongly advised that you reach out to all party members as elected officials represent everyone despite differing political ideology.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Allow for multiple scheduling options; do not be set on a centralized date upfront.
- ❖ Do not be discouraged about scheduling rejections; Members of Congress are very busy.
- ❖ If a date is set, be prepared for last-minute adjustments.
- ❖ Invite diverse officials to your plant

An invitation guideline is as follows:

1. Contact your Member of Congress' office. Their contact information will be on their website. You can look up your Members of Congress at: www.contactingthecongress.org or call Jonathan Roberts at 703-688-1653.
2. If you call, ask for the Scheduler and express your interest in hosting a plant tour.
3. If you write, follow the template ACMA's provides on our website (www.acmanet.org/ga/styrene.cfm).
4. Propose possible dates and let the Member's office select which works best.
5. Invite staffers and legislative assistants as they are the backbone to many Members of Congress.
6. Engage in follow-up phone calls, they are appropriate.

Media Consideration

Announcements

Like you, Members of Congress want recognition for their work and action. So making your plant tour a public event is an option to consider. Your plant is a staple of your community, so announcing such an event is also beneficial to those outside of your firm.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Send out a memo to all employees for awareness
- ❖ Include the plant tour in the company newsletter
- ❖ Post information about the tour on company bulletin boards

Media Coverage

Members of Congress also like press coverage. After checking with the Member's press secretary, send out a press release to local papers, radio stations, and television stations. Play to the legislator's desire for press coverage and publicity of platform issues. Once your company has invited the press to cover, Members of Congress are less likely to back out.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Contact large news media, but do not forget smaller news media outlets such as weekly or business newspapers.
- ❖ Do not hesitate to provide coverage of the event to media outlets; you should issue a press release following the event and can consider posting information or a video on your company's website.
- ❖ Host a plant tour for a Member of Congress that has a vested interest in the industry or legislation facing the industry.
- ❖ If you find certain news media is not interested in covering the plant tour, continue contacting smaller outlets for coverage.
- ❖ If possible, have someone record the event both with footage and writing.
- ❖ Local press is rarely hostile to Members of Congress or local business so be open and friendly with members of the press.

Organization

Committee preparation

It is advisable to set up a committee for planning each aspect of the tour. Below is a list of people from whom you likely will need help. Individuals listed below and other individuals within your company can act in more than one of the following roles:

Chief Executive Officer → The most senior executive needs to be present for the legislator's meet-and-greet. You will want the CEO, President, or owner to accompany the legislator on the tour. A company with present and active leadership reflects well on the tour's goals and purpose.

Government Relations Officer → This individual needs to be present for a variety of reasons. He/she will be in charge of knowing the views of the visiting Member of Congress. This person will also need to know the legislation that faces the industry and be willing to discuss these issues during the tour. However, lobbying on the first visit is strongly discouraged; let your knowledge and tour set the precedent for future discussions.

Additional Resources: ACMA's legislative priorities can be found on our website (acmanet.org). In addition, you can find out if your Member of Congress is part of the Congressional Composites Caucus. If not, be sure and invite he/she to join.

Public Relations or Communications Director → This individual will help in contacting media and news outlets. He/she will also be helpful in arranging photo opportunities during the tour. Use as many staff members as necessary to make sure the duties of accommodating the media are executed smoothly.

Employee Relations Manager → Have this employee present to handle all communications concerning the Member of Congress and your employees. This individual should know your employees the best; so it is imperative he/she is present for the tour. Have a group of diversified workers at hand to meet with this individual and the Member of Congress.

Plant Safety Supervisor → You must ensure the safety of all visitors; having this employee present will reduce the likelihood of safety problems during the tour.

Background homework

Do some homework on your visitor's background. Check out his/her biographical, political, and personal past. Highlight the person's social, professional, and business endeavors. Also, be sure to investigate the legislator's lawmaking background and voting record. This will help you in knowing where you stand; it will also help you gauge your conversations properly. ACMA can provide you with the information you may need.

Plant and employee preparation

Prepare your plant to show its best side. A typical tour should last 30-60 minutes and be designed around a lunch or breakfast break. This is so operating processes are not hindered. Also, make your employees aware that their Member of Congress will be touring the plant. This is a big opportunity; make them feel proud to be involved. Let them know that they will likely have the opportunity to shake hands with the Member of Congress.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Prepare a map of the tour route.
- ❖ Have clear signs highlighting the tour.
- ❖ Have name badges, hard-hats, and safety goggles for all visiting members.
- ❖ Before the tour, have a run-through with the plant and your employees.
- ❖ Select a few employees that will demonstrate machines/process throughout the tour and let them know beforehand.

Company one-pager

What is a “company one-pager”? This is a short outline that details who your organization is, what you produce and manufacture, how your products provide benefits to customers and society, how many employees you have, and a history of the company and its facility. This one-pager will serve as a useful tool in the tour process. It will be a useful handout the legislator can use as a guided reference throughout the tour. Remember, it is helpful to send it to the Congressional office in advance as well as providing it on-site.

Transportation

Accommodating your visitor

Most visiting Members of Congress will have organized their transportation prior to their arrival; however, it is common courtesy for your company to offer transportation during their visit.

Tour Options

Operating machinery

During the tour, find a way to highlight your machinery. Do this by showing your Member of Congress how your machines work, how products are assembled, and any new technology innovating your company and the industry. You can even allow the visitor to operate the machinery—with proper instruction and supervision.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Provide hands-on presentations to give the visitor a feel for the industry.
- ❖ Give your employees a chance to get involved and ask questions.
- ❖ Have all committee members present during this part of the tour.
- ❖ Arrange for photo opportunities during this physical aspect of the tour.

Product and special site displays

Display the products you manufacture. Give visitors the opportunity to see first-hand what your hard work produces and how it benefits both society and consumers. Also, do not hesitate to have some pamphlets or informative materials available for all visitors. This will serve as a take-away resource for the visitors to refer in case questions go unasked or unanswered.

Discussing current news and events

You will want to connect the pitch of your company to current events and legislation facing the industry. Members of Congress appreciate educated voters, so be aware of current news and events and how they might affect the composites industry.

Here are some tips to consider:

- ❖ Focus your discussion on the impact of proposed legislation or regulation facing your company; refrain from pushing an agenda.
- ❖ Talk about jobs, both risks involved and possible job creation.
- ❖ Focus on positive aspects of legislation and work on Capitol Hill; you want to befriend Members of Congress (despite their views).
- ❖ Be respectful of all ideas; if respect is given it will be received, which is good for your company and our industry.
- ❖ Do not feel you need to be an expert on legislation. Members of Congress will not question your knowledge concerning legislation or current news.

Talking points

There will be questions from all visitors, so be prepared ahead of time for these questions to be posed during the tour. Make sure you spread out your information.

Here are some options of discussion:

Success Stories → Inform the Member of Congress of the plant's progress and positive contributions to the industry. Talk about how your company has dealt with and overcome adversity.

Products Manufactured → Describe how various products are assembled. Mention their uses and statistics concerning such use.

Jobs → Present employment data, as well as data on labor unions, employee benefits, and training programs affiliated with your company.

Following-up

Post-tour contact

The purpose of the tour is to strengthen a mutual bond between you and your elected official. One way to establish a good rapport with your visitors is to follow up after their visit.

Here are a few follow-up suggestions:

- ❖ Write a thank you note; highlight key points that occurred in the visit.
- ❖ Invite the legislator to return at any time.
- ❖ Consider inviting your legislator to company events.
- ❖ Present your legislator with a token of appreciation, a memento (check with ACMA on permissible mementos).
- ❖ Send photos of the visit to the legislator.
- ❖ Provide information on the press coverage of the event.
- ❖ Thank your own company and employees for the successful visit.
- ❖ Come to Washington and being proactive for the industry.

Feedback

ACMA would like you to contact us after the visit. In contacting us, we would like your personal evaluation of the visit as well as a company-wide evaluation. This will help us better gauge our plant-tour advice in the future. The evaluations will also shape how we approach future grassroots activities. ACMA would also like publish photos you took with your Member of Congress s in guides like this one and on our website. You can contact us by emailing or calling Jonathan Roberts. You can reach him by email at jroberts@acmanet.org or call him at (703)-682-1653.

Conclusion

ACMA sincerely hopes this guidebook serves as a comprehensive resource for planning your company's plant tour. The information provided in this packet should also serve as a resource for getting involved with political officials to encourage their support of the composites industry. If you have any questions concerning the contents of this guidebook or about plant tours, please contact ACMA.