



ADVOCACY TOOLBOX Facility Tour Guide

Conducting site visits for members of Congress (MOCs) and their staff is one of the best ways to build relationships for your company and increase support for the fertilizer industry. Likewise, these visits provide excellent opportunities for lawmakers to meet with their constituents, hear the success stories and the struggles that you face and see first-hand how their policies work in real life.

This guide will help you plan, prepare for and conduct a successful facility tour and ensure that your experience is as effective as possible. Please contact TFI's legislative affairs team at (202) 962-0490 if you have questions or need any assistance.

PLANNING THE TOUR

Decide Who to Invite

Is this a visit for elected officials/candidates or congressional staff? Consider starting with a local or state staff person and working up to a visit from the candidate or elected official. A staff level visit can be just as important as a member visit!

Send the Invitation – ([Click here for a sample invitation](#))

Send a letter to the candidate and/or staff explaining who you are and what you would like to showcase. When inviting a legislator for a facility tour, be flexible and allow for several date options. Even when a date is set, be prepared for last-minute schedule changes.

The ideal time to schedule a tour is during a recess period. These generally occur during the following holiday periods:

- Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (mid-January)
- Presidents' Day (mid-February)
- Easter/Passover (March or April)
- Memorial Day (late May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Summer (August through the week after Labor Day)
- Rosh Hashanah (late September or early October)

- Yom Kippur (10 days after Rosh Hashanah)
- Columbus Day (early October)
- Veterans Day (early November)
- Thanksgiving
- Late December through early January

In addition to formal recesses, MOCs are most likely to be in their home districts on Mondays and Fridays.

Be Patient but Persistent

MOCs and their staff are extremely busy and receive many requests for meetings, tours, etc. Do not be discouraged if you do not get a response right away. If a week goes by without a response, follow up with a reminder to ensure they received the invitation. Continue to reach out until you are able to get an answer. Persistence will eventually pay off!

PLANNING FOR THE MEDIA

Clear media participation/ attendance with congressional office

Once the MOC's office approves media attendance, contact your local media outlets, including large daily newspapers, as well as local weeklies. Offer to send your own report and photos to the paper.

Draft a media advisory, if desired – ([Click here for a sample media advisory](#))

Once the date is set, draft a media advisory containing the date, time, specific location, parking accommodations and lighting requirements, if any. Note whether the tour itself is open for press coverage and if the MOC will take questions after the tour. Give the location. E-mail the draft to the MOC's communications staffer for approval. When approved, fax or e-mail the advisory along with a press kit and company information to everyone on your press list.

Prepare an area for news media

Arrange for an area outside of your facility for presentations, ribbon-cutting (if appropriate) and informal discussions with the news media. This area should be in front of your company's signage or logo.

Prepare a message from the CEO

Prepare an op-ed or letter to the editor (LTE) from your CEO to your local newspapers on an issue related to the MOC's visit. Better yet, arrange a meeting with the newspapers' editorial boards seeking support for your position. Reach out to local radio stations for an interview.

ORGANIZING THE FACILITY TOUR

Organize an internal planning group

The planning group should be responsible for organizing the logistics of the facility tour.

Designate a tour guide/leader

The tour guide is typically a senior/plant manager for the facility.

Decide who will meet with the legislator/staff

Don't be concerned with party affiliation. After all, your intent is to develop a good rapport with public officials who may influence the future of your company and our industry.

Draft lawmaker introduction

Decide who will provide remarks and the topics you want to cover in welcoming the elected official.

Reserve a room for the guest to address your employees

Determine the best room for the lawmaker to talk with your staff. Set up a podium and microphone if necessary and arrange seating. Determine if light refreshments will be served.

Make name badges for guest and staff

Name badges are a must for your tour. Create name badges for your guest and any staff who accompanies him or her, as well as your own employees.

Hire/designate photographer

Have a photographer on hand to take pictures of your MOC's visit. These photos are excellent opportunities to publicize the event and for the lawmaker to remember the visit.

Prepare an information packet

Prepare materials for your MOC that emphasizes the benefits that your company brings to workers, suppliers and your area's economy. Put together a one pager that highlights your company's characteristics and accomplishments. TFI will also provide materials for the information packet upon request.

Research your MOC's background

Research your MOC's biographical, political, business, social, educational and legislative background and voting record to identify areas of common interest. Find out what committees and subcommittees your MOC is on and try to match your legislative agenda with his or hers. Please contact TFI's legislative affairs team for any assistance.

Prepare questions for the lawmaker

Include any questions that you want to ask your lawmaker. These can be questions on regulations and policies that are currently in effect, proposed, or pending.

PREPARING FOR ARRIVAL

Designate a note taker

Assign a team member to take notes on any discussions, if possible.

Determine what, if any, machinery will be in operation

This is important, especially if you plan to highlight or show a particular piece of machinery or technology during the tour.

Provide clear directions to the facility

This is critical as MOCs are typically on very tight schedules. Ensure your guest knows what entrance to use and provide a reserved parking space for him or her.

Designate greeter(s) to welcome guests on arrival

Greet officials at designated area. In the event of rain, provide an umbrella if possible. Hand out name badges. If required, prepare guests for the possibility of going through security before entering the facility.

CONDUCTING THE TOUR

Provide safety equipment to tour guests, if applicable

Provide your guest with any items necessary for a tour, such as a construction helmet, safety goggles, gloves, etc.

Show lawmaker how your facility operates

Show your guest how machinery works, how different items are mixed or stored, what new technologies are being used and your workers' overall productivity and routines.

Let your visitor be an active participant

If feasible without shutting down production lines, offer your visitor the chance to address your entire workforce. Have the MOC do something "physical," such as shake hands, participate in a ribbon-cutting, run a machine, examine your product or look at a computer screen. These are prime photo opportunities.

Mention any prepared talking points during the tour

You have an important story to tell, so prepare specific answers to expected questions, particularly about your company's impact on your MOC's district. When developing your presentation, work in the following information:

- **Success stories:** Discuss how the facility has improved and contributed to the community. Inform visitors about your company's history, including total investment in facilities and equipment. Discuss the impact that legislation and/or regulation (both positive and negative) has on your company, employees and families.
- **Jobs:** Discuss the number of people employed in your facility (and others around the state or country), labor unions represented in your plant, and worker health, safety and training programs.
- **Payroll and benefits:** Discuss wages and the types and value of employee benefits, including profit-sharing, recreational programs, voter registration activities, health or sports facilities, credit unions, child care, educational support and discount purchases of company products. (Remind your visitor that each wage dollar multiplies in the wage earner's community in the form of rent, food purchases, clothing purchases, medical expenses, etc., before it goes to out-of-town suppliers.)
- **Community impact:** How much does your company pay in federal, state and local taxes? What are your local expenditures to purchase supplies, materials and services? Do you host town hall meetings? Does your company participate in community charities? Tell the legislator about your active role as a good corporate citizen.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE TOUR

A facility tour enhances the mutual understanding between you and your MOC. To make certain that he or she remembers your company, follow-up efforts are extremely important.

Send thank you note to guest(s)

Write a thank-you note reiterating any key issues discussed during the tour. Invite the MOC to return at any time. Consider inviting your MOC to your company's annual picnic or other outing.

Thank your own staff

Recognize employees who contributed their time and expertise to make the tour a success.

Send photos to MOCs

Photos shared with MOCs will often appear in a constituent newsletter, and often they will wind up on the MOC's office wall or website.

Tell TFI about the tour

To help TFI assist other companies, tell us how the tour went. Send us photos and press clippings. E-mail your information to TFI's Public Affairs and Public Policy teams.

Provide press coverage

Provide the MOC's office with your company newsletter and other publicity the visit may have generated.

Use social media to recap the tour

Publish photos, details, etc., on your company's social media platforms. Coordinate with TFI's Public Affairs team to post on any TFI platforms.

Continue to communicate with your MOC post-event

Offer the member substantive policy advice. Track how your legislator votes on future legislation and express your thanks when he or she votes in favor of your positions.

Thank you for helping Grow the Voice of Fertilizer!