

VALVE INDUSTRY PLANT TOUR GUIDE



Showcase Your Plant and Build Relationships

VMA VALVE
MANUFACTURERS
ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA

A Guide to Hosting Successful Plant Tours for Elected and Governmental Officials



This plant tour guide is exclusive to VMA members and provides an approach on how to organize, plan and conduct a successful plant tour. These type of plant visits are an excellent opportunity to showcase your company and its impact on the local economy, to build relationships with Members of Congress, state and local elected officials, and other Government representatives, and to demonstrate the importance of the industrial valve industry at the global, national, and local level.

Plant tours hosted by members also help amplify the VMA's work on behalf of its members to create a positive business environment which advances policy objectives surrounding enhancing workforce development efforts, strengthening the supply chain, addressing energy transition topics and how they impact the valve industry, supporting infrastructure investments, as well as tax and tariff concerns. VMA has created specific talking points around each of these issues as well as the industry, available on our members-only website section, and as a supplement to this guide. You are encouraged to incorporate these into your company specific messaging.

Please contact VMA if you will be holding a plant tour so that we can provide support, promote it and conduct follow up after the event. This helps the VMA continue to maintain relationships with Congressional and Executive branch leaders on behalf of our members and the industry. For questions or more information, contact Marc Pasternak, Vice President and Staff Liaison to the Government Affairs Committee at mpasternak@vma.org or via telephone at **202.331.0104**.

Setting up the Plant Tour

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, AND WHY?

Decide Who to Invite

Consider starting with the Congressperson/Governmental Official that represents the congressional district your plant is located in. If they can't participate, reach out to other Congressperson's in the surrounding areas. Also reach out to any government officials you are acquainted with in the Executive branch, or your state and local elected officials.

To find out who represents your district in Congress, visit www.congress.gov; to find out who represents your district at the state level, visit www.openstates.org.

Send the Invitation

Send an email to the Congressperson (ideally, to their scheduler whose name and email address you can get by calling their office, identifying yourself and telling them you want to invite their boss on a plant tour – if in fact, your plant is in their district, you need to tell them that) or government official explaining who you are, whom you work for and the reason for your call. When inviting an elected official on a plant tour, be flexible and allow for several options. Once a date has been confirmed, work out with the scheduler a length of time for the tour. The tour itself should last 30-45 minutes. Finally, be prepared for last minute date or time changes.

Please let VMA know when you have a confirmed plant tour date and time.



Sample Invitation Email to Member of Congress

You can download this template from the members-only page on www.vma.org/membersonly

Company Logo

Address

Website

Date

Dear Congressperson or Elected Official (enter their last name):

I am writing to invite you, and members of your staff, to participate in a plant tour at (your company name). As a member of the Valve Manufacturers Association (VMA), we encourage Members of Congress and Executive officials to visit the facilities of their local businesses for the opportunity to see manufacturing and distribution at work and learn about the industry and the issues that are important to the constituents in your district.

(Insert information here describing your company in 2-3 sentence's. Be sure to include the number of employees) This plant tour is an informal opportunity for you to see our plant and speak with our employees. The format usually calls for the tour, open discussion with our employees (including a brief question and answer period) and a photo opportunity. We expect the entire event to take no more than 60 minutes. Let me suggest the following dates:

(Insert Day, Month, Year – suggested time frame)

(Insert Day, Month, Year – suggested time frame)

(Insert Day, Month, Year – suggested time frame)

We hope you will accept our invitation to participate. Please let me know at your earliest convenience if one of the above listed dates is convenient, or if you suggest another date and time. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

(Your title)

(Your email address)

(Your phone number)

Note: Give Congressional/Governmental offices at least 48 hours to respond to your inquiry.

Organizing the Plant Tour

FOUR SIMPLE STEPS FOR SUCCESS

- 1 Decide who within your company will meet with the official**

Determine which of your employees would be best suited to participate in the tour. Don't be concerned with party affiliation. Ensure that those selected to participate are personable and knowledgeable about the company's operations and activities.
- 2 Draft Member of Congress/Executive Official introduction**

Decide who will introduce the Member of Congress/Government Official and put together a short bio (typically available on LinkedIn) for them to read when the official arrives.
- 3 Identify the required safety equipment**

Determine ahead of time what safety equipment will be needed. These include construction helmets, goggles, masks etc. If time allows, host a limited security training session prior to the tour.
- 4 Draft the tour script**

Prepare some concise remarks on what you want to cover during the tour. Some possibilities to include could be:

 - Number of employees who work at the plant and the work environment, from shifts and hours work to the type of work done, to benefits and the type of education needed to work in the facility, and the activities the company does to support employees and attract new workers
 - Quantitative information on the number of valves, actuators and components made or sold from the plant, associated sales dollars
 - Any new technologies or machinery that has recently been installed at the plant, including items that help the company reduce energy, become more efficient, reduce emissions or their carbon footprint, etc.
 - Information on the concerns and issues of the industry or company that may help the official in their role (VMA has information on this for download)

Comply with ethics rules

Congressman/woman are not permitted to accept gifts other than small, low-cost items such as a company branded baseball hat or coffee mug. You should also not discuss donations made to their campaign.



Preparing for Arrival

A QUICK CHECKLIST OF THINGS “TO-DO”

☐ **Send Confirmation 1 week prior to the Tour**

Include specific information on how to get to the plant, where to meet (If there are several entrances, communicate which one will be the meeting point), and security or other requirements (type of shoes required, dress code, mask requirements, etc.) and a day of contact with cell phone. Also include the names and titles of those who will be going on the tour, and create name badges for all participants. You may want to also send short background information on the company and the valve industry. (VMA has samples available for download for our members)

☐ **Prepare for contingencies**

Members of Congress/Government Officials may be running late or must switch the event date at the last minute.

☐ **Do a “walk through” beforehand**

Walk around your facility to visually inspect and make certain that no unintended proprietary information is subject to viewing, there are safety concerns, etc. This is also an excellent time to determine which machinery will be in operation, especially if you plan to highlight a particular piece of equipment during the tour.

☐ **Designate a note taker**

Assign a team member to take notes on any discussions. This will help with post tour follow up.

☐ **Welcome guest on arrival**

Greet the elected official at the designated entrance to your company.



CONDUCTING THE TOUR

Some Quick Reminders On Tour Day

**Provide the proper safety equipment
for tour guests**

**Show the lawmaker how your
production line works**

Don't forget the script you prepared!

**Have a question or two prepared ahead of time
to generate discussion if needed**

Take pictures. Lots of them!



Tour Follow Up

CAPITALIZING ON THE MOMENTUM OF A SUCCESSFUL TOUR



Send thank you email to Congressperson/Government Official

Write a thank you email to the Member of Congress thanking them for the visit and reiterating any key issues that were discussed. You may also include follow up documents on the industry, your company, and issues and topics discussed. Invite them to return at any time.



Send photos to the visiting Congressperson/Government Official

Often, photos that you send to Members of Congress will appear in their digital newsletter.



Generate Publicity for Your Hard Work

After the tour, send out a press release to your local media as well as to the VMA (press@vma.org) and post images on your social media channels. Don't forget to forward any press coverage to the lawmakers/official's office.





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