

congressional intern handbook



a guide for interns and newcomers to capitol hill

a publication of the



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by Sue Grabowski

*Nicole Folk, Editor
and Project Manager*

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what's new & acknowledgments

Considering that CMF first published the *Congressional Intern Handbook* almost 30 years ago, before most of you were born, emphasis was placed on making this year's *Handbook* reflect the evolving needs of interns and new staff in Congress.

With technology and online communications turning “readers” into “scanners,” this edition offers a new look and design geared to the way people read publications today; chapter summaries (dos and don'ts for those short on time); and an index for easier reference. Taken together these changes make this edition more user-friendly and tailored to needs of our congressional audience.

The last edition was also published in June of 2001 or just three months before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, requiring expansion of the safety chapter to reflect changes in security across Capitol Hill. This update provides critical information that you—the newest members of the congressional community—need to understand as you begin working on Capitol Hill.

Bringing about these changes, as well as conducting tedious fact-checking, quality control and endless research, was a substantial team effort. This book would not be as effective were it not for the knowledge and contributions of several congressional staff and outside experts.

We especially thank the United States Capitol Police, the Chief Administrative Officer, the House Office of Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Operations, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms and Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness for their thoroughness and dedication to ensuring that the most helpful and accurate safety information reach the hands of interns and new staff in Chapter 8.

Alma Candelaria and Teresa James at the Office of Compliance, along with management consultant Kari Uman, and Ed Cassidy and Bill O'Reilly at the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct reviewed the text for Chapter 6 and offered valuable guidance and updates on congressional ethics, workplace laws, and sexual harassment that improved the chapter.

For donating their time, insights, sometimes their office resources, and for dutifully answering all our questions, we thank: David Pike, Senator Jeff Bingaman; Ngozi Pole, Senator Edward M. Kennedy; Tracee Gross, Senator Kent Conrad; Patty Sheetz, Rep. Gil Gutknecht; Alan Knapp, Rep. Ted Poe; and Robert Newlen, Congressional Research Service.

The format and design recommendations were based primarily on the research of CMF intern Ben Schumacher, who developed and conducted focus groups with House and Senate interns, and former CMF staffer Jessica Walters who conducted interviews with intern coordinators across the Hill. Graphic designer Cynthia Wokas brought these improvements to life with skill, vision and taste.

Finally, special appreciation goes to the CMF staffers who assisted this significant effort. Intern Collin Burden helped update and fact-check the text, while Jennifer Ross, Kathy Goldschmidt, and Rick Shapiro reviewed and revised text and offered guidance and support. Their willingness to pitch in whenever and wherever needed greatly contributed to this year's revision.

—Nicole Folk

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introduction

an internship is a process. It's thoughts and actions. It's facts and feelings. It can be a valuable and enjoyable experience. It's looking back and smiling at how hard it was to write your first letter now that you're a seasoned pro of six weeks. It's realizing that although a portion of that work you do is less than intellectually stimulating, it's got to get done. It's learning that while you may rarely touch the glamorous side of substantive policy, you're making a valuable contribution to the office and that's what counts. It's a lot more. You can view your internship as an assignment, or a lark, or just a job, or a chance to be caught up in something exhilarating, even though it does mean plowing through a seemingly endless amount of "grunt work."

Some people adopt a very casual approach and let the internship happen to them, no sweat. Others attack their jobs with such a ferocious intensity that the internship may suffer from a lack of perspective. After all, an internship is a chance to occasionally run around and have fun observing the spectacle without chafing against the confines of a real job. (Even congressional staff wannabes should take a break once in awhile.) It can play both sides—some responsibility, but no long-term commitments. It can be the best of all worlds—a share in the action, but not an overwhelming stake in the future. This is not advocacy of irresponsible conduct or unreliable behavior. It is a belief that interns should seize the opportunity to make their stay on Capitol Hill a well-rounded and whole experience. Somewhere between laid-back and manic there lies the balanced internship—sensitive to one's contribution to any project, but aware of one's place in the broader picture.

Your internship is what you make it. Taking a cue from the quotations cited on this page, you've got to give of yourself and put something into your internship as well. It's a lot of work, but it can be a lot of fun, too. This *Handbook* is written for the intern new-to-the-Hill and searching for some guidance in adapting to an alien environment. It offers a few directions on the surroundings, the lingo, the reference points, and the hard knocks learned by your predecessors. It furnishes some of the clues, but it does not supply all the answers. As for the rest, you're going to have to chart your own course and draw your own map. It's your trip. And that's the truth.

Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

There are no menial jobs, only menial attitudes.

—WILLIAM JOHN BENNETT

It is not what we get. But who we become, what we contribute...that gives meaning to our lives.

—ANTHONY ROBBINS



why interns?

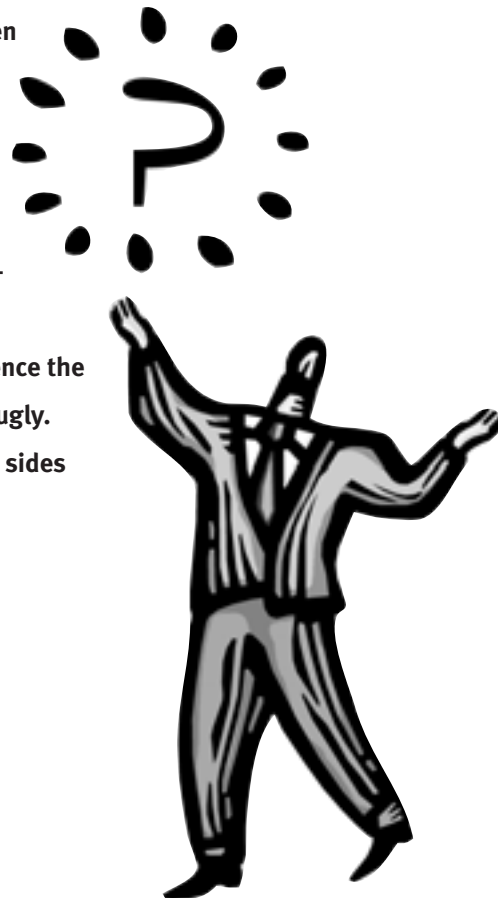
and then there were interns. Somewhere along the evolutionary path of Capitol Hill personnel, interns came to pass. Today college students clamor to Capitol Hill, and congressional offices embrace their spirit and service. They are an integral part of Capitol Hill life. The fit is a natural one—between the student interested in the governmental process and public service, and the congressional office always on the hunt for more bodies and extra minds to lighten the workload. Outside the beltway (the road that circles the District), Congress may evoke visions of rich, wood-paneled hearing rooms, the president addressing a joint session or a glamorous and powerful arena where laws are written that affect the entire nation. While Congress comprises all of these images, closer up it is a mini-metropolis, populated with hundreds of small entrepreneurial businesses called House and Senate offices. A peek inside any one of these offices reveals a lot of decidedly unappealing work going on—fascinating and tedious, engaging and grinding. Interns, like almost everyone else on Capitol Hill, are privileged to experience the many sides and slants of Hill life—the good, the bad and the ugly. The following chapter offers a bit of rationale about how both sides benefit from the relationship.

*Does there always
have to be a reason
for everything?*

—THOMAS MERTON

*The only job where
you start at the top
is digging a hole.*

—UNKNOWN



What the office gets

- Bottom line—the office gains free or next-to-free help. Some call it slave labor. Some call it an educational experience. Others spell it “gofer,” as in “go fer” this or “go fer” that. Interns may act as surrogate staff members, and perform tasks at many administrative and legislative levels, from filing letters to attending hearings. They can help the Staff Assistant answer the phone and open mail, the legislative staff respond to constituent correspondence, the Systems Administrator update the Web site and the Chief of Staff research special projects. Office guidelines and individual talent define the boundaries of intern activities in a congressional office.
- Many offices attempt to balance intern tasks between administrative and legislative duties. This attempt meets with success depending on how hard the office tries, how well the intern adjusts, and the chemistry between the two. Also, what activity the office is involved in at the moment, be it scheduling tours, churning out a mass mailing, acquiring “Dear Colleague” signatures or hosting a delegation of visitors from the district, can determine how interns spend any given day. How the office is structured and the components of what makes a particular office tick—its established “culture”—can affect how interns spend their entire stay.
- Administratively, interns may answer phones at the reception desk, open/date/code/log-in/distribute/fold mail, run errands for the Senator, purchase supplies from the stationery store, escort constituents on Capitol tours or to the House/Senate visitor’s gallery, pull newspaper clips off the Internet, copy material, file co-sponsorships of bills, sign letters for the Congresswoman, deliver notices to other offices and fulfill flag requests. Front-desk duty can cover a wide range of responsibilities blending the public relations finesse of greeting constituents or mollifying impatient lobbyists with the juggling act of booking White House tours while simultaneously accepting Page deliveries and routing them in a timely fashion to the proper staff members.
- On the legislative side, interns can answer mail, research issues, hunt down reference material, gather information on pending bills, develop special legislative projects or initiatives, attend hearings/meetings, follow-up on “Dear Colleague” letters to other Members/Senators, look up facts and figures for a speech, order documents and write newsletter articles.
- All of these tasks need to be done. They are not make-work projects or punishment or reward. Recognizing that every job is important is a vital lesson to learn; it allows interns to move with equanimity from one request to another without feeling they are being demoted because they’ve just been asked to open and sort a pile of mail. Interns should approach that pile of mail and every job with diligence, conscientiousness, attention to detail, good judgment, diplomacy, follow-through, humor, patience and an appreciation of the big picture. No whining allowed.

What the intern gets

- What interns gain from their internships is more difficult to quantify than the office payoff since the perspective is so individual. Without a doubt, the intern experiences an exposure to working in an office environment—apart from working on the Hill—that is a lot more beneficial than may initially meet the eye. That is, being thrown into the people, politics and procedures of an office—any office—is preliminary real-world knowledge and earns real-world credentials. Once out of school, most interns will have to fit into some organization, somewhere, and interact with a host of personalities and management styles. How each day plays out—the psychology and the intra-office politics—is an invaluable education. Literally understanding how a professional office operates is a big plus.

- Of course, working on Capitol Hill offers a chance to witness from the inside how one of the three branches of the U.S. government does its job, representing the people by legislating public policy, and serving the people by responding to casework and requests. Interns learn that the constituent is king and responding to mail is one of the highest callings of the office. They realize that relatively speaking not a whole lot happens on the House or Senate floor, and that in committees, compromise may win over principle when push comes to shove. It can be an eye opener to learn that the boss has his/her faults like anyone else and that nobody is perfect. Just how closely the intern observes the legislative machinery is, in some respects, up to the intern. But even as the lowest person on the totem pole, an intern, by reporting to work everyday, will absorb an understanding of Capitol Hill unattainable in the classroom.
- Practically, interns can earn course credits in conjunction with their college studies. In addition, interns gain stellar-looking paragraphs on the next versions of their resumé. Especially if the job seeker is looking beyond the D.C. city limits, an internship with the Congress of the United States has a nice ring to it. When looking around inside Congress for that job, your experience on the Hill means a lot and those connections you made while being a stand-out performer in the office can pay high dividends (see Chapter 12). And if that competent and effective intern returns home to the Member's district or Senator's state, and puts in time on the next campaign, there may even be a better chance of landing a job back in the old office. Political loyalty mixed with a proven track record creates an irresistible combination.
- Finally, there are the social and networking sides of an internship. Contacts are made within as well as outside of the office. Fellow interns can be among the most valuable contacts with whom to exchange information and share a common bond of commiseration or braggadocio. Much of the intern-to-intern networking takes place on the lunch hour or after hours. It is another network to plug into and learn from. Lunches and receptions are Washington institutions where a whole lot of business is goin' on. And don't forget the networking potential of interoffice softball games into which most interns are drafted during the summers—meetin' and greetin' on the baseball diamond can translate into helpful and valuable contacts off the field. Interns can participate in all manner of social situations, perhaps for business, maybe for job opportunities, but mostly just for the fun of it. That freedom is something an intern should treasure. 🏆

chapter 1 summary



do

- **Accept that all offices, and thus all internships, are unique. You may have a vastly different experience than your friends or roommates.**
- **Read this book! It will help soften the learning curve that comes with working in such a incomparable environment as Capitol Hill.**

don't

- **Forget that you are an integral part of the democratic process – this town runs on interns!**



expectations and disappointments: coping with reality

as you merge into Capitol Hill traffic, view this chapter as approaching yellow flashing lights—warning you that you might want to familiarize yourself with some of the more perilous psychological bottlenecks ahead. You are likely to encounter pitfalls, experience anxieties and endure mind games that are universally shared by your intern compatriots—past and present. We don't want you blindsided by frustration or disillusionment. This section of the *Handbook* is offered in order to help you gain a few practical insights and develop some coping mechanisms for the ride ahead. Once you understand the lay of the land on the Hill, you'll be able to more easily maneuver over some of the rough spots, steer clear of blind alleys, and shift into high gear and a good attitude. The chapter begins with a hypothetical listing of intern expectations and disappointments to set the tone.



*Nothing is so
good as it seems
beforehand.*

—GEORGE ELIOT

*Fasten your
seatbelts. We're in
for a bumpy night.*

—BETTE DAVIS

(MARGO CHANNING) IN
ALL ABOUT EVE, 1950

*All I'm askin' is
for a little respect.*

—"RESPECT"

ARETHA FRANKLIN,
1967

Expectations

- I'm going to get to draft a bill. I'll see the Congressman everyday, maybe even go to lunch with him.
- I'll accompany the Senator when she testifies before the subcommittee.
- It's going to be exciting all the time.
- The office will have state-of-the-art technology.
- I'll help write a speech.
- I'll do in-depth research on international trade.
- I'll meet a lot of lobbyists.
- I'll have my own desk and free rein on my activities.
- I'll be involved in everything; the office would be lost without me.
- I'll get to go on the floor of the House when the Congresswoman votes.
- I'll be treated just like a regular member of the staff.

Disappointments

- The staff treats me like a second-class citizen. How 'bout an *Intern Bill of Rights*?
- If I'm not opening mail the whole day, I'm folding, stuffing and sealing it.
- Am I going to college to be a receptionist?
- I've been here two weeks and haven't even met the Congressman yet.
- I'm sick of just answering dumb letters. It's boring. When do I get to do something exciting?
- A movie subtitle for my internship could be *Nobody Knows My Name*.
- Everyone always seems so busy. I'm afraid to ask anyone a question for fear they'll get angry with me.
- It's my first day here and the Office Manager threw a pile of work at me, but didn't really tell me how to do it, where to look for answers, who to call. I'm really lost already. When's the next plane home?
- I expected cutting edge and high-tech, but got *Medieval Times*.
- I do things a third grader could do, like use the copier for hours on end.
- On the Senate side, you'll help out in the mail room; on the House side, you'll BE the mail room.
- Desk??? I don't even have an assigned place to sit!



Your first two weeks aren't necessarily going to be the greatest.

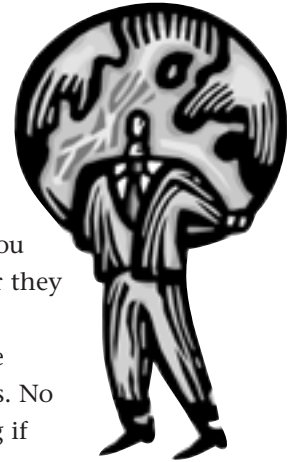
Many interns interviewed after completing their stay noted how unhappy they were when first coming aboard. They were disoriented, didn't know anybody's name, felt badly that nobody knew theirs, were unaccustomed to the environment, were unsure of themselves and were left wondering why in the world they had come in the first place. Remember, this phenomenon is not confined to an internship. It is part and parcel of the initiation rites for any new job. Everyone is pitched and rolled during

those first weeks before familiarity takes over and composure is gained. No cure really exists for the coming-into-a-new-place-and-not-knowing-what-you're-doing-here-blues except living through those gloomy moments with sights set on rosier days ahead. Grin and bear it while you find out what to do and how to do it.

Don't expect to save the world.

You may end up salvaging a part of humanity, but don't expect it as a matter of course. It isn't just because you're an intern and interns don't get to do that by definition. Many a Legislative Assistant (L.A.) hasn't managed to have a bill signed into law either. First of all, you are in a "Catch 22" situation. That is, "You can't do this because you need experience and we can't give you the chance to gain the experience because you need experience." This barrier faces most people who look for a job on the Hill, whether they have a Ph.D. or a law degree or 15 years seasoning in another field.

It's Hill experience that counts—knowing the people, the politics and how to pull the strings. Hill credentials translates into possessing some knowledge of how the place ticks. No matter what your preparation and training off the Hill, it's usually near the bottom rung if you haven't worked there unless, of course, you were the boss's campaign manager or you have expertise in a very specialized subject that is needed by a particular office. There are exceptions, but you are the newcomer and, besides possessing no Hill experience, you usually have little background in the manners and methods of a professional office, and so have a lot to learn.



Don't look now, but opportunity is knocking—opportunity dependent upon your own initiative. Don't let it pass.

Begin by doing every task assigned to you as best you can; you have to learn to crawl before you can walk.

Don't just open and sort mail—excel at it. Take phone messages like nobody else. Log-in constituent mail quickly and accurately, no muss, no fuss. Do it all with a smile on your face, a lift in your step and gladness in your heart. Be consistent in the quality of your work, even if you think it is a mundane assignment. Build your way up. Don't throw away any opportunity to perform a good job. Learn to anticipate. Sharpen your intuition.

For instance, one caseworker tells the story of the intern who was assigned a case and a sample question to probe for needed background information. The intern called the agency, asked the one question, got one answer and hung up. The caseworker was a bit exasperated that the intern didn't realize enough to ask the "next logical question" and pursue the matter further. It's an innate talent and difficult to teach, but an intern bent on doing his/her best isn't satisfied with only skimming the surface.

That isn't to say that you should harass everyone either or get ahead of yourself asking for something that isn't required—sometimes the basics are all you really need. But don't be afraid to use your common sense, which actually isn't so common! Your supervisors don't expect you to act like an unthinking robot; they do expect you to use your brain.

Step-by-step, prove yourself the master of all that is given to you. Consistent excellence always gets attention. Don't moan or mope. Dig in and make them notice you, but don't be obnoxious about it! It is this kind of uniform attention to detail that will earn you a shot at the bigger action. You had better believe that if the L.A. discovers that you can't correctly transmit information from a simple phone call, she is going to think twice about sending heftier assignments your way. Each job well done is another inroad made and another test successfully met.

On the subject of tasks, remember that all tasks are important; don't gripe about them.

Ninety percent of interns are over-qualified to be interns, but some don't realize this basic fact of life. Every once in awhile, an intern arrives in D.C. under the misconception that he or she is about to become the Member's/Senator's top advisor on major issues of life and death, about which the intern is sure he or she knows more than any other staff member. (*Yeah, right.*) Such an approach is simply destined to cause rough sailing ahead. A realistic, cooperative attitude that permits staff to know, love and appreciate you will open more opportunities to participate in the office work of your choice than will any other approach.

If you think some assignment is trivial, you may have to tone down your ego and adjust your focus. Don't develop low esteem just because of what you perceive to be "menial" task assignments. Congressional offices are as much driven by small daily details as they are by issues of worldly importance. The Office Manager doesn't sit around and dream up stupid jobs for interns to do. When the L.A. wants sign ons to a joint letter from a dozen offices, and you've just spent an hour at the copier, he isn't thinking of your daily exercise routine. Either you do it or he will have to do it. There isn't anybody else, and you're available. Everyone in the office performs their share of low-level-looking jobs and they don't want to meet with a wall of resistance when asking an intern to do the same. Deal.

One L.A. who puts in a considerable front-end investment in orienting her interns (more than the average L.A.) won't waste her time on someone copping a bad attitude. She takes a lot of care the first weeks to train her interns. While she has a soft spot for taking interns under her wing and teaching them something about the Hill, she also harbors a hard-core overall agenda of reaping a pay-off in the form of an astute, well-trained and knowledgeable intern who can lighten her workload. If an intern gives her a bad time griping about "grunt" work (or she hears about such moaning through the office grapevine), she basically cuts the cord. She believes she has provided the intern a good portion of her valuable time. If the intern reciprocates with a sour disposition, she feels the contract is broken. All the work in a congressional office is important because it contributes to the whole. It's a team effort.

Bottom line: It's hard to see the forest for the trees—it's easy to wallow in a self-pity mode. But from the staff perspective, interns perform valuable services for the office. Your work is useful.

Keep your eyes open and absorb everything you can. Maybe then you'll be able to bring it all together.

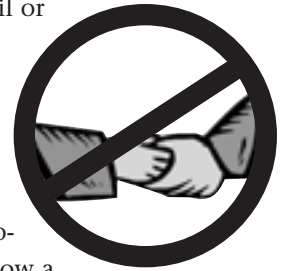
While making the most of your assignments, don't lay back and vegetate or turn into what one Office Manager calls a "labor faker." (Note: Those older supervisors of yours—even the young ones—have been around the block a few times and it's pretty difficult to pull the wool over their eyes. So watch out, they're not as dumb as they may look!) Turn into an entrepreneurial intern. Read everything you can get your hands on. Don't wait to be taught—teach yourself. Make learning about congressional resources or your own office or tracking a particular bill a special assignment of your own. Keep your eyes open to the activities around you or read some of that mail you're opening. Therein lies your chance to jump in when the occasion calls for it.



Ask how you might be helpful and perhaps develop projects for getting your foot in the door. Or you might be ready to volunteer to do something in a pinch—be it running over to the flag office with a request (you've finally found where that is located) or ordering a report from the Congressional Research Service (you've familiarized yourself with the topics). Perhaps you've made it a point to read *C.Q.* or *CongressDaily*, and if the opportunity presents itself, you can offer your services to cover a hearing—"Let me attend; I know a lot about student loan repayment." Whereas nobody would have thought of asking you, you've kept tabs on the situation and are able to fill in.

Don't expect to have your hand held every minute or even every day.

The people in your office are working on their own particular crisis or backlog of mail or special project. Most do not have the time or inclination to play tour guide, political science lecturer or big brother/sister. Personal attention provided to interns varies among offices and the record is rather spotty. One L.A. admitted that, "As an L.A. I'm too busy to take a chunk of my day to instruct interns. Besides I'm not such a whiz as a teacher and I just get frustrated because I don't have the patience. It is the intern's obligation to learn, not the office's obligation to instruct. Don't expect a tutorial; the doing is the learning." Some offices are special and go out of their way to show a bit of individual attention, but then that's why they're so special. On the whole, you're viewed as being in the real world now and rightfully so—you are! Some of this treatment is deliberate because it's a lesson in its own right—self-reliance and a test of your natural aptitude to cope without a daily ego massage. A congressional office can be a very hectic place at times and an ability to move with the forces is a necessity. Learn to adapt.



Look at your internship as that now-clichéd "learning experience."

After starting your college education, it's tough to embark upon another educational ordeal, but that's the best way to approach your internship. It isn't your job to produce one accomplishment after another. Leave that to the full-time staff members. That is not to say you shouldn't reach for greatness or otherwise keep your eyes on the prize. It is to point out that your overall feat should be that of fitting into a functioning congressional office and learning from your special proximity to the phenomenon that is Capitol Hill.

For instance, ask permission to leave the office once in awhile to attend committee hearings. You can do this on an ad hoc basis or you can pick an issue or subcommittee to track through your time on the Hill. Maintain a personal perspective on what you do and on how you view your own place on the organizational chart. While you may not be a committee counsel or a Chief of Staff, you are a part of the scene. Enjoy a certain freedom and flexibility that only comes with being an intern.

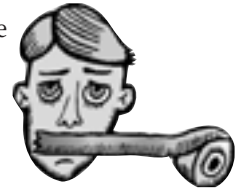
Expectation/disappointments: Quotable quotes

While compiling this guide, many people were asked to lend some words of wisdom on the subject of expectations and disappointments—school program supervisors, congressional staff members (many of whom were once interns) and interns themselves. A portion of those comments were melded into the previous section. However, many could not be clustered so easily under neat concise headlines. The best of the lot follow, in no particular order. It is believed that these gems stand on their own, and offer succinct commentary.

- Flexibility is very important. You may get stepped on or yelled at when it's not your fault. Just roll with it and don't bruise easily. Personality wise, don't be so strong-willed that if you do make a mistake you will be devastated to the point of ruining your whole internship. Understand that it's chaotic at times and people get a little short. Chill.
- A variation on the theme above is the fact-of-life that staff members in any office possess different work styles and disparate views of interns. Rather than learning by trial and error, it might be helpful to determine early on who in the office prefers communicating by e-mail versus telephone versus personal interruptions, and who might be the most appropriate full-time staff member to team up with or otherwise help on projects. If you can figure out these personal styles, you can avoid approaching a person the wrong way and suffering a serious rebuke, which is never easy to swallow.

Also know that some staff members are so stressed out that they don't have time for your questions—and that posture may be a momentary aberration due to a passing crisis or it may be an ongoing, full-time character trait.

- Still another element in being flexible is understanding that you are walking into an office full of intern history, some good and some bad. This means you may be judged initially by the standard of those who came before you, whether positively or negatively, and whether or not you think it's fair. If this happens to you, don't take it personally. The office will have expectations. Resolve to exceed them and chart your own course. You'll come through, and in the process, you may make life a little easier for interns yet to come.
- Stick around the office after hours, especially if the staff stays late. Staff are more relaxed because the phone calls have died down and the demands of the Member/Senator/floor/committee/home offices have eased as well. It's decompression time. Staff are usually more willing to talk and exchange thoughts. You're more likely to get your specific questions answered as well as pick up insights on the staff in general. With familiarity will come trust and a broadened work horizon.
- Find a good L.A. and latch on to him/her. Smart interns attach themselves to an L.A. and ingratiate themselves by doing everything they can. Finding a friendly mentor makes all the difference in the world. Soon the assignments will get meatier and the research more lofty as the L.A. and intern work as a team. It can turn into a mentor/protégé relationship if the L.A. is willing.
- During your first week as an intern, you learn how to get out of the way. By the second week you will have gotten out of the way. Come the third week, you may actually be able to contribute something.
- Try to avoid bringing the wrong kind of attention to yourself. In a lot of places, the squeaky wheel gets the grease; it's the opposite up here. Around these halls, life is more akin to an old Japanese proverb: "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down."
- Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's internship. You might have spent an entire morning at the copy machine while your bud down the hall basked in the lights, cameras and action of a particularly exciting committee hearing. It is unlikely that despair or jealousy will help the situation. You will constantly meet interns from other offices. When sharing experiences, remember that every office is unique unto itself. Your foremost responsibility is to your office. Your duties are those that the intern supervisor or Chief of Staff or L.A. assign you, not what you would like them to be. You might as well learn that lesson early, since it is a fact of life in the working world. In any job, we all have to do things that we may not necessarily like to do. Your hard work and loyalty will pay dividends down the road, and you'll get a piece of the action as well.
- Interns need to keep in mind that they are a participant-observer, yet the participant side tends to overwhelm the observer function. That is, students get so caught up in their work in the office that they forget the primary educational purpose of the internship, which is to learn by observing the legislative process. There is a clear, though implicit *quid pro quo*: the student's labor in return for the opportunity to observe and ask questions about the legislative process from the inside. Offices often forget this, and so do interns, but ideally neither should forget the essential trade-off.
- Especially during your first couple weeks on the job, lose any inhibitions you might harbor about asking questions. Ask away. When someone asks you to do something, you've got his/her attention, so make the most of it. That's the time to find out about the subject and exactly what the staff member wants you to do. Obviously, don't ask questions just for the sake of asking them. Ask pertinent questions and make sure you acquire complete information the first time around.



Staff members want the assignment done well, so they will be willing to give you their time. Communication is key; don't wait a week and then ask for clarification. Chances are the staff member will have expected the project to be completed by then.

- Some offices should limit the number of people they accept for internships. Unfortunately, some interns are so bountiful in an office that they're swinging from the chandeliers and fighting over who is going to answer the phone next. In such cases, interns have to carry around all their stuff because there is only one desk for five interns. Try to make the most of what is handed to you; go with the flow.
- The experience teaches you how government works. It isn't what you may think; things move a lot more slowly and incrementally. It isn't an instant gratification process around here.
- Like many opportunities, an internship is what you make of it. Those who choose to make the most of it will probably find it a satisfying and unique opportunity for public service.
- Some interns come to town in need of a definite attitude adjustment. They believe at the outset that photocopying or reception duty is definitely not for them. They prefer the development of foreign policy in personal consultation with the Senator or Congressman. These interns are most likely to return to school unfulfilled.
- You may find that you think you're smarter than someone and can mentally run circles around him/her, be it another intern or even a staff member. And perhaps you actually may be more on the ball than a colleague. But there isn't any need to flaunt it; you can create resistance and enemies. This doesn't mean that you should hide your talents. But perhaps you should conceal that chip on your shoulder and just play it cool. People appreciate quiet smarts more than in-your-face self-importance.
- Don't get paranoid (*i.e.*, "The Chief of Staff doesn't like me because all I do is grunt work, and she always points out everything I do wrong. Can I go somewhere else?"). For one thing, she's probably not picking on you; she's just trying to steer you on the proper course so you can learn from your mistakes. For another, you're going to have to deal with all manner of personalities in real life, so get over it. Take it as constructive criticism. You can't just erase people by hitting the delete button. The more earnest you are and the more you take things to heart, the more likely you'll fall into these thoughts of self-doubt. Lighten up.
- Interns do a lot of "grunt" work, but they also have the most unique opportunity in the world to witness the policymaking process from the inside. There are few places where interns will ever go where they will enjoy the access to information that they have on the Hill. A picture is worth a thousand words and an internship is worth a thousand credit hours.
- Finally, when in doubt, opt for more communication, not less. One office sits down with interns beforehand to discuss duties, goals, and expectations—both the intern's and office's. Then when it's over, interns are debriefed to inquire about whether the goals have been met and what can be done to improve the program. If your office doesn't use this practice, maybe you can recommend it. 🏠

chapter 2 summary



do

- Recognize that every task is important and must be done well. Your ability to get better work depends on it!
- Take initiative. Pitch in wherever and whenever necessary, without getting in the way or seeming too eager.
- Take advantage of this incredible educational experience by absorbing as much as you can.
- Realize that you have a huge learning curve the first couple weeks, but you'll get through it.

don't

- Consider any task beneath you - even veteran staff do "grunt work."
- Expect that you will save the world and be the Member's/Senator's most trusted advisor.
- Expect to receive much training or hand-holding. Sometimes, the doing is the learning.



acquainting yourself with the office

each office has a unique culture. Interns should try to become acclimated quickly with the functions, routines and habits of their new environment. Offices conduct business in their own distinct manners—their own well-defined practices and procedures, customs and conventions. We leave such customized explanations to the offices themselves. However, the following brief review will fill you in on some generalities of office transactions until your own office supplies the specifics. You'll be living for a couple of months in this initially unfamiliar territory. The faster you learn your way around, the more rapidly you “catch on,” the better will be your adjustment. You're going to have a lot of things thrown at you at once—there'll be a lot to absorb. Learn the ropes and you'll be more help than hindrance in no time.



*Hanging around
until you've
caught on.*

—ROBERT FROST
DEFINING COLLEGE
EDUCATION (AUTHOR
DEFINING INTERNSHIPS)

*You can observe
a lot just by
watching.*

—YOGI BERRA

*There's something
happening here.
What it is ain't
exactly clear.*

—"FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH"
BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD
1967

A symbiotic relationship

You walk into what appears to be a paper mill where people are scurrying to get out a “Dear Colleague” (whatever THAT is...) and to find out the status of the “continuing resolution.” (What language do they speak around here?) There is a constant parade of constituents through the Congressman’s office, that is, when he isn’t running to the House floor or to committee meetings. He hasn’t even noticed you’re here. The Office Manager immediately puts you to work opening mail, and when you’re finally done with one batch, another delivery comes in! Nobody told you that you could take off an hour for lunch, so you didn’t and now your stomach’s grumbling. Where did they say those snack machines were located? Welcome to Capitol Hill.

What is going on here?

Walking into a congressional office and adjusting to the landscape can be a bit unsettling at first, but it will turn into familiar terrain before too long. A congressional office wears many hats: political, legislative, representational, educational and administrative to name a few. Corresponding to these roles are activities that stem from them, such as answering mail, scheduling appointments, greeting constituents, participating in committee work, handling casework, meeting lobbyists, communicating with the press, voting on bills, offering amendments, visiting the home district or state and delivering speeches. There is a lot of action going on and many actors are in the drama.

Who are the players?

There are lead roles and bit parts in the congressional playbill—some are people, some are places. Listed below are a few with which the intern should make at least a passing acquaintance in order to understand the plot.

The District (House side only)

The district is the geographical boundary of a Representative’s jurisdiction and, more formally, the political, economic, social, and demographic composition of a House Member’s constituency. The House of Representatives comprises 435 districts, each with an average population of around 640,000 (as of 2000). Due to their small populations, seven states are represented by a single Member of Congress, called a Member-at-Large. In addition, Puerto Rico is represented by a resident commissioner while American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands are represented by delegates—all of whom may vote in committees, but not on the floor itself.

An intern should familiarize him/herself with the cities, towns, counties and boundaries of the district. Usually the office will have compiled such a list that will be floating around somewhere with this information. Also, read the profile on the district in the *Almanac of American Politics* or *Politics in America*; your office should have one if not both of these publications sitting on someone’s desk or bookshelf. In addition, the *Congressional Directory*, in the section on districts, lists the cities located in each district. The district and its interests are major determinants of the office’s direction, intent and focus. Study up on just what makes the district tick.

The State (Senate side only)

An entire state is in effect a Senator’s “district.” Each state is represented by two Senators regardless of the state’s population. That means each Senator from California represents 35+ million people while each Senator from Wyoming represents 500,000+ people (2004 figures). Obviously, a Senator from California will have to deal more rigorously with mail flow management than a colleague representing a

fraction of the Golden State's population. Read the profile on the state in the *Almanac of American Politics* or *Politics in America*, which will help you acquire a feel for the state from historical and political perspectives.

Member/Senator

In this *Handbook*, "Member" refers to a Member of Congress (M.C.), Congressperson, Representative, etc. Sometimes others use it to denote a Senator, although "Senator" is the most utilized title.

Congressmen/women serve two-year terms while Senators serve six-year terms. A Member/Senator sets the tone of an office; his/her personality, philosophy and political bent pervade just about every activity in which the office is involved. An intern should realize that there is only one public personality in the place, and that is the one embodied in the boss. Interns and the staff are parts of the woodwork when it comes to presenting a face to the public—the Member/Senator is the only person who counts.

Constituent

A constituent is an individual residing in the home district or state represented by a Member/Senator. They write, call, and e-mail a lot. They also vote.

Who's who in the office: Introduction

House rules limit the number of staff in a congressional office to 22 (18 permanent and four temporary), but budget constraints keep the average to around 15 per office. House offices receive operating funds through the Members Representational Allowance (MRA). The MRA varies among offices according to distance from D.C. (*i.e.*, travel costs) and cost of renting space in the district (*i.e.*, Manhattan is more expensive than Minneapolis). States, on the other hand, may differ in size by millions and millions of constituents. For this reason, Senate office staff budgets are based on state population (*i.e.*, Florida receives a lot more than Vermont). No ceiling is placed on the number of staff hired with that account, so an intern might be working with 50 people or 15 people, depending upon the size of the state.

All House offices maintain at least one office in the district, sometimes more. Senate offices also maintain offices back home. The home office represents the Member/Senator on his/her own turf and is the constituent's closest personal link with federal lawmakers. Constituent contact is much more common there than in Washington, and it is the place where casework, the "ombudsman" role of an elected official, is often headquartered. Constituents also call and write to the local offices with complaints, requests and opinions. Often, these messages are forwarded to Washington where you may get to answer them!

Washington staff job descriptions

Congressional staff job titles match the varied responsibilities the office must perform. Listed below are some of the principal positions and descriptions found in many offices. No office is quite like another, but typically each of these titles and tasks is assigned to someone in the Washington office. Your office may maintain a list of staff with their titles. If so, get hold of it to better understand the line-up. It is especially important to learn how the Legislative Assistants divide their subject areas (*i.e.*, John has agriculture, commerce, energy/environment, etc., while Jane has taxation, small business, defense, judiciary, etc.). You may consult such a list to decide to whom you should refer questions on particular topics.

- **Chief of Staff/Administrative Assistant** ("A.A.") is the top staff person in the office, holding a well-recognized, highly respected and influential position. The Chief of Staff manages the office

overall (often Washington and the district/state) from directing the production of work and coordinating with the Legislative Director to keeping track of home district/Hill politics, overseeing personnel, representing the Member/Senator at various meetings and everything in between.

- **Legislative Director (“L.D.”)** is often the director of the legislative program/staff or person in charge of the Member’s/Senator’s committee work, depending on office hierarchy. The L.D. oversees and directs a portion or all of a Member’s/Senator’s legislative program, including creating a legislative program for the Member (*i.e.*, setting priorities, goals etc.), committee prep work for hearings, witnesses, testimony and legislative proposals, plus general issues oversight and initiatives, floor work, mail, etc.
- **Legislative Assistants (“L.A.s”)** (number varies) work under the direction of the Chief of Staff or L.D. Work is apportioned along committee or subject lines where L.A.s take on the same responsibilities for their areas as described for the L.D. Some offices distinguish L.A.s by the issues they were assigned, and may therefore have “senior” L.A.s. who handle what are considered more priority issues. They may also help answer constituent mail, especially on the House side.
- **Legislative Correspondents (“L.C.s”)** are responsible for answering legislative correspondence from constituents. Not all offices create a separate position; on the House side in particular, L.A.s may answer their own legislative mail. Activities can range from generating standard computer letters to researching legislative issues on which the Member/Senator has received mail.
- **Executive Assistant/Scheduler** handles the individual needs of the Member/Senator including scheduling, files, personal calls and correspondence, travel arrangements, bookkeeping, and assorted personal tasks and errands. These activities may be divided between two people with the scheduler managing all of the Member’s/Senator’s time, be it lunch with constituents, a picture with a Girl Scout troop, a town hall meeting, phone calls or visitors.
- **Office Manager** performs the nuts and bolts office administering, which may include monitoring support staff, office accounts, equipment, furniture, supplies and the filing system. This person basically works with all administrative and legislative staff to make the office function smoothly and often oversees intern applications, recruitment, selection, orientation and supervision. He or she may also make sure that the office plants don’t die.
- **Staff Assistant** is the front desk assignment, usually acting as chief “visitor greeter” and “phone answerer.” He/she performs a wide variety of tasks with emphasis on constituent tours, general requests, opening/routing mail and, obviously, assisting other staff members as needed.
- **Press Secretary/Communications Director** is the Member’s/Senator’s publicity director who is responsible for “getting the word out” on the Member’s/Senator’s activities via press releases, mailings, newspaper columns, speeches, schedule announcements, the Web site, e-newsletters, etc. The Press Secretary may also monitor press clippings.
- **Systems Administrator** manages all computer hardware and software systems used by office, including maintaining the office Web site, Internet and intranet systems. They are also responsible for electronic processing and file management of constituent mail.
- **Caseworker** handles constituent casework including initial problem identification, contacts with agencies, follow-up letters and case resolution. The Washington offices may or may not have a caseworker on staff.

See Chapter 11 for definitions of the District/State Director, Field Representative and District/State Caseworker/Constituent Services Representative.

Fitting in

An office may comprise individuals, but it should function as a team to promote the best interests of the politician-policymaker and the people. An intern, while a unique player, should attempt to blend in quickly with the office unit. There'll be plenty of time to stand out and shine later on, so practice being inconspicuous while lending a hand wherever you can. That cooperative spirit alone will make you a standout. Each office is different, often reflecting the personality of the boss and the district/state, but there are enough similarities to produce a common set of ground rules to start the intern rolling.

First things first: What to know immediately

Official I.D. card

Identification badges are issued to employees, interns, and media representatives working on Capitol Hill. Obtaining one for yourself will be one of the first “jobs” you perform in the office. An intern I.D. card allows you entry into most areas staff are allowed, including the staff gallery of the House/Senate chamber.

- **In the House**, an I.D. card can be secured by filling out a “Congressional I.D. Request Form,” with your name, Social Security number, service termination date, status and hours. The completed form must be signed by the sponsoring Member/Senator/committee chair. Your office supervisor will no doubt prepare or help you complete this form upon your arrival. Once this step is finished, fax the form to the I.D. office (5-0239) at least one day in advance. The next day, take some other form of identification, such as a valid driver’s license, to the I.D. office, 321 Cannon HOB between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., M-F (5-3820). Fill out another form there, smile for the camera and collect your shiny new I.D. card.
- **In the Senate**, the U.S. Senate Sergeant At Arms issues intern identification cards. A letter or a standard “request of assistance” form to the Sergeant at Arms must be prepared by the Senator’s office providing the intern’s name, Social Security number, termination date and payroll status. Bring the information and picture I.D. to SD-G58 (Dirksen Senate Office Building ground floor) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. M-F (4-2338) to have your picture taken and collect your I.D. card.

To whom do I report?

It may be apparent with whom you check-in the first day, but you can be handed off to any number of staff members for this or that project, and the lines of authority may blur before you have had a chance to get your bearings. In many cases, the Office Manager holds overall authority for the intern program and administrative tasks while Legislative Assistants supervise research assignments. Get the lines of authority in order to get the priorities straight. This clarification is especially critical when you’ve been asked by a half dozen people to do a half dozen tasks “immediately.” Don’t panic. And don’t sit quietly feeling overwhelmed and hoping the problem will go away. It won’t. Timidity is not a positive attribute for an intern when it translates to inaction or unmet expectations on the part of your supervisors. If you’re unsure of next steps, go to your supervisor and seek guidance (quickly) in sorting out the tasks, and then make sure all the parties involved know where their project stands if it cannot be accommodated within the assigned timeframe. Communication is key; no surprises.

What is my work area?

No doubt you'll be provided a place to sit, but don't expect that corner office with all the windows. Space is precious on Capitol Hill, and interns are not allotted premier landing strips. But look around you; many of your older, more experienced colleagues aren't exactly lounging in spacious digs either. Be flexible, and try to organize that space to control the paper flow that will soon swamp you. At a minimum, get a hold of some file folders for your separate projects/people and label them somewhere clearly with your name. In this manner, your papers will always be together and if you accidentally leave them somewhere, they can be easily identified and returned to you. (Don't forget to relinquish any outstanding material in those files to the original supervisor of the project(s) before you finish your internship.) Also, a small 6" x 9" spiral notebook comes in handy for jotting down notes and compiling "to do" lists; again, make sure your name, office and phone number are written in the inside cover for easy recovery if ever misplaced.

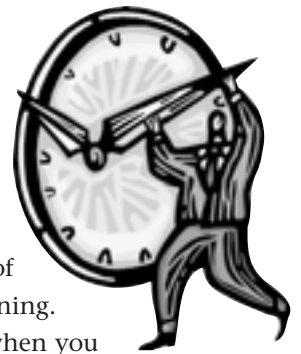
Keep the chaos contained by straightening up your desk/space at the end of the day. If you put off this daily tidying task until morning, an early a.m. crisis can scatter to the wind all those precious scraps of paper, and the reconstruction process can be time-consuming. If you want to be treated seriously, you cannot afford to lose things or backtrack/redo previously researched work. It's called being organized. Treat your space with respect. The care and attentiveness with which you approach your assignments reflect on your work ethic and contribute to an overall impression others use to gauge your internship in general.

Office hours

Notwithstanding long commute times, when are you expected to be in the office? When is quitting time? Offices may require additional evening time and occasional weekend work. About lunch—is it only an hour from 12 to 1 o'clock or can it be stretched into a picnic until 3 o'clock? Or do staff "stagger" lunch hours so that the office is always adequately staffed? Do you have to "cover" for other staffers when they go to lunch? Everyone can't go at once.

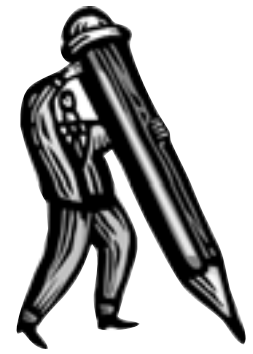
The office relies on you. An emergency can crop up at any time, and knowledge of your whereabouts is vital. Call in when you're running unexpectedly late in the morning. Give timely notice when you'll be leaving early. Also advise the appropriate people when you are leaving to go anywhere outside the office—to lunch, a hearing, the Library of Congress, etc.—and when leaving for the day. This information helps in taking messages and coordinating things in general. If you are detained longer than you expected, call in from time to time to make sure you're not needed back in the office.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for time off for special events. If you want to see that cool exhibit or a session of the Supreme Court or Mark McGwire's testimony regarding steroid use in baseball before the House Government Reform Committee, is it okay to give fair warning and take off or are arrangements more formal? Offices are pretty understanding, but advance planning and refraining from going overboard will usually be appreciated and rewarded.



Sign-in/sign-out policies

Most offices have an established procedure for staff to sign-in and sign-out as they come and go throughout the day, though with the high volume of BlackBerrys and other PDAs on the Hill, staff are virtually accessible 24/7. Staff and interns are expected to give proper notice when they leave for lunch, a meeting, an errand, etc. Most staff members simply e-mail one another when they will be out



of the office with information on their whereabouts and when they will return. A few offices may still use a sign-out sheet posted in the common area. It doesn't matter which method your office uses, you just have to be able to track down staff members if the Member/Senator wants them or if they are needed back in the office.

Key to the office

In some offices it's strictly taboo. Other offices routinely provide office keys to interns as a matter of course. What about yours?

Addressing the Member/Senator

Both U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives are considered "Members of Congress." A U.S. House Representative is more likely to be called "Member," "Congressman/woman," or occasionally "Representative." A Senator may be called "Member," but is usually addressed simply as "Senator." How he/she is addressed by the office staff can vary according to the individual preference—Senator, Congressman/woman or by first name. It's best to ask and start out on the right foot.

What exactly is "the office?"

The majority of House offices comprise three-room suites. Some have annexes, however, which means one of the three rooms is separated from the main suite by a couple of doors, a hallway or two, or by several floors—not ideal, but that's the breaks of seniority and the office space lottery. An annex houses assorted staffers, supplies, equipment and an occasional intern or two. In the Senate, the office entails many more rooms, nooks and crannies. Where a Senate office staff cannot be accommodated in one string of uninterrupted rooms, other rooms or annexes also exist. Learn your territory.

In addition, each Member/Senator has some sort of storage space for accumulated correspondence, supplies, files, etc., called a storeroom, cage (Cannon HOB) or attic locker (Senate). You may be called upon to run an errand there. Senators (and a very few House Members) also have special "hideaway" offices in the Capitol building, which are used for a variety of activities, depending on the Senator. Some treat them as offices and encourage staff to conduct business with them there; others utilize them as private getaways from the frantic pace on the floor or the hub-bub of the regular office. Sometimes staff won't even know the location! It just depends on the individual.

And that's just in Washington...

Just as you make it a point to understand the lay of the land in Washington and "Who's Who" among the staff there, make it your business to learn the location(s) of the Member's or Senator's offices back home, their phone numbers and office hours, and identities/names of staff members who work in each place. Some may have "satellite" or traveling offices with part-time hours, too. Sooner or later (and probably sooner) you will answer the phone and need to pass on this information to an inquiring constituent. Don't wait until the constituent's call is blinking madly on "Hold" to figure it out.

District/state knowledge

If you can't get your hands on anything more thorough, at least read the section on your Member's district or Senator's state in the *Almanac of American Politics* or *Politics in America*. They provide the basics plus a nice narrative and a bit of history. Someone in your office should have a copy of one or the other of these volumes. If not, they can be found in the Hill libraries, online, and CRS research centers.

On the House side, the district can get so complicated with split cities and divided counties, the definition can boil down to dissecting zip codes. The Office Manager will probably keep a list of all the cities in the district. You should acquire a copy. If you know the zip and wonder if it's in your district, tap into "Zip" on HouseNet, the House intranet (<http://HouseNet.house.gov>) and find out the name of the Member who represents it. Familiarity with the district will help later in answering a phone inquiry of whether "x" city is in the district, or in identifying a letter from outside the district that must be referred to the district of origin.

Newsletters and questionnaires

Newsletters and questionnaires are mailings that are sent to every household in the district or state according to whatever schedule an office creates for itself. They are part public relations and part education—for constituents and Members/Senators alike. Many offices mail out a newsletter and questionnaire—or a combination thereof—each term, though this practice is decreasing because of the cost and time savings of online communications. They also usually mail the results of the questionnaire to the district. You should ask the press person for copies of the last few issues to learn what the boss has been communicating to the people—and how the constituents have been responding to the boss.

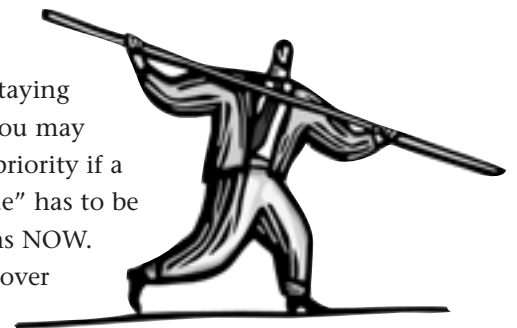
Speaking for the Member/Senator

For the most part, even though you work for Congresswoman X or Senator Y—and may be the only person with whom most calling constituents will end up speaking—you cannot speak FOR the Member/Senator. It may be difficult to comprehend this distinction at first, but in reality only a few of the staff, in limited circumstances, ever speak for the Member/Senator or attempt to represent his/her views. In time, when you draft legislative correspondence, you may very well be attempting to relay the Member's/Senator's stances on particular subjects. But those draft letters undergo a very stringent clearance/authorization process. A phone call or conversation with constituents in the office or with lobbyists at a reception cannot be subject to such double-checking.

Therefore: never speak for the Member/Senator. When people call or come by to express an opinion, your job is to listen and then relay those concerns accurately and objectively to the most appropriate person in the office. Even when you are outside the office, remember that the contents of your conversations can reflect on the Member or Senator. Your personal opinion is something that should remain private.

Crisis situations

They are a matter of course in congressional offices. There are always emergencies, flurries of activity and never, ever enough time to handle circumstances that seemingly pop up from nowhere. Be aware of the atmosphere around you. Lend a hand if you see a chance, but lay back if your offer of aid is perceived as interference. Don't take a rebuff at such a time personally. There are moments when staying out of the L.A.'s hair will be the greatest help of all. Other times, you may believe your work has a measure of priority, but there is only one priority if a press release must be churned out by 5 o'clock or a "Dear Colleague" has to be hand-delivered before the start of the noon session, and that means NOW. If you're ever confused about the precedence of one piece of work over another, just ask your supervisor.



You shouldn't allow yourself to get overloaded either. Most of the time you won't be asked to handle two life-or-death situations at the same time. One will keep you busy enough!

Alphabet soup and a foreign language

From your very first day on the job, you will be assaulted with initials, numbers, shorthand abbreviations for very big laws and a jargon that can only be translated by a native of the area. Don't be afraid to ask for translations of Capitol Hill's mother tongue. While you're probably familiar with FYI and ASAP, there's also HHS, OMB, NEA, ADA, CRS, LIS, and tons more. People reference H.R. 144 or S. 3500 or P.L. 109-174 or Title IX (Roman numerals are very popular) or Section 508, and everyone seems to understand. If they're not talking initials or numbers, they're murmuring about bills/laws entitled Brady Bill or the Hyde Amendment.



In addition, your office will likely use initials on internal correspondence and materials to designate the Member/Senator and staff. So if your boss' name is Congressman John Doe and your Chief of Staff is Jane Smith, you may see (or hear) "JD" and "JS" used as shorthand.

Then comes the quintessential vocabulary that may start out easy enough—A "Dear Colleague" is just a letter another Member/Senator circulates to inform colleagues of some issue or enlist their co-sponsorship of a bill. A "Whip Packet" is merely an envelope of bills and reports delivered by the Member's/Senator's respective party to congressional offices. But then it gets out of hand with postal patron, Committee of the Whole, point of order, joint session, gallery, cloakroom, Extension of Remarks... Help! Where's the Hill-speak/English and English/Hill-speak dictionary?

With respect to its unusual speech, Capitol Hill is a foreign country but, unfortunately, there isn't a reference book available that defines every idiomatic term. You'll have to pick up this language, and all of its dialect, slang and colloquialisms by asking for a translation when you just don't understand what is being said. Nobody took this language as a college course requirement, so everyone, at one time or another, experienced a lack of fluency similar to what you will encounter upon arrival in the land of Hill-speak.

What's a recess?

A recess is time out for Congress. During these periods, synchronized to occur throughout the year, Members/Senators usually return to their home districts/states to meet with constituents (In fact, recesses are also officially called "district work periods" in the House and "state work periods" in the Senate). They can also catch some "R & R" (rest and relaxation) with the family, take to the golf links, or pursue any number of other recreational and official activities. Interns should know that the boss usually disappears from D.C. during a recess and the office breathes a sigh of relief as well. Especially during the summer, staff vacations often parallel the recess schedule. August tends to be quiet and casual up on the Hill as Members/Senators and staff are scarce, and those staff that are hanging around are focused on cleaning off their desks, clearing up the files, catching up on constituent mail, or attending to projects ignored during the hustle and bustle of the House or Senate in session.

Congressional Intern Program

The Congressional Intern Program, which serves both House and Senate interns, operates under the auspices of the Committee on House Administration in the House and the Committee on Rules and Administration in the Senate. The program does not provide placement for those trying to land internships, rather it furnishes a comprehensive view of Washington D.C. and additional activities for interns such as a weekly lecture series in the summers. For more information, contact the House

Administration Committee at 1309 Longworth HOB (5-8281) or visit <http://interns.house.gov> (available via the House intranet).

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) also conducts an intern orientation that results in receiving a CRS identification number which is required in order to access their services.

Technology/equipment

A congressional office is stocked with a lot of technology-related equipment, some of which are unique to the Hill. Listed below are some of the more universally used types of technology/equipment you may find in your office.

- **Computers** are as much a fact of life on Capitol Hill as they are everywhere else, although the technology of certain offices somewhat lags behind the more state-of-the-art outside world. House and Senate offices are allowed to purchase any equipment that meets the minimum technical standards put forth by the Committee on House Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules. Your office may have one system while your fellow intern's office may use another. All operate their own intra-office network, with connections to the district/state office(s), Correspondence Management System (CMS), e-mail, and the Internet.
- **The Correspondence Management System (CMS)** is the core of a computer system in a congressional office and, as such, represents the most important and specialized software interns will use. CMS packages are databases designed specifically for the congressional environment to manage constituent services, especially correspondence and casework needs. You will become very familiar with your office's CMS if you are tasked with the login and/or answering of constituent mail (see more information later in this chapter).
- **E-mail** is the lifeline of communication in all offices. With a few exceptions, offices communicate internally within the office, but also with other offices, the district/state, constituents and anyone else with an e-mail address, as long as it's regarding official business. For instance, Debbie wants to tell Jim that she's gone to a committee hearing, and he should meet her there when he returns from his briefing. She just leaves the message for him on e-mail and takes off. Jim will check his messages, learn of Debbie's whereabouts and her request of him. If either Debbie or Jim have office-issued BlackBerrys or other PDAs, they can communicate this information in real-time.

Some offices record incoming phone messages via e-mail. If a person is unavailable, the Staff Assistant records the appropriate information onto the computer as the caller provides it to him/her, and forwards the message to the staff member's e-mail for later retrieval when he/she returns. During reception duty you may have to take over this message management but be very careful to not release staff e-mail addresses unless authorized to do so. Most interns are not assigned their own e-mail addresses in the office, but a generic e-mail address for the office's interns used to conduct official business. Your supervisor will describe your office's e-mail policy during your orientation.

- **The Internet** is just as critical on the Hill as it is off the Hill. The development of congressional Web sites and other online communication tools (such as e-newsletters, blogs, and RSS feeds) have produced huge implications for reaching constituents and voters around the country. Personal offices, committees, and leadership all maintain Web sites, but the information provided varies by office. Check out your Member's/Senator's site to see where they stand on issues, what they're working on, and what services they provide to constituents. As technology advances on the Hill, offices will be making better use of these tools to keep the folks back home informed of the goings-on in Washington. Make sure you stay up to date as well by reading what's provided online. Just make sure to save your browsing addiction for after hours.



■ **BlackBerrys and PDAs** are rampant on the Hill, and staff have a love-hate relationship with them. Their use by staff is an important development in recent years, especially with regards to security and emergency preparedness, but being accessible at all hours also has its disadvantages. Staff can now be in touch while on vacation, on sick leave, while driving to and from work – you get the idea. Their use (and addictive nature) also means that you will see staff (and sometimes the Member/Senator) continually sending and receiving e-mails during meetings and conversations, which can be rather frustrating to others. The use of BlackBerrys varies by office, however. Your entire office could have them or maybe just the senior staff members. Either way, it is highly unlikely that you, as an intern, will be given one (sorry).

■ **Copiers** come in all sizes and shapes. Some sophisticated models are a bit more complicated than the coin-operated versions back at the school library. Don't be shy to ask about the copier's operation and features. You'll only be more embarrassed when the paper gets stuck or the press release comes out on pink paper. Also, watch how others troubleshoot a jammed copier (opening the door, looking over and under and inside to pull out stuck paper, etc.) so you're able to fix the machine by yourself when encountering the same situation rather than having to call on others to bail you out.

■ **Fax machines** are likely to occupy a good bit of your time. Many offices receive so many faxes that they have two units—one for incoming transmissions and another for outgoing ones. It may be your job to make sure that the numerous incoming faxes are properly sorted, stapled together and routed to recipients in a timely fashion. On the flip side, most offices can now send an outgoing “blast fax” through e-mail, but you may be called upon to lend a hand now and then.



As with the opening the mail (see below), make the most of this experience. You can learn a lot by: quickly glancing over the morning news clips faxed to Washington from the district office as you pass them onto the Press Secretary; keeping apprised of the types of events the boss has been asked to attend; reading through the press release you are sending out (in-between transmissions); or checking out what constituents are saying in their faxed letters to the office regarding their opinions on pending bills. Depending upon your office's individual adoption of technology, this may also be done over e-mail, but it is still a good way to keep up on the latest news and information. As they say, information is power.

■ **Signature font** (“sig font”) prints the Member's signature when a letter is printed, if the computer has been properly coded. This is the most popular way to place the signature of Members/Senators onto a letter. There are still a few offices in the Senate, however, who use an autopen—a machine that many offices used for years to sign the Member's/Senator's signature on letters.

Basic tasks

The tasks interns perform in offices vary in volume, emphasis, type, tone and tenor. Since intern assignments constitute such a mixed bag, it is impossible to draw up a typical and comprehensive list of tasks without causing a lot of confusion. However, there are several activities that interns almost universally perform, and perform immediately: greeting visitors; answering the phone; and responding to correspondence.

What follows is an elaboration on these three basic responsibilities that attempts to be detailed enough to offer practical pointers, but general enough to avoid constantly running counter to individualized office procedures. It cannot completely accomplish the latter goal, however, and each intern must learn the tailored specifics for his/her office.

Greeting Guests

So, you're sitting at the front desk and people keep walking in all the time. Who are they and what do you do with them? Constituents, lobbyists, press people, couriers, appointments and lost tourists all come wandering into the office at one time or another. Be friendly and helpful. If you don't know what to do, at least greet the people, seat them and find another staff person to handle the rest. This can be especially true when you are not "on" reception duty at the moment, but the reception desk is temporarily vacant. Don't leave a person standing blankly in the reception room just because greeting guests isn't in your job description ("It's not my job, man..."). It's simply poor protocol, bad manners and a negative reflection on the office and the Member or Senator you serve.

When welcoming constituent visitors, recollect how confused you were when you arrived on the Hill. Constituent visitors are often in the same boat. Greet them warmly; make them feel comfortable. You may be instructed to make sure visitors sign the guest book; many offices maintain such a running log of visitors. In addition to gallery passes, your office may have prepared a tour packet that you can offer along with pleasant conversation about how long the tourists have been in town, how their trip has gone thus far, where they are from, etc. You might offer them water or coffee if that is appropriate, as well as friendly conversation. Believe it or not, many people are nervous to enter the hallowed halls of Congress. Your role is to put them at ease and make them feel at home. The office will have established a standard procedure for handling constituents who drop by and want to see the Member/Senator. Make sure you know what to do.

Each day, the Member's schedule is printed up and usually one copy is sent to the front desk. In that way, you can be aware of expected appointments, greet them and buzz the scheduler or executive assistant when they arrive. Appointments for staff people will also announce themselves, and you will have to inform the staff person of appointment arrivals.

Unexpected visitors/lobbyists drop by as well. They may say they'd like to talk to the L.A. who handles tax matters. Try to find out as much information as possible, and then contact the staff member with the visitor's name, organization if applicable, and the issue he/she wants to discuss. Always find out the lobbyist's or visitor's name. Copy it down to share with the most appropriate staff person to meet with the visitor. Staff people and the Member/Senator meet many people and cannot always remember names. Again, your office may have a policy about unscheduled appointments and how to handle them. You should learn what to do and how to politely deal with this traffic.

For visitors in general, try to be smooth in your reception. If you look like you don't know what you're doing, you've blown it. Also, once visitors are in the office, remember that all conversations there are being heard by non-staff members. Be discreet.

Phone duty—the system

Your phone at home likely doesn't have flashing lights, an intercom system or transfer/conference call/speaker phone/hold buttons. Before you pick up the receiver, learn a little about the structure.



Internal Capitol Hill Calls: Breaking the Code

On Capitol Hill, phone numbers comprise the numbers "22" in front of a five-digit number beginning with 3, 4, 5, 6 or 8. The third digit can help tell you from where the call originates.

From any office on Capitol Hill, if you want to dial any 223, 224, 225, 226 or 228 phone number, drop the "22" and dial the last five digits. This is part of an internal phone system. For example, if you want to call the Committee on House Administration, just dial 5-8281.

Prefix	Designation
223	House “soft numbers” that are for intra-House inbound and outbound service. You cannot make an off-the-Hill call from these numbers, nor can you receive a call from off-the-Hill—the call must go through the main office phone number.
224	Office affiliated with the Senate side
225	Office affiliated with the House side
226	Non-Member offices (House side), usually committee or support, or Member organization; often physically located in an annex building; also used for some newer fax numbers and direct staff lines in the personal offices of Members.
228	Office affiliated with the Senate side.

Incoming calls

Most congressional offices are very tight on space. This used to lead to a lot of confusion when phone calls were transferred or when direct dial lines rang. House offices handsets now offer the capability to broadcast unique rings for staff so you can tell when it is your phone that is ringing. The Telecommunications Group (6-4101) at the House can show you how to program your custom rings or you can find information on HouseNet (<http://HouseNet.house.gov>). Additionally, most offices use Caller ID to help distinguish from where a call is coming.

Outgoing non-hill and long distance calls

To reach an outside local number, you must push “9” first and then the seven-digit phone number. Since the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area comprises two states plus the District of Columbia, calls to close-in Virginia and Maryland suburbs are considered local, but still require an area code (703 and 571 for Virginia; 301 for Maryland). To make a long distance business call, the procedure is essentially the same as for local calls: push “9,” then “1,” followed by the area code + seven digits. To make an international call, dial 9, then 011, then the country code, and then the seven-digit number. If making personal or otherwise non-congressional business calls, use your own credit card, since to do otherwise is against the law, and could get you and the boss in trouble.

Incoming/outgoing lines

Note that some phone lines rollover as “incoming” lines. That is, when they ring, if the first line is busy (and lit up), the call will rollover and ring the second line or third or fourth. Other lines are strictly “outgoing,” and no calls can be made into them unless the specific number is dialed. Sometimes these lines are reserved for the personal use of the Member/Senator or a specific staff person. Placing calls on outgoing lines frees up incoming lines so that people wanting to call the office won’t always get a busy signal. Make sure you’re using the correct lines for your business.

Hold Button/Intercom

The hold button is easy to identify; it’s usually red or marked “Hold.” When someone calls and you determine the caller’s name and the name of the person to whom they want to speak, place the caller on hold by pressing the hold button. It is important to use the hold button instead of simply placing your hand over the mouth piece because the newer phones can pick up what you say (which may be something you don’t want the caller to hear ...). The line the caller is on will begin flashing quickly (ringing lines flash slowly—it can take awhile to figure out the difference. Next look at the staff intercom list, which is a roster of staff member names next to two-digit numbers, usually taped to or near

the phone. First press the intercom button and next press the intercom number of the person to whom the caller wants to speak. Once the person you buzz picks up the line, inform them of the name of the person calling and indicate the number of the line (*i.e.*, "Theresa Romer is on 55") on which the person is located. In this case, the "55" refers to the last two numbers of the incoming line, which will differ office to office. Some offices say "Call on line 2," which refers to the second button on the unit.

Transferring Calls and Voicemail

Capitol Hill telephones are on a special system that allows for the routing of a call from the main office number to an annex or to another main office or to a committee or to just about any other Hill office number by depressing the "transfer" button and dialing the last five digits of the number. For instance, if an incoming caller has mistakenly been connected to the wrong office, you can transfer him to the proper office by pressing the transfer button, punching the proper five-digit inside-the-Capitol-Hill complex number, pressing transfer again and hanging up. The original caller and the new number will be connected (the caller's light will disappear from your phone once the call is connected). In some cases, such as when transferring a specific person to a specific staff member in an annex, you can press the transfer button, press the phone number, get the staff member on the phone to inform him/her the name of the person calling and then hit the transfer button again. Announcing the caller is just common courtesy.

If the person is not in, your office's procedure might dictate that you take a message for the person. (Note that most staff members do not want their direct phone numbers provided to callers, so make sure you know your office's policy on this matter.) Ask someone in your office to demonstrate how to transfer a call.

Occasionally, the Hill is the target of telecommunications scams. For instance, an office receives a call from "the telephone company checking on a problem." This is then followed by a request to transfer them to a non-Hill number. These calls could end up costing your office as much as \$4.99 a minute. NEVER transfer a call from an unknown person to a non-Hill number.

Almost all congressional offices use voicemail. This allows a caller to be transferred to the staffer's individual extension to leave a recorded message rather than leave a written one with the reception desk. If a staffer is not in or unable to take the call, ask the caller if he/she would like to leave a voicemail message. Much like the intercom, there will be a list of extensions opposite the names of staff members, and as with the transfer process you can transport the caller directly to an individual's voicemail. To help your office manage its voicemail, you can respectfully remind staff to: 1) change their greeting if they are going to be on travel, unavailable, or if they will have difficulty returning messages; 2) modify the message when they return; and 3) avoid creating excessive ringing of their phones (direct dial) by putting their phones on SEND ALL CALLS when they will be out of the office. This will send all calls directly to the staffers voicemail account without the phone ringing.

Additionally, the House has added to its phone function offerings a service called Message Manager, which can be downloaded for free off of HouseNet. Message Manager allows you to: receive faxes in your voicemail account; manage your voicemail from a PC; create phone message groups; look up any staff members' phone extension; and other services. Many offices, especially in the Senate, also have Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDDs), which allow them to communicate over the phone with constituents and others who cannot hear by typing messages much like a typewriter. Ask your office if they have a TDD and whether you will be expected to use it.

Phone books

There are separate telephone directories for the Senate and the House. In addition to identifying practically every conceivable person, place and thing on Capitol Hill and their corresponding phone numbers, the books also contain maps of the Hill and an explanation of the bell systems. Please familiarize yourself with these books as they are invaluable reference tools.

Also note that most desks have a “pull-out” wooden panel on which is usually taped a white card-board sheet listing House/Senate numbers and valuable/much-used miscellaneous numbers that are close to your fingertips. Study this sheet (or its big sister, usually up on the walls next to the elevators), learn what’s on it and you’ll locate your numbers quickly. Finally, the names, offices, room numbers and phone numbers of official House employees are all available online from the House intranet (<http://HouseNet.house.gov>) and the Clerk of the House’s intranet (<http://clerkhouse.house.gov>) while Senate employee information is available on Webster, the Senate intranet (<http://webster>).

Phone duty—the procedures

You may get placed at the front desk to handle phone calls your first day. Do you know what to do?

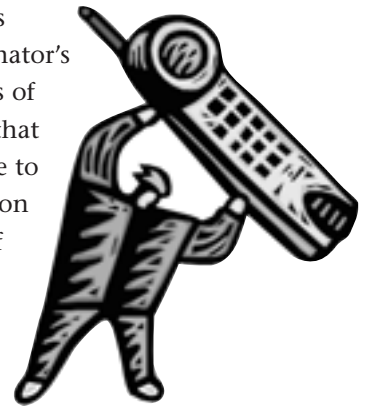
Answering the Phone

Don’t laugh—answering the phone involves a lot more than meets the eye, or in this case, the ear. Your voice represents the caller’s first impression of the Member’s or Senator’s office. You are on the front lines. Answering the phone is considered by many Chiefs of Staff to be the most important task undertaken by an intern. (So important, in fact, that some offices are afraid to put their interns on the phone.) Whether you take the time to do it well will play a big part in determining the first impression that you will make on your office. If you blow this assignment, you can potentially affect the other types of initiatives you will be allowed to take on.

Aside from simply picking up the receiver, as mentioned earlier, you need to be proficient in using the “hold” button, transferring calls without losing the caller and directing calls to the proper staff member using the intercom and voicemail. Learn your office’s standard phrase – “Senator Hill’s office. May I help you?” or “Good morning. Jon Stewart’s office” or “The 10th Congressional District of Indiana” or whatever. Be courteous. Use a lot of “pleases” and “thank yous” to project a friendly and helpful demeanor.

After acquiring the caller’s name, ask for the name of the organization with which the caller is affiliated. This question helps weed out press calls that should be directed to the Press Secretary or another designated staff person. Be wary of enterprising reporters who call and ask for the L.A. (sometimes by name) who handles budget issues without identifying themselves as reporters. Some reporters believe they may acquire more or better information if they don’t have to reveal their press affiliation, which probably isn’t the case. At any rate, you can save yourself and the office some trouble by catching them before they get too far.

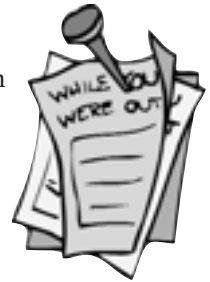
Always put a caller on “hold” when seeking further information or the whereabouts of a staff member. Holding your hand over the receiver isn’t sufficient. It is unprofessional to talk to someone else while the caller can overhear the conversation or extraneous office noise. Likewise, if you’ve told a staff person that someone is on the line, but you notice that they never picked up the phone, after awhile pick it up yourself and suggest to the caller that it might be better if you took a message. Don’t leave a caller to “die” on the blinking line. They’ll just hang up after a bit and call you back anyhow.



How to Take Messages

In conjunction with answering the phone, most offices maintain strict procedures on just how to take a message when the person called is not in.

- Take messages thoroughly; acquire the correct name, organization and number, and don't be afraid to ask the caller to spell John Smith, because it could be Jon Smythe. Even if the caller says that the staff person that he/she is calling already has the number, please ask for it—with the possible exception of a staff member's spouse! If you have trouble or encounter resistance on the part of the individual calling, simply ask the caller to hold and then buzz the staff person via the intercom. Also, in order to confirm the information you take down, repeat the name and number to make sure there is no possibility of a mistake. Finally, put the date, time and your initials on every message. It seems kind of small and insignificant, but staff people really pick up bad vibes about an intern if a name/number is wrong or a message is garbled.
- In general, don't volunteer specific information on why a person isn't in. In particular, never admit the staff person hasn't come in yet in the morning. That's the business of that person and the office. You can inadvertently let the cat out of the bag on something that may be confidential. This unintentional indiscretion can be especially lamentable if it involves the Member/Senator. Let an authorized staff person tell the caller the whereabouts of the boss. A good general phrase is, "He is unavailable."
- Finally, make sure that wonderfully complete, neat and tidy message gets to the staff person! If your office takes down messages in hardcopy, don't leave it on the staffer's desk full of paper where it's likely to be lost. Try to place it in a conspicuous place, such as his/her chair or computer monitor, where it can be easily seen. Otherwise, if your office lets you use e-mail, send the message electronically to the appropriate staff people, and you'll always have a record that you passed the message along. Your office will train you on the proper procedures and staff preferences for recording messages.



Talking to the Press

Short answer on speaking with the press: don't. There are people on the staff designated to speak with the media. What you may think is a joke or polite conversation, or just plain old trying to be helpful, can end up in the morning paper and cause much embarrassment to the Member/Senator. The press is always out for a story—and rightfully so. It's their business. However, your Member's/Senator's perception of a story and the press's perception might be worlds apart. Let someone else handle it.

Phone Calls for the Member/Senator

Normally, a Member's executive assistant or scheduler receives all phone calls for the Member/Senator. So, if the Member's/Senator's spouse, or the president of the United States, or whoever calls, put them on hold, buzz the executive assistant/scheduler, and provide her/him with the name. There should also be a back-up staff member if this person is not in. Some offices may have a policy that dictates that certain callers, such as the Member or Senator's spouse, children or other Members of Congress, be put through directly. All of this is by way of saying that it is rare that you will buzz the Member/Senator directly with phone calls; most are usually screened first. Unless otherwise stated, if the Member/Senator is out, the executive assistant/scheduler is out, and no one is around to help, take a message and leave it in the message box/e-mail/voicemail of the executive assistant/scheduler as appropriate. Naturally, if it is a VIP or some kind of crisis, try to locate a higher authority to handle the call.

One other note: in offices cultivating an open, accessible, in-touch-with-the-people image, constituents may call and ask for the Member by first name. It should be apparent with one or two follow-up questions that most just want to comment on an issue or a bill. Offices will differ on whether interns should make the determination that it's just an issue call rather than a VIP, but doing so may keep the executive assistant/scheduler from being swamped. Seek guidance from staff.

Whip Calls

Whip calls are transmitted to House/Senate offices on a designated phone line announcing a vote or special message. (The “Whip” is a party leadership official whose job is to round up votes in support of or against pending legislation/inform the Members of upcoming floor proceedings.) The call will usually be a recorded message. In some offices, one person or specified people are designated to hear the calls. In others, the receptionist just announces “Whip Call!” and whoever is interested picks it up. If you happen to be using the line the Whip Call usually comes in on, you will hear a ringing as you are speaking. The ringing will continue until you hang up and someone picks up. If the designated person meant to receive the call is not in, you might take a message and put in their message box/e-mail/voicemail. The Whip Call will repeat over and over until you hang up, so don't worry if you don't understand everything the first time you hear it.

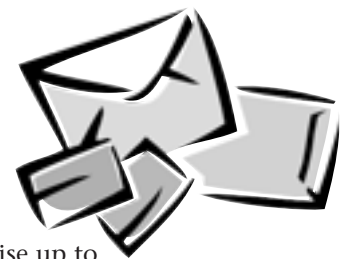
Grant/Contract Announcements

Various government agencies routinely e-mail or fax congressional offices to notify them of a grant or contract that has been awarded to a particular agency, organization or person in the Member's district/Senator's state. Sometimes, however, a verbal announcement may come in over the phone. This early warning system is a matter of congressional courtesy on the part of these agencies so that the office may contact the successful applicant first if so desired. If such a call comes in while you are covering the phones (the agency representative will say “I have a grant announcement...”), take down the information carefully and note if written documentation will be coming via fax or e-mail.

Upon receiving this information, share it with the person designated to receive these messages, but if that person is not in, inform the Chief of Staff. Likewise, make sure to relay any incoming fax to the proper staff member right away, because the office may want to crank out a press release on the grant award. As always, be sure to include the date and your name on any message you take.

Mail is my life

The information below covers general mail procedures, computer procedures and the basics of drafting letters. Dealing with the mail is a continual and time-consuming requirement of all congressional offices, which each day receive neatly bundled piles at their doorsteps/desk tops. It never stops. It has to be opened, sorted, processed, and in the case of letters, reviewed, logged, routed, researched, answered, printed, folded, stuffed, sealed and sent on their way. (This doesn't even cover e-mail, which can comprise up to 70% of an office's incoming correspondence from constituents!) These steps along the mail trail take up much time and effort on the part of the office. Interns provide a lot of the fuel to keep this engine running smoothly.



Incoming Mail/Routing Mail/General Info

- Mail is delivered three times a day to House offices—twice in the morning and once in the afternoon. There are four deliveries on the Senate side, two times each in the morning and afternoon, with more deliveries scheduled in peak mail times.

- It's a conglomeration of constituent letters, lobbyist requests, colleague communications, agency bulletins, special-interest publications, invitations, petitions, press releases, casework, announcements and more junk mail than you'll ever see in a lifetime—all wrapped up and plopped on the front desk or in the mail room.
- Interns may help in opening, date stamping, logging or sorting the mail—try not to lose envelopes with the return address in the process. It's one of the most important jobs in the office. It also affords an opportunity to get a handle on what actually goes on in the place.
- If you are involved with mail distribution, it should be done with care and attention to detail. Some Senate offices with a heavy mail load reserve an entire room for mail processing only. Interns have spent many an hour there with the letter opening machine.
- In general, legislative mail from constituents is sorted by issue area as are publications (i.e., the *Farm Times* will go to the Ag (Agriculture) L.A., the “Dear Colleague” on nuclear reactor safety to the L.A. with environmental responsibilities, etc.). Each subject is assigned to a L.A.; you should have been provided a list of how the L.A.s segment issue areas. Other staff members also maintain jurisdictional areas of concentration: the Office Manager will get bill receipts for supplies while the Executive Assistant will be routed invitations, and the Staff Assistant may receive tour/flag requests.
- Publications of wide/general interest, such as *Congressional Quarterly (CQ)* and *Roll Call*, are so sought after that it may be strictly routed around the office or stored in a common area. There are many, many kinds of mail. At first, it all looks like Greek but, if given the task of opening/sorting mail, you should be provided ample instruction on where to begin pigeon-holing it all.
- Opening mail basic: always staple the outside envelope of correspondence to the incoming letter so that the address is saved. Even if the envelope doesn't have the address, you might staple it anyhow to prove that it wasn't thrown away by mistake.
- All mail is screened off-site before it reaches your office. However, you may want to wear powder-free, latex-free gloves (and change them daily) to protect yourself. If you receive a suspicious mail or package, do not open it or touch it. Leave the area and contact your supervisor, the Office Emergency Coordinator (ask who that is), and/or the Capitol Police. The Capitol Police have also published instructions on helping you recognize suspicious mail. More safety and security guidelines are detailed in Chapter 8.

Folding/Sealing Mail

There are many ways to mess up this task: enclose the wrong letter with the wrong envelope; leave out the enclosures; or fold the letter so the address block does not appear in the envelope window.

Always glance at the envelope name and letter name. They can easily fall out of order somewhere up the line. It doesn't exactly show the personal touch when a constituent receives a letter addressed to Mr. Jones on gun control and her name is Ms. Smith and she wrote about tax reform. When in doubt, ask.

Many letters contain enclosures. Be sure that when folding the mail, you have inserted all material that should go with it and no material that shouldn't! It's always embarrassing when an agency has to call and say that “the enclosed memo” was not enclosed or a constituent complains that the requested report was not sent.

Window envelopes have a piece of clear cellophane across a cut-out space on the front so that the name/address on the letter shows through the “window” for mailing purposes. Not all offices use these envelopes but many do because it saves time in typing separate address blocks on envelopes. Letters have to be folded in a certain way so that the “fit” is correct. Be sure to learn to correctly crease the correspondence.

Filing hard copies

While computers have eliminated many of the hard-file letter copies of days gone by, some offices continue to keep a hardcopy or two on hand in a master subject file. In the district office, this filing may be heavily tied to casework correspondence. If your office follows this protocol, you will undoubtedly be assigned to file them. (Note that there are other types of filing that may come your way such as filing “Dear Colleagues,” press releases or other material. Be prepared to handle this paper and put it in its proper folder and appropriate drawer.)



Mail and computers: the basics

You’ll find computers at the root of almost all office functions, including correspondence management, scheduling, office account budgeting and legislative research. The focus here, however, is on the mail, mostly constituent correspondence to be specific.

Computers are used to log the mail, assign the mail, select the appropriate response text, enter the name/address of the writer and print or e-mail the responses. Computer coding of letters can inform the Member/Senator about the “hot” issues in any given week, tip off the Chief of Staff to those on the staff who are lagging behind with their letter responses backlog and prompt the L.A.s to answer particularly old letters.

Computers also allow offices to send out targeted mailings. For instance, by scanning the codes of past letters, the computer can sort out all the names of people who wrote on a particular topic during the year. A follow-up response can be prepared that reports back to them on the status of their concerns either when a vote settles the issue or perhaps as a wrap-up at the end of a session.

The point at which interns are allowed to jump onto the computer differs among offices. Some offices reserve a PC just for interns. Others ask interns to use a PC only when one is freed up by a staff member. Still others don’t allow the intern to log-on at all.

If your office heavily utilizes interns in the mail system, you will become very familiar with a principal tool of the computer—the sample letters/paragraphs that form the core of streamlined correspondence management.

Constituents routinely write in on the same subjects. Sometimes they use the same words, perhaps because a grassroots campaign encouraging congressional contact drew up a sample, which their membership copied verbatim. Other times, thousands of pre-printed postcards stating the identical message, or a few handwritten variations of similar letters, can flood the office.

Usually, when more than a few letters reach the office on the same subject, the L.A. or L.C. composes a standard paragraph (or two) that answers this type of letter, and has it approved by the Chief of Staff/Member/Senator. (Since it may be sent to hundreds or thousands of constituents a standard paragraph is scrutinized closely for substance and intent.) It is then entered on the computer for use in replying to all future letters on that subject. In addition to the substantive body of a letter, there are dozens of introductory and closing paragraphs between which to sandwich the meat of the letter with appropriate salutations and “please stay in touch” farewells.

Many offices put all of these standard letters and paragraphs into a loose-leaf binder so it can be used as a reference tool, but it should also be available online in your office’s CMS. Individual L.A.s often keep handy the standard letters in their subject areas, which can be consulted as well. Somebody, somewhere and in some form will have these standard letters.

An intern should curl up a few hours or more with the office’s “letter library” (either on or offline) and study its contents for position, style, length, facts, format, intent, substance, stand, subtleties, tone, tenor, formality, informality and the like. By browsing through these replies you can acquire a

feel for what is expected of you when you answer correspondence. Borrow as many sentences or paragraphs as you can if they are appropriate for your own letter assignments. It's not plagiarism if it fits the bill. The office is looking for consistency with its correspondence, since it is all signed by the same person, and so should speak with the same voice. Your style should match, not deviate from the norm.

Constituent mail basics

Constituents are responsible for electing Members/Senators. Obviously it pays to be responsive to their correspondence because the responses can help to inform the electorate, to establish a personal dialogue, to demonstrate responsiveness/accessibility and to offer a chance for rallying support for legislative initiatives, among other reasons. Most offices rank answering constituent mail (which includes phone calls, e-mails, and faxes) as a high-priority item. But there are extremes: one Member's office personalizes every single constituent response while another Member's office basically doesn't answer constituent mail at all—sending each constituent correspondent a form card indicating that he believes that the people of his district want him to spend his time on more important efforts than answering mail. To each his own!

Kinds of constituent mail

- **Legislative mail** offers opinions on pending bills, suggestions for new laws, questions about legislation, etc. Some interest-group-generated letters and/or e-mails arrive by the hundreds, and sometimes thousands, on the same subject. Others are individually written inquiries. Interns see a lot of this mail.
- **Casework** concerns individual problems that constituents have with the federal government. Casework is the ombudsman role of a Member of Congress or Senator. An ombudsman was originally a governmental official in Sweden and New Zealand appointed to receive and investigate complaints made by individuals against the capricious acts of public officials. Congressional offices investigate lost Social Security checks, rejected Veteran's loans, requests for visas and a host of other "please help me" constituent appeals. The Member plays the middleman role in clearing up red tape and expediting things. Some offices confine such work exclusively to their district/state offices while others perform these duties in Washington or both offices. Casework is representation at its most basic level—helping an individual solve a problem with the daunting governmental bureaucracy. (See also Chapter 11.)
- **Requests** arrive from constituents asking for a variety of bills/documents/publications. Often constituents don't quite get down the proper name or number and it's a wild goose chase for a law that never existed or a pamphlet with a title far different than the constituent's description. Sometimes the constituent uses the "old" bill number from a previous Congress. When the request asks for a "high" number like H.R. 11000 and only 5000 bills have been introduced in the current Congress, you know something is wrong. Hmmmmmmm. At times it can be very aggravating. Other times, one must assume the role of super sleuth and solve the case of the missing report. Interns track down a lot of requests and learn much in the process. Relax and enjoy it, Sherlock.

Note that, occasionally, a constituent will ask for a publication available only by purchase through the Superintendent of Documents at the Government Printing Office ("GPO"). You can help them by learning the procedure for buying publications, which is found on their Web site at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov>.

- **Tours** are another service offered by Members/Senators to constituents visiting Washington. Principally, special tours of the White House, Supreme Court, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and

the State Department can be arranged, though space is severely limited to due security restrictions. Constituents often write in for such tours as well as for help with other arrangements in planning their trips, including gallery passes. A gallery pass is a card (a different one for the House and the Senate) that is a ticket into the proceedings—well, at least into the galleries overlooking the proceedings. All offices maintain a stash of gallery passes in the reception area. In addition, many offices keep a ready assortment of brochures on hand to pave the road for a more pleasant visit. Some offices offer their own tour of the Capitol, while the majority supply gallery passes, and send constituents on their way to the free tour of the Capitol that commences in the rotunda. Note that all offices designate a staff person to care for tour requests, handle tour reservations and make sure the visitor is well accommodated.

- **Flags**, hundreds and hundreds of American flags, are routinely flown over the Capitol building on an average day. Many people want a flag flown as a special memento, to spruce up the Senior Citizen Center, fly over City Hall or grace the school auditorium. Constituents must pay for the cost of the flag, which the office then purchases from the Office Supply/Stationery Store and usually pages them over to the “Flag Office” (part of the Architect’s office in the Capitol) for flying and certification. The Architect provides a certificate attesting that the flag was flown on thus-and-such date—sometimes a constituent wants it flown on his mother’s 75th birthday or a scout troop requests it be flown on the anniversary of its founding. The flag is either returned to the office, which sends it out to the constituent with a cover letter/presentation certificate or, on the Senate side, it is sent to the Service Department, which handles mailing. If you see boxes of flags sitting about or are sent to the Office Supply/Stationery Store to purchase one (many sizes, two fabrics), you know that these are to fill a constituent request or that the Member/Senator has decided to make a special presentation.
- **Grants**, and inquiries about grants, are not very common, but are worth citing again here nonetheless. A grant is a payment by the federal government to an individual, business, organization, local government or state to aid in administering specified programs, services or activities. Perhaps a federal laboratory or a university may receive a grant to work on a particular project for the Department of Energy. The award can be big news and a press release can be produced or it can be business-as-usual with no fireworks.



Answering a letter: style

Interns are often criticized for insufficient writing skills that are not up to handling the workload of a congressional office. Many staff were in the same boat when they joined the office. In general, anyone should be trained to answer letters, especially when samples abound on every conceivable subject and every type of position. If someone in the office is willing to help and you’re willing to work at crafting letters in the office style, you can pick it up pretty quickly.

Forget preconceived notions. Forget flowery. Forget lots of adjectives. Forget sentences with more than 25 words. Forget dangling prepositions. Forget legislative jargon. Forget repeating the same word in a sentence or paragraph. In most offices, forget letters more than a page long.

Read a hundred responses to constituents in the letter library. Write accordingly. Rewrite your letter several times if need be to get it just right—all good writing is rewriting. Tell a story. Make your point. But don’t complicate the works with extraneous information. Conversely, don’t make your reply so cryptic that the recipient won’t have the foggiest notion what you’re trying to say.

Work at it and the results will pay off. Demonstrate that you can handle the rather standard request letters and you will be given more weighty matters, both from the perspective of figuring out the answer and of exhibiting the skills to put it down on paper in a responsive fashion. Some basic ele-

ments to communicate in a letter to a constituent (although every letter doesn't have to contain each of these points):

- Member/Senator is understanding, sympathetic, friendly;
- Member/Senator is informed, knowledgeable about facts of issue;
- Member/Senator is closely following legislation in the issue (content/status);
- Member/Senator is active/participating in legislative action or has been on similar issue in past (voted/signed letters/etc.);
- Member/Senator pays attention to constituent views and takes them seriously; and
- Member/Senator is very glad to hear from them and hopes they will keep in touch.

Answering a letter: format

Where are the margins? Where do I put my initials (or the initials of the person for whom I am writing the letter)? How many spaces between "Sincerely" and the Senator's name? Do I center the date or start typing it from the left margin? Do I indent paragraphs or begin them block style flush with the left margin? What font do I use? These are a few of the format-type questions you may have when faced with writing letters.

Every office has a different mode of formatting its letters—block paragraphs vs. indented paragraphs, centered date/signature block vs. left margin date/signature block, Member's name in all caps vs. Member's name in upper and lower case, Times Roman vs. Arial font etc. While these choices of styles are optional, the spacing of letters is usually standard across all offices, everywhere, on or off the Hill. That is, there are usually three to six spaces between the date and the address, double space between the address and the salutation, three spaces between "Sincerely" and the Member's/Senator's name, double space between the Member's/Senator's name and the initial block, etc. Do not try and "spread" a letter to a better fit by fiddling with standard letter format; it would be better to tighten/expand the left/right margins. Use sample letters/envelopes to learn the format. In addition, note on sample letters how initials are affixed to the bottom of a letter. Initials often connote the Member's/Senator's name and the originator/typist of the answer. Each office has developed its own code; make sure you know yours.

Letter procedure

How many copies are to be made? Who okays my draft/final letter? Does our office edit online or in hardcopy? Where are letters collected for proofing/signing? In what order will the letters be clipped together (*i.e.*, the incoming with outgoing)? Where will the original letters go? What's to be done with any copies? Can I send a simple request letter to CRS using my own name? There are procedures and rules to answer these questions for every office. Interns have to be familiar with what their office expects in these departments.

Important: no letters should go out without the approval of a permanent staff member, even under your own signature, without permission. Congressional letterhead and envelopes are for official business only. Using this stationery to write letters to pals at home or to send notes to other interns is illegal and can cause the Member/Senator a real headache. The taxpayers are footing the bill for both the postage and paper and they may not be used for any purposes other than those officially intended.

Mail: definitions

- **“Dear Colleagues”** are sent by one Member to every other Member’s personal office. They may be sent for any of 100 different reasons—seeking cosponsorships for legislation the Member/Senator has introduced; urging support for or opposition against pending legislation; offering an opinion on a topic in the news; circulating an editorial in the Member’s hometown paper; providing information on an event of interest, etc. An intern may be tasked with the job of dropping off a pile for delivery via inside mail. First Call Customer Service Center: B-227 Longworth HOB (5-8000); Senate Postmaster: SD-B23 (4-5353). In the House, Dear Colleagues can also be sent electronically and are stored online in the e-mail systems.
- **The “frank”** is a shorthand term for the franking privilege granted to Members of Congress/Senators (and committees/official organizations, etc.) to use their signatures instead of postage for official business. A franked envelope contains a reproduction of the Member’s/Senator’s signature in the top right corner. Sometimes the word “frank” is applied to the gummed label used for large envelopes, packages, etc. The frank can only be used when mailing official business from the congressional office.
- **Inside Mail** is a delivery service for the transmittal of official congressional inter-office communications, generally through all those blue re-addressable multi-use envelopes you see around (which were, incidentally, the brainchild of an intern in the summer of 1993 who couldn’t understand why Congress did not use the same inter-office and recyclable envelopes used by the private sector). Inside mail is available among offices in the Capitol, the House and Senate office buildings and annexes, the Library of Congress buildings, the White House, the State Department and the Social Security Administration. Inside mail may not be used to circulate letters that are personal or political. Other than the blue re-addressable envelopes, only franked mail is handled for delivery via inside mail (*i.e.*, a plain white envelope just won’t make it). Many offices segregate outgoing mail into “Inside” and “Outside” boxes to facilitate the sorting process.
- **“Postal Patron”** is a term for a mailing that is delivered to every postal patron or household in the district/state/designated zip code area. You may see the term on a newsletter, questionnaire or town hall meeting announcement.
- **Questionnaires** are occasionally sent to the district/state to poll the constituency on a particular issue or a whole series of questions. When a questionnaire is mailed, replies soon arrive by the tray loads. An intern may be involved in tallying or answering questionnaires.
- **Referrals/“Buck Slips”** are forms used to refer a constituent letter to a committee for its comments on a constituent’s inquiry or to transmit casework to an agency for disposition. They are usually printed form letters asking for comments on the “attached communication.” Referrals/buck slips are also a part of congressional courtesy that dictates that Members answer mail from their own constituency on matters of federal concern. Individuals send correspondence to Members/Senators other than their own, and occasionally request information of their federal lawmakers that is rightfully within the jurisdiction of a state, county or local governing authority. In these cases, a Member/Senator “refers” the mail to the proper Member/Senator or the correct governmental echelon. Usually a form “Buck Slip” (derived from “passing the buck”) or a stamp that says “Respectfully Referred – Not Acknowledged” is attached to the letter informing the recipient from where it came. Each office handles this activity differently and an intern may or may not become acquainted with this procedure. 🏠

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF. . .Keeping up with the boss

Finally, especially during your first few days on the job, you may wonder who the boss is. Where is the Congresswoman? Just WHAT is she doing all day? Most Members and Senators are doing a lot—and doing it fast. They can become a blur. Here’s a thumbnail sketch of some activities that will begin to provide you an idea of their daily routine:

17

Wednesday July

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| 6 a.m. | Wake up; exercise; read the papers; review day’s schedule and briefing materials for the day’s events. If a new House Member, will need to leave the office, where have been sleeping on the couch, and head for the basement of Rayburn to take a shower before the staff shows up for work. |
| 8 a.m. | Host breakfast in the Member’s dining room for reporters covering Washington D.C. for papers in the Member’s state. |
| 9 a.m. | Hold a brief meeting with staff to review the day’s schedule and key issues to be resolved. Say hello to the new interns. |
| 9:20 a.m. | Meeting interrupted by chairman of Member’s committee who wants to make sure she can count on the Member’s vote in mark-up this morning; she also wants to support Member’s new campaign finance reform bill being introduced today. Finally, she asks to make sure the Member will be on time to the mark-up (Members rarely are). |
| 9:40 a.m. | Meet with Jones family from the district who are visiting Washington on vacation with their three children and had a 9:30 a.m. appointment. Shows them the office; Dad says junior has had a dream of having his picture taken with the Member on the Capitol steps. Call the photographer and head for the Capitol steps with junior and rest of family in tow. |
| 10:20 a.m. | Arrive 20 minutes late for committee mark-up; chairman is not pleased. |
| 11:30 a.m. | Hold press conference on campaign finance reform bill to be introduced today. |
| 12 noon | House convenes; speak on the floor during one-minutes/morning business or on behalf of campaign finance reform legislation. Drop the bill in the hopper. |
| 1 p.m. | Speak to a group visiting from another Member’s district who are enjoying two days of such meetings organized by the other Member’s office; think these forums are a good idea and return to office to tell Chief of Staff to do them too. |
| 2:30 p.m. | Head to the House floor to speak against a pending bill to increase the minimum wage. Back in the office, C-SPAN watchers from around the country start calling in with angry comments. The intern taking these rather heated messages wonders what she has gotten herself into. |
| 3 p.m. | Run into party leader in the hall who proceeds to ream the Member for not alerting him about the campaign finance bill before it was introduced. Several reporters overhear the exchange and gather around. Spend 20 minutes trying to explain to reporters the leader isn’t really that upset. |
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17

**Wednesday
July**

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- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 3:30 p.m. | Respond to press calls back in the office. The independent insurance agents from Member's district are in town for their convention and stop by to say hello. Turns out they would like nothing more than a photo with the Member. Call the photographer for a photo in the office in front of Member's American flag. |
| 4:30 p.m. | A flurry of votes begins. Members from the other side of the aisle are staging a protest on the minimum wage bill and calling for several procedural votes. Walk back and forth the to the floor several times. Dictate correspondence or notes to staff into pocket tape recorder or via BlackBerry while navigating to and fro. |
| 5:30 p.m. | Attend several of the seven receptions to which invitations were received for this evening. Take along interns so they can get some decent food. |
| 6:30 p.m. | Head downtown to deliver a speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce holding its annual convention at the Hyatt. Traffic is tied up near the convention center; walk the last four blocks so as not to be too late. |
| 7:15 p.m. | Arrive at event just as salad is being served. Organizer asks if willing to speak during dinner as they have had a last-minute cancellation from the party leader who was supposed to do the honors. After speech, several people come by to talk; never get a chance to eat. |
| 9 p.m. | Return to the office hungry. There is cold pizza left over in the office from the staff's dinner; decide to head for the cloakroom and grab a hot dog there. Chief of Staff goes along to review activities in the office that day and make decisions about tomorrow's schedule. |
| 9:30 p.m. | Once at the cloakroom, decide to organize a "special order" with other Members (it's TV prime time!). |
| 10:30 p.m. | Head back to the office where no staff remain. Answer ringing phone to find an unhappy constituent on the line, not pleased with Member's minimum wage vote. Spend 20 minutes listening to her concerns. |
| 11 p.m. | Call home to wish spouse good night; kids are already in bed. |
| 11:30 p.m. | Begin handwritten thank yous and glance over tomorrow's briefing materials |
| 1 a.m. | Curl up on the couch. |
-

chapter 3 summary



do

- **Your research.** Learn what you can about the district/state, Member/Senator, and the roles and responsibilities of the staff.
- **Figure out who supervises your work and assignments** (sometimes the chain of command isn't so clear).
- **Keep yourself and your work area organized.** You want to make a good impression and space is a precious commodity in most offices – don't waste it.
- **Clarify the internal office procedures you need to follow:** dress code, office hours, lunch times, and informing staff of your whereabouts.
- **Spend considerable time learning the intricacies of the phone system and how to handle the various types of calls your office receives.** Sending a caller to the wrong voicemail or accidentally conferencing a constituent into a private call can land you in a heap of trouble.
- **Understand the kinds of constituent mail your office receives** (case-work, legislative requests, grants, tour/flag requests, etc.) and how your individual office responds to them.

don't

- **Get overwhelmed when the staff throws you several assignments at once.** Seek guidance from your supervisor about prioritizing tasks and communicate timeframes to the parties involved.
- **Forget that even though you work for the Member/Senator, you don't speak for the Member/Senator.** Never attempt to represent your boss' views with constituents, the press, or even to your friends.
- **Be intimidated by the flurry of activity around you and the "code" everyone seems to be speaking.** Quick online searches can help you translate Hill jargon and understand what's going on.



dressing the part

“dress,” “clothes” or “attire” can be a sensitive subject. Who wants to dictate Armani or Gap? Prescribe Doc Martens or wingtips or sensible pumps? Banish jeans, wrinkled pants, t-shirts and sheer skirts? Regulate hemlines, jackets with ties, socks with shoes or earring location? Welcome to the working world. Just as McDonalds sales associates, airline pilots and Santa’s elves all sport uniforms, the same holds true for most people who trade in their college texts for paychecks. We tend to wear loosely defined versions of uniforms, or at least adhere to a type of attire generally deemed acceptable for our particular professional environment. This rule is even more true on Capitol Hill where your appearance not only broadcasts personal style to your colleagues, it is part of an office image that is communicated to constituents and the congressional community at large. Appearances do count and the next pages offer some guidance for tailoring a standout look without standing out.



Take great care to be dressed like the reasonable people of your own age, in the place where you are; whose dress is never spoken of one way or another, as either too negligent or too much studied.

—LORD CHESTERFIELD

You may want to rethink your wardrobe a little.

—ALBERT FINNEY
(ED MASRY) IN
ERIN BROCKOVICH, 2000

Never wear anything that panics the cat.

—P.J. O’ROURKE

Dress for success

No matter who occupies the White House or the Speaker's chair, Washington, D.C.'s fashion environment is considered conservative with a small "c." Government is sober and serious stuff where style tends toward traditional conventions. You're not likely to see much of the splash and dash of Malibu, Miami or Manhattan during working hours in the nation's capital. By and large, men's suits stick to various hues of charcoal gray and navy blue. Professional women wear brighter colors, but many slip on more suits (again, conservative) than dresses. The dress code could be characterized as "businesslike." So where do interns fit in?

No one expects interns to own dress-for-success wardrobes. Everyone expects interns to use common sense with their apparel choices. *Presentable, moderate, neat, tidy, clean and pressed*—these are the attributes that count when trying to fit in and not stick out. Just as important, these virtues can be attained without spending a lot of money on expensive attire. It's really making the most of what you have, which is the motto for your internship in general.

The Capitol Hill "uniform"

- A man can get away with a closet that contains khaki/gray pants, a blue blazer, dress shirts, ties and dark shoes. Ninety percent of your intern colleagues and a lot of full-time male co-workers will wear this ensemble as well. Plan on putting some mileage on a dark suit. Adjectives you don't want to hear directed at your clothes: *wrinkled, rumpled, dirty, too baggy*.
- A woman's wardrobe should be versatile for mix and match purposes. Combine some dark colored skirts/trousers with different blouses and throw on a jacket/blazer if it's available. Muted hues are emphasized here because they are easier to intermingle with each other; that black skirt will go a lot further than the hot pink one when it comes to putting together a week's worth of outfits. That is not to say that brights are taboo: good taste counts a lot more than any color scheme. Dresses are fine too, but lean toward low-key in the hem and neckline departments, and think about a slip for anything sheer. A long coat helps protect whatever you are wearing from rain and snow splatters that are part and parcel of a winter's walk. Low heels/flats raise the comfort level on those hard hallway floors, but spare the wear and tear on the feet with sneakers or flip-flops for morning and evening commutes. You might also consider bringing an extra pair of hose to place in your desk if you regularly wear nylons. Adjectives you don't want to hear directed at your outfit: *too short, plunging, low-cut, too tight, wrinkled, see-through*.
- And speaking of wearing things, women and men, go easy on the cologne and after-shave. If you're going to use them, don't go overboard when your office quarters are so close.



Reconnaissance

Be sure to check out what's acceptable dress-wise during your first week on the job. For instance, lots of offices heed "casual" Fridays, but does that mean you can dress down to jeans-with-holes-in-them level or merely leave the tie at home? What goes during recesses? (Hint: If you appear at the door in your Marilyn Manson t-shirt, shorts and sandals, you may never get a chance to cross the threshold.)

Other offices—often those with home districts located close to D.C.—never designate casual days because constituents show up all day, every day, and they believe that staff represent the Member and should dress accordingly. Or, offices may try to have the best of both worlds by dressing somewhat casually on Fridays, but with guys keeping a tie and jacket nearby to throw on if visitors arrive and

women dressing more comfortably, but still professionally. Just remember: each office does its own thing. So if you're not sure of what goes, just ask. The old game of "Follow the Leader" works well here. As an intern, you might think that you can dress a little more casually than the staff, but that's a myth. You'll look more professional and stand out among the other interns in the office if you dress the part.

what not to wear

One intern tells the story of making an assumption that cost him dearly. For the interview, he arrived at the office all dressed up, wearing his nice suit. Everyone else was dressed casually. "Hey, pretty cool," thought the prospective intern. He landed the job and reported for work a month later in jeans and a polo shirt. His new colleagues were all in business attire. When the Congresswoman cruised through the office that day, the intern got a strange look and wasn't introduced to her. His supervisor told him that he would be introduced as soon as he was properly dressed. What the intern did not know was that his interview was conducted on a "casual" day during recess when the Member was out of town. The intern's first day in the office was not such a day.

What exactly is a "skintern?"

The Hill newspaper published an article on intern attire and asked staff members and intern program coordinators for their perspectives. Staff complained of interns dressing like they were going out on a Saturday night or trying to imitate *Sex and the City*. Unfortunately, some staffers have taken to calling female interns, especially those that serve in the summer, "skinterns" due to their clothing (or lack thereof). In some offices, the offenses were so bad that extremely specific lists were created outlining what clothing is acceptable and totally unacceptable. Other staffers called the interns "naïve" and "disrespectful." Several staffers stated that they would not hesitate to send an inappropriately-dressed intern home to change. The moral of the story? When in doubt, play it safe. Save that fashion-forward outfit for the weekend.

doh!

Another intern told us how the Member thought it would be fun to bring him along to a reception. Unfortunately, the event required a coat and tie and the intern was only wearing a dress shirt that day. A staff member took his place instead. Afterwards, the intern always came prepared, since you never know what activity a day on the Hill will bring.

Taken to the cleaners

One final note: make sure to locate a reputable dry cleaner in your neighborhood. Most neighborhoods have several, usually with early or late hours to accommodate Washingtonians who keep unpredictable work schedules. (There's also a dry cleaner on site in the House.) Ask your office-mates or neighbors for recommendations on reasonable and reliable establishments that will clean that nice new suit, and use one if need be. Dry cleaning is expensive, but that suit won't impress anyone if it sports a big salad oil splat on the jacket—at least not the way you want it to impress anyone. 🍴

chapter 4 summary



do

- Realize that the attire on the Hill is usually conservative, more traditional, and businesslike. Think dark-colored suits, khakis, dress shirts, and blazers for men; dark-colored suits/skirts/trousers, dress shirts and cardigans for women.
- Remember that you represent your Member/Senator and should always appear presentable and professional.
- Take into account that some offices alter their dress code during recess periods (or when the boss is out of town), but you should always check with your supervisor as to what's appropriate for work.

don't

- Forget that every office is different and the dress code varies as such. Just because your friend can wear jeans on Fridays doesn't mean you automatically get to.
- Sacrifice comfort for the latest trends. You will put on a lot of miles walking the hallways of Congress, and it's much easier in low heels/flats!



getting your bearings on the Hill and in the city

Capitol Hill is like no other place in the world. There are summoning bells, security checks, special services, rules and regulations. The Hill has its own telephone exchanges, parking lots, zip codes and way of life. The following pages offer some tips on how to move around the Capitol complex without making it apparent that you're a complete newcomer. It's part narrative, part road map and part compass. The light in the Capitol cupola is your North Star. After being turned around for a couple of weeks yourself, there is nothing more gratifying than steering a bewildered tourist in the proper direction or decoding the bell system for a visiting family of constituents. Without even knowing it, you've moved from greenhorn to guide. You've been initiated. You belong.



*The more I observed
Washington, the
more frequently I
visited it and the
more people I
interviewed there,
the more I
understood how
prophetic L'Enfant
was when he laid it
out as a city that
goes around
in circles.*

—JOHN MASON BROWN

*Toto, I have a
feeling we're not in
Kansas anymore.*

—JUDY GARLAND
(DOROTHY IN OZ) IN
THE WIZARD OF OZ,
1939

*You are entering
another
dimension.*

—ROD SERLING
THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Getting acquainted with campus life—the buildings

Getting Lost

Getting lost is a frequent activity of newcomers to Washington and to Capitol Hill. It is a very good way to learn your way around the oft times confusing terrain. One former intern recalls on his first day being told by his supervisor to get his I.D. badge and then to "get lost" for a few hours- literally! The intern, now a Hill staffer, knows his way to such obscure locales as the Office of Interparliamentary Affairs and the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and has no trouble maneuvering underground through catacombs that can frighten less seasoned pathfinders. Asked to provide directions on locating the Flag Office (defined later in this chapter) one well-traveled staff member recommended that you "follow the pipes." If you want to earn your scout blazing badge, pick a place in the House/Senate buildings or in the Capitol to "find." Look for it above ground, and then enter the subterranean depths and search for it through the tunnels or via the subways. Don't be afraid to get lost and ask directions. You'll earn your explorer badge in no time.

Layout

Basically, Capitol Hill proper consists of the Capitol Building, the Senate side and the House side. Then it gets a lot more complicated when you bring in the separate Senate and House office buildings, the Library of Congress complex, and the underground subways. There are three principal House office buildings and three Senate office buildings, housing Members of Congress and their personal staffs, committee meeting rooms, party/leadership offices, member organizations, cafeterias and a web of support services that accommodate this mini-city.

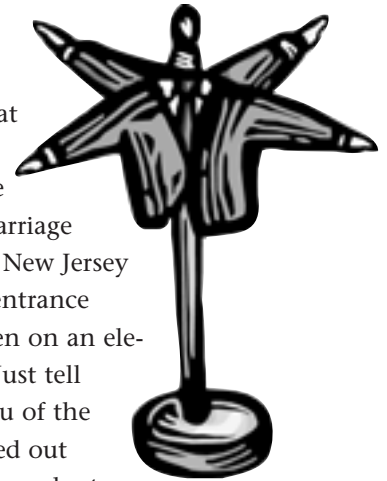
House Office Buildings

The three principal House office buildings, lining Independence Avenue S.E. across from the Capitol building, are named after prominent Speakers of the House and run alphabetically and more or less chronologically down the Hill according to the dates of each Speaker's term in office.

- **Cannon House Office Building (CHOB)**, named after Speaker Joe Cannon (1903-11), has five floors and a basement. Room numbers have three digits, with the first digit designating floor level. Two-digit rooms preceded by a "B," such as B-74, are located in the basement. Note that you have to use a special bank of elevators to travel to the fifth floor, which are located separately from the main elevators, approximately one-third of the way down the halls from the "rotunda" area near the interior staircases.
- **Longworth House Office Building (LHOB)**, named after Speaker Nicholas Longworth (1925-31), has seven floors, a ground floor and a basement. Room numbers have four digits beginning with "1." The number "1" indicates that the room is located in Longworth, the second digit indicates the floor level (the digit "0" indicates the ground level). Rooms located in the basement and sub-basement levels have three digits beginning with "2" and are preceded by the designation "B" or "SB," for example B-265.
- **Rayburn House Office Building (RHOB)**, named after Speaker Sam Rayburn (1940-44, 1949-53 and 1955-61), has four floors above ground and five below. Room numbers have four digits beginning with "2." The number "2" indicates that the room is located in Rayburn; the second digit indicates the floor level. Rooms located in the basement and sub-basement levels have three digits beginning with the number "3" and are preceded by the designation "B" or "SB" respectively, followed by the

number “3.” NOTE: This building has the most complex House office building floor plan. The maps on the walls near the elevators are constantly consulted by Hill newbies and veteran alike. Sometimes you’ll wish you could rip it off the wall and carry it with you until you reach your destination.

Exiting a House office building can be discombobulating at first. Just remember that the buildings are literally built along the incline of a hill and as such the levels change. For instance, you can enter the Longworth building from the outside at three principal entrances and come into the building on three different floor levels. The “carriage entrance” in the middle of the block on South Capitol enters the basement level, the New Jersey and C Street entrance is on the ground level, and the Independence and New Jersey entrance across the street from the Capitol is on the first floor. This is especially confusing when on an elevator and confronted with a zillion choices of B-this or G-that or SB-something else. Just tell me how to get outta here! Many times a little sign next to the buttons will inform you of the street onto which the elevator will exit. If you don’t pay attention, you can be dumped out into some very spooky garage level and they’ll have to send out the National Guard in order to find you.



Additionally, there is one House annex building where many Member organizational and support, service and committee offices are located.

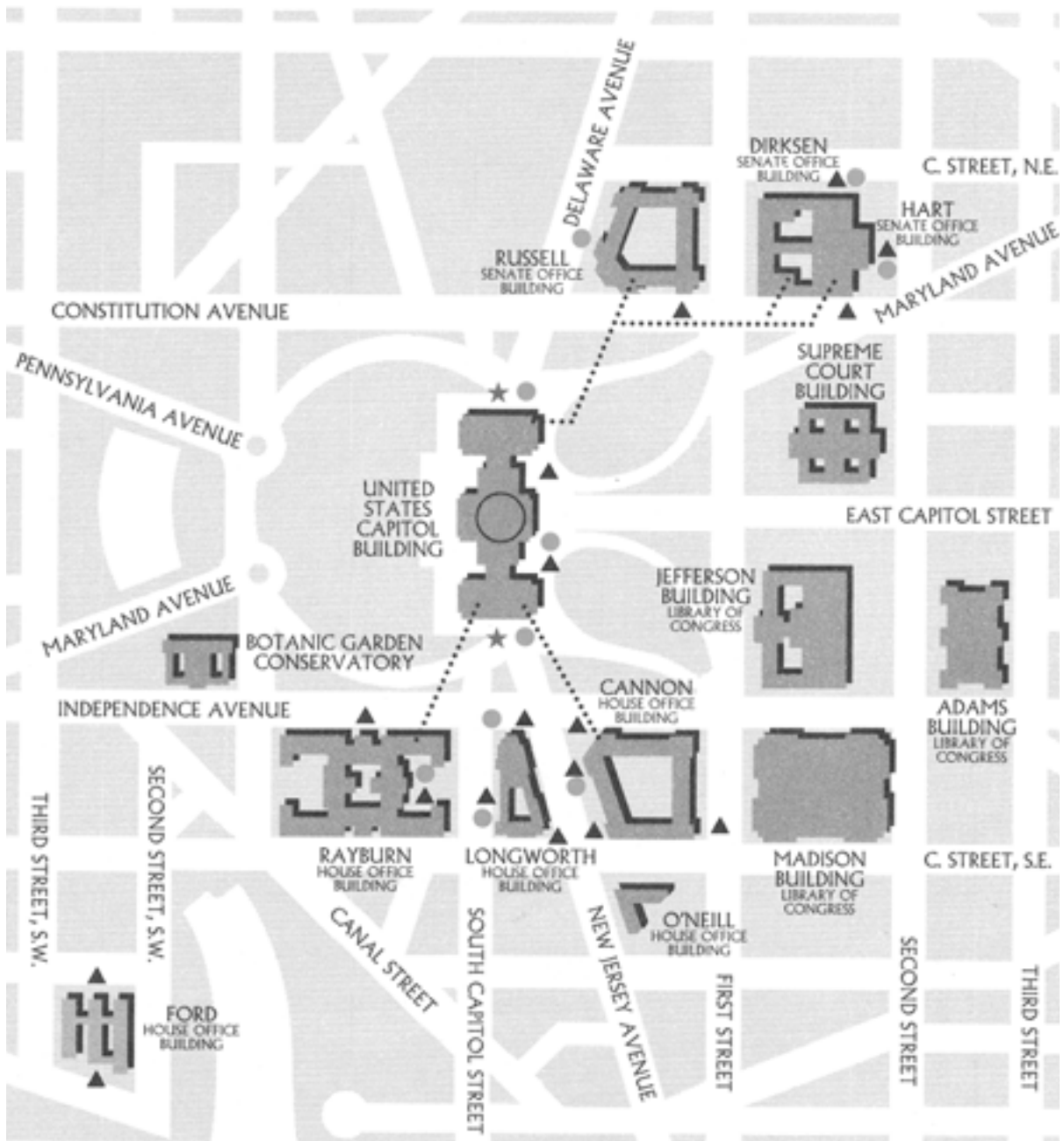
- **Ford House Office Building**, named for Republican Leader (and later President) Gerald R. Ford (1965-73), is located across a maze of roads at the bottom of the Hill/western end of Rayburn HOB. Since Ford is a few blocks away from the main cluster of congressional buildings, it is a short outside hike from the other buildings (sorry, no tunnel) but shuttle service (defined later in this section) is provided. Room numbers begin with H2 (it was formerly called House Annex Number 2), followed by a three-digit number beginning with the floor on which the room is located—H2-201 would be on the second floor, for example.

Senate Office Buildings

Senate office buildings, lining Constitution Avenue N.E. across from the Capitol, are named in honor of distinguished U.S. Senators.

- **Russell Senate Office Building**, named for Senate President Pro Tempore Richard B. Russell (1969-71), has four floors and a basement. Room numbers in this building are preceded by “SR” followed by three digits; the first digit indicates the floor level. Rooms located in the basement are preceded by “SR” followed by a “B”; for example, SR-B103.
- **Dirksen Senate Office Building**, named for Republican Leader Everett M. Dirksen (1959-69), has six floors above ground and a basement. Room numbers in this building are preceded by “SD” followed by three digits; the first digit indicates the floor level. Rooms located on the ground level are preceded by “SD” followed by “G” and rooms located on the basement level are preceded by “SD” followed by “B.” This building has connecting doorways on each floor to the Hart Senate Office Building.
- **Hart Senate Office Building**, named for Senator Philip A. Hart (1959-76), has seven floors and a basement. Room numbers in this building are preceded by the designation “SH” followed by three digits; the first digit indicates the floor level. Rooms located in the basement are preceded by “SH” followed by “B.” The building has connecting doorways on each floor to the Dirksen Senate Office Building. In the Hart building, Senate main offices are generally located on odd-numbered floors,

capitol hill



- ▲ Visitor's Entrance to the Office Buildings
- ★ Entrances for Members, Staff, Accredited Press, Building Access Card Holders, and Visitors with Business Appointments only
- Barrier-Free Entrances for Handicapped

with additional office space, committee rooms, and meeting rooms located on even-numbered floors. Senator's personal office suites include two floors, connected by an internal stair.

As was explained in the House Office Building section, the office buildings are built literally along a hill. As the incline changes so do the ground-level entrances and the corresponding floors (*i.e.*, you can enter the Russell building from the street at three different entrances and find yourself on three different floor levels). This is very confusing when you find yourself on an elevator at one unfamiliar corner of the building, you look at the B, G, or 1 buttons, and you wonder which one will put you on the level to walk out of the building. Usually someone in the elevator can help you alight at the correct floor. In no time, you'll be able to tell the baffled tourist/newcomer how to exit to the proper street entrance.

Also located on the Senate side is the headquarters building for the U.S. Capitol Police at 119 D Street N.E. (See Chapter 8 for more information on security.)

All Roads Lead to the Basement

All roads don't exactly lead to the basement, but if you ever need to, you can walk from the far corner of Cannon, through Longworth to Rayburn, under the Capitol to the Senate side and then through Russell and Dirksen to Hart or vice versa. The basement level of all the principal House and Senate office buildings (Rayburn is an exception) is generally the level that you use to move around from building to building (Hart and Dirksen are connected to each other at just about every floor level) and from building to Capitol. In Rayburn, Garage Level 3 contains a subway to the Capitol, and on the sub-basement level, tunnels will take you to the Longworth HOB.

The Library of Congress Buildings

There are three principal Library of Congress buildings: the Jefferson Building, the Adams Building and the Madison Building. An intern is most likely to make acquaintance with the Madison Building, since it houses the Congressional Research Service and is the location of a nice cafeteria/buffet (see also food section later in this chapter). The Madison Building is the huge, white marble building across the street (First Street S.E.) from the Cannon House Office Building. A tunnel from the Cannon HOB basement leads to the Madison Building. The Jefferson Building, located at the northeast corner of First Street S.E. and Constitution, is the oldest structure, and the one typically identified as the "Library of Congress." Housing the spectacular Main Reading Room and Great Hall, it is considered by some to be one of the most beautiful buildings in America.

The Capitol Building

The Capitol building offers ample opportunities to get lost, turned around or thoroughly confused—but it's not too bad once you get used to it! The Capitol building is divided in half, jurisdictionally speaking, between the Senate and House sides, straight through the east/west axis of the Capitol rotunda. It has three principal floors not counting the basement/terrace/attic levels. Room numbers preceded by an "H" are located on the House side and room numbers preceded by an "S" are located on the Senate side. Most rooms in the Capitol have three-digit numbers with the first digit indicating the floor level. For instance H-207 is in the House wing on the second floor. Two digit numbers preceded by "B" or "ST" or by the designation "HB" or "HT" indicate rooms located on the basement or terrace levels of the Senate or House wing respectively.

Getting From Here to There

Subways/Tunnels

All of the House and Senate office buildings are connected to the Capitol and each other by an underground subway/tunnel system. (Ford House Office Building is an exception.) A subway connects the Capitol to the Rayburn HOB and one (walking) tunnel joins the Capitol to the Cannon and Longworth buildings. In addition, the Cannon HOB is connected by tunnel to the Madison Building of the Library of Congress, which is itself joined by an underground tunnel to the other two Library of Congress buildings. The three Senate office buildings are connected to the Capitol by two subways—one that commutes to Russell and another that travels to Dirksen and Hart. Both originate from the same station in the Capitol basement.

So it is possible to walk from the farthest reaches of the Rayburn HOB to the atrium of the Hart Senate Office Building without ever stepping outside. Since there is a subway to the Capitol from Rayburn and from the Capitol to the Hart building, however, riding the rails may be easier on the feet. Otherwise, hoofing the route from Cannon to the Capitol is a rather routine stroll for a House intern, while Senate interns hop on a subway and ride to the Capitol.

Note: As a courtesy, the first subway car is reserved for Members/Senators only, since it will be at the front of the line when the train arrives, thus allowing a quick exit for a dash to the floor. If bells ring for attendance in the House/Senate, the rule on this first car is absolute and may extend to other cars as well. When there is a crowd and no Senator is in sight, the first car can be occupied by anyone. However, the driver can spot Members/Senators at 50 paces and will have no qualms about asking you to relocate from a particular car if the space is needed.

Elevators

When bells ring for attendance on the House/Senate floor, some elevators are clearly reserved for “Members Only” or “Senators Only.” This special designation minimizes the amount of time that a Member/Senator has to spend moving to and from the floor when a vote is in progress. On these occasions, you may be barred from a particular elevator car to better accommodate voting Representatives and Senators. Note that some elevators are always reserved just for Members/Senators and some in the Capitol building are marked just for press/staff, which includes you!

A popular old story on the Hill finds a couple of tourists barred from an elevator in the Capitol, above which had a brightly lighted “Members Only” sign. Curious, one of the pair timidly approached a security guard and inquired, “Where do we join to become Members?”

Shuttle Service

A shuttle bus service for the Capitol Hill area is provided free of charge by the Architect of the Capitol, and can accommodate individuals with disabilities. White passenger vans with the Architect's emblem on the front doors and a sign noting "Shuttle Service" operate continuously among the congressional office buildings from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday when the House or Senate is in session. The service operates on a clockwise and counter clockwise route, starting at the Ford House Office Building and the Hart Senate Office Building. Both schedules start simultaneously at 8:00 a.m., and the shuttle vans depart every 30 minutes. The last scheduled departure from Ford toward Hart is 6:00 p.m., and the reverse, from Hart to Ford, is at 5:30 p.m.. A congressional I.D. is required for all passengers using this service and must be shown to the driver upon entering the shuttle bus. The scheduled stops (2006) for the service include:

- **Ford HOB**—Third Street, S.W. entrance
- **Longworth HOB**—South Capitol Street entrance
- **Capitol Building, House Wing**—Sidewalk leading to South entrance
- **Capitol Building, Senate Wing**—Sidewalk leading to North entrance
- **Russell Building**—Delaware and Constitution Avenue, N.E. entrance (northbound only)
- **Postal Square Building** (Post Office next to Union Station)—
Main entrance, First Street, N.E.
- **Hart Building**—Second Street, N.E. entrance

The schedule may change during recesses, holidays, and other times of low ridership. You can call the Architect of the Capitol at 4-6645 for updates and more information.

Security and Access

With terrorism a threat around the world, security on Capitol Hill has been tightened considerably in recent years. In 1983, a bomb detonated in the Capitol building completely destroying a number of offices and would have taken many lives had the timing been coordinated to a busier period. In 1998 two Capitol Hill policemen were killed when a gunman stormed past a security checkpoint in the building. In October 2001, soon after the terrible events of 9/11, several congressional offices were the victims of an anthrax attack through the mail. Against this backdrop, I.D. cards, concrete barriers and bag searches constitute a regular part of day-to-day living on the Hill. Here are a few more details to ease your travels around the Hill. (See also Chapter 8 for more on security.)

- I.D. cards are issued to staff, interns, vendors, and journalists. Those who possess I.D. cards are allowed to enter any open (see hours below) House, Senate or Capitol building entrance, but must pass through a magnetometer. An I.D. card or no, every purse, briefcase, package or bundle is subject to a manual or electronic search.
- Hours of Operation: Typically, a House intern I.D. will grant you access to the House office buildings from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week. At this time, the Senate does not have restricted hours for interns, though that is subject to change. Since security procedures are continually revised, your supervisor will inform you of the updated hours when you start.
- After hours in the House, interns cannot gain entrance to buildings, even with an I.D., unless accompanied by a permanent staff member. A staff member must sign the destination and names of all those in a group that he/she is accompanying with the desk officer on duty. Note that after hours only certain entrances are open.
- Some entrances are marked for Members/Staff only. If you wish to enter a building with a visitor, you may be asked to use a visitor entrance.
- Be aware that for some events on the Capitol premises, such as an appearance by the president for a joint session, special security procedures apply that may limit your access to certain areas.
- Closed circuit cameras are placed around the Capitol buildings for further protection and about 1,300 U.S. Capitol police patrol the grounds.

“Over on the Floor”

When a Member/Senator is “over on the floor,” he/she is most likely in the chamber itself or in an adjoining lobby or cloakroom area. Under the definition for this *Handbook*, there will also be descriptions of places very near the floor that you may have to visit in the course of carrying out your job responsibilities.

Chamber/Floor

This is the place where Congress meets. There is a House chamber (second floor, House side of the Capitol) and a Senate chamber (second floor, Senate side of the Capitol.) The Senate chamber holds 100 desks, one assigned to each Senator. As you face the rostrum (the big dais under the flag in the center of the room), the Democrats sit on the left side of the chamber and the Republicans on the right. The House has few desks and no assigned seats. Again, the Democrats sit on the left, facing the “press gallery”—an area above the podium reserved for the working press, and the Republicans on the right.

In the House, the Speaker of the House or another Member designated by the Speaker sits in the chair at the top of the rostrum and presides. On the Senate side, the vice president of the United States is the official “presider.” Since it is very rare that the vice president is around, the Senate is presided over by the president *pro tempore* (Latin meaning “for the time”) or pro tem. While the president pro tem is traditionally the Senator of the majority party with the longest service, he or she regularly calls on a junior Senator of the majority party to take the gavel. Other individuals on the rostrum are various officers of the House/Senate, the parliamentarian, stenographers, etc. On the House side, the somewhat empty area in front of the Speaker’s desk (with two microphoned podiums and a desk) is known as the “well” of the chamber. When formally addressing the House, as opposed to answering a question, the Member steps up to one of these small podiums in the well and delivers a speech.

The House votes electronically, allowing its Members 15 minutes to record their votes. The four panels of blue tapestry above the press gallery light up with the Members’ names in alphabetical order. The Members place I.D. voting cards into boxes located on the backs of aisle chairs. The Members push a button (green-aye, red-no, yellow-present), and a corresponding light will appear next to their names on the tapestry panels. Wooden boxes (scoreboards!) located just above the doors at either end of the gallery, tally the votes, and indicate the pending bill number and the amount of time left to vote. A vote takes approximately 15 minutes, but it can vary.

Senators also have 15 minutes to vote when the roll is called. The Senate does not use electronic voting devices. Instead, tally clerks read the roll of Senator’s names in alphabetical order. As Senators stream onto the floor, they motion for the tally clerk’s attention and usually display a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down” to indicate “Yea” or “Nay,” which is then manually recorded by the clerk who subsequently reads the final tally at the end of the vote.

When the House or Senate is in session, don’t be surprised to encounter few Members or Senators on the floor. Most of the work on a bill takes place in committees and is communicated to Members through mounds of memoranda from various sources. Except for those managing the bill or those interested in a particular piece of legislation/amendment, most Members/Senators have learned enough about the bill beforehand that it isn’t necessary for them to be present except for the votes. Naturally, controversial bills always attract more attention, and so attract a fuller “House.”

House/Senate Galleries and Gallery Passes

Holding a few more than more than 600 people each, the galleries are where the public sits to view the proceedings in the chamber below. The House gallery is located on the third floor, House side of the Capitol, while the Senate gallery mirrors the House placement, being located on the third floor of the Senate side.

Congressional offices provide separate visitor passes to visiting constituents, guests etc. for admittance to the Senate and House galleries. (Learn what and where these are located in your office as you may be asked to provide them to guests.) You must have one of these regular visitor passes or House/Senate I.D. to sit in the gallery. The visitors galleries can grow crowded at times, necessitating long lines and, once you are allowed in, short (*i.e.*, 5-10 minutes) visits before being ushered out. Your intern I.D. cards can come in handy here. On the House side, an intern I.D. card allows the bearer into the House staff gallery No. 6. On the Senate side, your I.D. card buys you passage into the Senate staff galley No. 1 for watching debates. Of course, these staff galleries do get filled occasionally, and staff and interns are all turned away. Also, interns may be bumped in favor of permanent staff. But generally, this is your best bet for watching the proceedings undisturbed.

No cameras or recording equipment are allowed in the gallery; they must be checked before entering the gallery at a counter designated for this purpose. A walk through a metal detector is also a routine. Once seated, a visitor cannot talk, read, write, eat, drink, smoke, clap, wear a hat, lean over (or touch) the first-row railing or do just about anything else except watch, breathe and be very quiet. The back of the standard gallery pass spells out such restrictions. The doorkeepers politely, but firmly remind you of any of these rules if you proceed to break them.

Joint Session of Congress

The House and Senate sometimes come together in a “joint session,” usually to hear an address by the president or a visiting foreign dignitary. These sessions are held in the House chamber because it can accommodate considerably more people than the Senate chamber. For some period before and after a joint session, entrance to the House chamber, and often to the entire Capitol building, is restricted for security purposes. Each congressional office (House and Senate) receives one ticket for a seat in the gallery. Distribution of that pass may be designated to the Member’s spouse, a visiting constituent, a staff member or whomever. Whether an intern gets a chance to use it, depends on the office.

Step seats (literally reserved seats on the steps) and standing room tickets are assigned on a first call, first serve basis through the House Sergeant at Arms. Some offices participate more actively than others in placing their requests with the House Sergeant at Arms, obtaining tickets, and distributing those tickets on a priority basis to whomever wants them. If your office does not usually attempt to acquire such a seat(s), you might ask permission to call the House Sergeant at Arms and represent the office in attempting to secure a ticket or two. One word of advice, the tickets do get snatched up quickly, so as soon as you get wind of a joint session give the House Sergeant at Arms a call. You can rarely be too early, but it’s a good idea to check with your office before calling. Note that occasionally joint sessions will be opened to all staff at the last moment in order to pack the audience.

Note: A “joint meeting of Congress” maintains the same seating procedure, but the president does not appear; a “meeting” usually translates to an address or speech by a head of state or some other dignitary.

House/Senate Legislative Bell System

When you are visiting the Capitol or one of the House or Senate office buildings, you may hear bells ringing and wonder what they mean. Basically, these signals inform the Members/Senators the type of

activity that is taking place on the floor of their respective chambers by summoning them for quorum calls, recorded votes or other activities.

Hall clocks and wall fixtures in the House/Senate office buildings light up with the respective number of bell rings. One light remains lit in the House office buildings while the House is in session and one light is lit in the Senate office buildings while the Senate is in session. American flags also fly

House legislative electric bell signals

1 long ring, pause, followed by 3 rings	Signals the start or continuation of a notice quorum call. This call is terminated if and when 100 Members appear.
1 long ring	Termination of a notice quorum call.
2 rings	Electronically Recorded Vote.
2 rings, pause, followed by 2 rings	Manual roll call vote. The bells will sound again when the Clerk reaches the R's.
2 rings, pause, followed by 5 rings	First vote in a series of votes. The first vote will be a minimum of 15 minutes with successive votes of not less than 5 minutes each. Each successive vote signaled by 5 rings.
3 rings	Quorum call. This may be either a notice quorum call that has been converted to a quorum call or a quorum call initially. The bells are repeated 5 minutes after the first ring.
3 rings, pause, followed by 3 rings	Manual quorum call. The bells will sound again when the Clerk reaches the R's.
3 rings, pause, followed by 5 rings	Quorum call in the Committee of the Whole. This may be followed by a 5-minute recorded vote.
4 rings	Adjournment of the House.
5 rings	Five minute electronically recorded vote.
6 rings	Recess of the House.
12 rings at 2 second intervals	Civil Defense Warning



Senate legislative buzzers and bell signals

Pre-Session Signals	1 long ring at hour of convening; 1 red light remains lighted at all times while Senate is in session.
1 ring	Yeas and Nays
2 rings	Quorum Call
3 rings	Call of Absentees
4 rings	Adjournment or Recess (End of Daily Session)
5 rings	Seven and a half minutes remaining on Yea or Nay vote
6 rings	Morning Business Concluded (Lights cut off immediately) Recess During Daily Session (Lights stay on during period of recess)
12 rings	Civil Defense Warning

above the House or Senate chamber when either is in session; the flag always flies over the central entrance to the Capitol building.

Also, you may be on Capitol Hill in the evening, or see the Capitol from afar, and spot an illumination in the cupola of the Capitol dome. This light indicates that the House or the Senate (or both) is in session. The light is extinguished when both sessions have adjourned for the day.

Internal Services: For official business (non-reference)

There are many, many services provided to Members/Senators in order to support the conduct of official business. The House and Senate telephone directories list pages of such services under the heading “General Support Services.” The following listing will cover those with which interns are most likely to come into contact. Consult the telephone directory or the House/Senate intranets for a complete roster.

Copy Center (Senate side only)

Copy centers are places where material can be taken for quick copying. There are self-service, walk-up machines for smaller jobs, and more sophisticated, large copier for jobs requiring an operator. Interns may be asked to run to a copy center and copy this or that. You might copy it yourself, or perhaps fill out a work order for pickup later that day. All copy centers are open Monday through Friday, but hours vary by location: SD-G82, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (4-6138); SR-B24A, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (4-7487); SH-230, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (4-2505).

Dry Cleaners

House staff and interns can take advantage of a on-site dry cleaning and laundry services center. If your clothing is dropped off before 10:00 a.m., there’s typically a two-day turnaround. Visit them in B-239 Longworth HOB (6-8698) from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. M-F for prices and the full range of services available. Senate interns can choose from outside vendors that are near the Senate office buildings. Neighborhood cleaners are an option for everyone – ask your coworkers for their recommendations and shop around for the best prices, hours of operation, and service.



First Call (House side only)

On the House side, First Call serves as a single point of contact for all services provided by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), as well as for general House information. They handle passport applications, notarize documents, offer sightseeing brochures, special event coordination and logistics, and are also the place to drop off your hardcopy “Dear Colleagues.” B-227 Longworth HOB (5-8000), 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., M-F.

Flag Office

This is the place where all the flags are sent for flying over the Capitol building. Usually Pages handle most of the deliveries here, but during a recess or when Pages are not on duty, interns may be sent to this office, located in an obscure area of the Capitol. Room HT-16 Capitol building (8-4239).

Flag Service (Senate side only)

The Senate Service Department (defined later) maintains a flag operation that, with the proper work order/instructions, handles many of the transactions entailed in flying a flag for a Senator’s office, including packaging and mailing. The flag operation service is located in the Service Department’s (see cite below) main operation’s counter, SD-G82 (4-4051).

Inside Mail (See entry in Chapter 3.)

Page Service

Although appointed by a single Member/Senator, Pages (high school juniors between the ages of 16 to 18 years) serve everyone in the same party of the Member/Senator who selected them. Pages can be identified by their uniform of navy blue jackets, gray pants or skirts and white shirts or blouses. Page service is provided to Members/Senators, committees, and the leadership to expedite the conduct of official business by insuring the timely delivery of documents. A Page can be summoned to run an errand by phoning one of the numbers listed below. There aren't enough Pages to go around if everyone calls at once, so most offices use the Page service selectively. Interns often run some of the same errands assigned to the Pages, especially when the Pages are not on duty (during recess or after hours) or a delivery cannot wait for a Page to come over to the office. All materials delivered by Pages should be packaged in franked envelopes.

House Pages are usually available from 11:45 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. If the House convenes before 10:00 a.m., Page service begins one-half hour before the session. When the House is in past 5:00 p.m., limited Page service is available until Special Orders are completed. Contact the Page Supervisors at their respective cloakrooms for more information: Republican (5-6377) and Democratic (5-4607).

On the Senate side, Pages are available on a more limited basis. Senate Pages try to confine their errand running to needs of the Senators, especially when the Senate is in session, as opposed to office staff requests. Messenger service by Senate Pages is available only during the hours the Senate is in session and only among the Senate office buildings and the Capitol, plus one daily delivery to the House side at 2:00 p.m. Contact Democratic Pages at (4-9500) or Republican Pages at (4-6491).

Offices of the Photographer



In order to arrange for a photographer to snap professional pictures of Members/Senators on the Capitol steps, in their offices or anywhere else, offices can contact the Office of the Photographer on either the House or Senate side. Usually the executive assistant/scheduler is authorized to make the arrangements and sign for photos taken only when a Member/Senator is present. House: 5-2840; Senate: 4-6000. Some offices are taking their own photos with digital cameras and printing them in-office or posting them on the Web site, but official House and Senate photographers are still in high demand.

Postmaster's Office

The Postmaster oversees the post offices within the Capitol complex as well as the expeditious delivery of tons of mail, a speeded-up passport application process, notary public service, and various publication and distribution services. Senate interns may come into contact with the Postmaster's office when they are assigned the task of dropping off "Dear Colleagues" for inside mail delivery. Senate Postmaster: SD-B23 (4-1424).

Press Galleries

Press galleries, as one would expect from the title, are places in the House/Senate reserved for members of the media to watch and report on the floor debate. The most prominent of these, located on the third floor of the Capitol behind the rostrums of the House and Senate chambers, are spaces/offices for the press to type/file stories, make phone calls and generally use as a landing area. This space is also referred to as the "gallery." The actual address in the House is H-315 (5-3945); in the Senate S-316 (4-0241).

In addition to the offices located behind the House/Senate galleries, there are other press galleries, including radio-television and periodical galleries located on the third floor of the Capitol building on both the House and Senate sides, and the Rayburn radio-television gallery in room B-364 Rayburn HOB. Each press office has a wall on which are attached bins that hold the press releases of Members/Senators/committees who want to get the word out on some matter. Press people can scan the wall and pick up releases that interest them. Interns may be dispatched to these press rooms to leave handfuls of their office's releases for bin distribution (you should plan to leave around 15-25 copies at each location, depending upon the gallery).

Recording Studios

Radio and television programs may be recorded by Members/Senators respectively in the House and Senate recording studios. Studio services are for the exclusive use of Members/Senators for the purpose of conveying information to their constituents and the public. An intern may be sent there to pick up/deliver tapes. House: B-310 Rayburn HOB (5-3941); Senate: ST-71 Capitol building (4-4979).

Service Department (Senate side)

In addition to handling all equipment needs of Senate offices, the Service Department can fold newsletters, print mass mailings and package all sorts of materials for mailing (including flags). For instance, if the Washington office wants to send a box of leaflets explaining the new Medicare program to a senior citizen center back home, the Service Center will pick up the leaflets at the office, box and wrap them and, if you've enclosed an address label, send the box on its way. Interns can be sent to deliver and pick up any number of items to and from this office. The printing work order counter, and packaging and flag operations room are located in room SD-G82 (4-4051).

Stationery Store/Room

This is a very popular locale to send interns on errands! Located in the basement of the Longworth in the House and basement of the Dirksen (near the cafeteria) in the Senate, this is the place where offices purchase all of their supplies—from paper clips to yellow legal pads and pens. Each office has an assigned account number and maintains a system for keeping track of expenditures. To buy an item and charge it to the office account, you must be in possession of an “account card” and a current I.D. badge. If sent to purchase merchandise, your supervisor will inform you about just how the place works. Other supplies may be bought with cash for personal use, but you must have a valid congressional I.D. to be admitted. Official stationery, however, can only be purchased through a Member's/Senator's account. Most items are priced a good bit less than the usual retail price. House: B-217 Longworth HOB (5-3321); Senate: SD-B43 (4-4771). House offices can also purchase supplies online through HouseNet (<http://HouseNet.house.gov>).

The House and Senate also have gift shops, with all sorts of congressionally emblazoned memorabilia, large and small. Visitors, employees and interns may purchase many kinds of souvenirs, including wallets, pens, ties, tote bags, blankets and Waterford crystal for personal use, with cash, personal check, or credit card. Located next door to the House Stationery Store in B-218 Longworth (6-5362), the House gift shop is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., M-F. The Senate gift shop is located in SD-B01 and is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., M-F.

Internal Services: For Personnel

Since Capitol Hill is like a little municipality, there are services available to the thousands and thousands of employees who work within its city limits. Listed below are some of these services.

Airline Ticket Office (or “CATO” for Combined Airlines Ticket Office)

CATO offices provide a wealth of services for House and Senate travelers—much more than indicated by its name. While they can make reservations and ticket domestic and international flights, they also book railroad and cruise tickets, sell American Express Travelers Cheques with no service charge and provide same-day delivery service to all offices in the U.S. Capitol, House offices and Senate offices upon request. The Reservations Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the Ticket Office from 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., both M-F. House: B-222 Longworth HOB; Senate: SR-B06. Reservations: 4-5886 or (703) 522-2286; Fax: (703) 522-0616.

Barber Shops & Hair Salons

Barber shops and hair salons provide complete hair care and related services to Members, Senators, employees and the general public. Appointments are advisable to avoid a wait. Call for prices.

Shoe shines are also available at stations in the basements of many of the office buildings.

House

Capitol Styles	(full service salon for men and women): 139 Cannon HOB (5-4008), 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
House Cuts	(full service barber shop): B-323 Rayburn HOB (5-7024), 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.



Senate

Barber Shop	SR-B68 (4-4560), 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Hair Salon	SR-B72 (4-4570), 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards located around the Hill, usually outside House and Senate cafeterias/carry-outs, hold housemate search requests, sale items, ride information and other assorted advertisements. You might check them out, especially if you're in the market for a roommate.

Credit Unions

- **In the House:** Lifetime membership in the House credit union is open to all people possessing a valid House I.D. card and \$5 (the minimum balance for a savings account), including interns! (Note: This lifetime membership may come in handy down the road when you've left the Hill and moved far away, but want to acquire a low-interest loan. Even if you haven't put money in your account for decades, that account is still open and still ready to use. So think twice about closing that account when you depart.) You must open a savings account to also have a checking account. You can then obtain a VISA Check Card to make purchases and use at the ATM (there are seven scattered throughout the House office buildings and the Capitol). Personal checks will only be cashed if you are a member of the credit union and if you have that amount of money available in your account. Three working day holds are placed on local checks and five working day holds on non-local checks. House location hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. M-F (6-3100) and include Room SW 1 & 2 Rayburn HOB (near the subway); B-203 Longworth HOB; and H2-195 Ford HOB, as well as the branch in room H-129 in the Capitol Building.
- **In the Senate:** Credit union membership is open to all people possessing a valid Senate I.D. card and \$6 (\$1 for a lifetime membership and \$5 minimum balance in a primary savings account), also

including interns! Once you open a savings account, you may also open a checking account and receive a VISA Check Card for purchases and use at ATMs (there are five scattered throughout the Senate office buildings and the Capitol). There is a three working day hold on local checks and five working day holds on non-local checks. You must be a member to take advantage of credit union services. The hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Friday 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Senate Location: SH-118 (4-2967).

First Aid/Health Units

These offices can provide simple medical remedies—aspirin, cold pills, cough medicine—as well as your temperature reading or, in an emergency, a cot on which to nap. The offices also dispense, free of charge, flu immunizations and travel and allergy shots. If a condition is more serious, a nurse can make a referral to nearby M.D.s. All offices are open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. M-F. House Locations: 110 Cannon HOB (5-3470); 1204 Longworth HOB (5-2500); B-344 Rayburn HOB (5-7131); and H2-145 Ford HOB (5-2442). Senate Locations: SR-166 (4-4170) and SH-124 (4-6580). Capitol Building Locations: H-166 (5-5421); S-153 (6-4830).

Post Offices

Post offices are scattered throughout the House and Senate offices. You can purchase money orders, stamps, mail packages or buy collector’s trinkets, or do anything else you do at any other post office.

House post offices

202 Cannon HOB	(6-5409); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., M-F
B-202 Longworth HOB	(6-5423); 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., M-F
2106 Rayburn HOB	(5-0956); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., M-F
H2-121 Ford HOB	(6-5413); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., M-F

Senate post offices

SR-B34B	(4-3900); 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., M-F (regular weekday hours); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. during non-legislative periods.
SD-B17	(4-5353); 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., M-F (regular weekday hours); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. during non-legislative periods.

Capitol post office

H-101 Capitol building	(6-5417); 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., M-F
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Railroad Ticket Office

This office serves both House and Senate offices. It is located in room S-101 in the Capitol building and it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. M-F. Tickets can be purchased either through calling AMTRAK’s toll free number (800) USA-RAIL (with a credit card) or directly at the railroad ticket office. You can also use the Combined Airlines Ticket Office (CATO—see first heading under this section) to reserve and purchase railroad tickets.

Food glorious food

Internal eateries

Lord Reith once remarked that “You can’t think rationally on an empty stomach and a whole lot of people can’t do it on a full one either.” To promote rational thinking, find below the location of close-by food from the House, Senate and Capitol cafeterias, carry-outs and other eateries. Call 4-3080 for a recorded message of the daily menu of the Senate cafeterias and 5-7320 for the daily menu in the

Capitol

Capitol Coffee Shop	HB-9 (5-3919)
Capitol Snack Bar	SB-10 (4-5340)
Capitol Refectory	S-112 (4-4870)

House side

Cannon Carry-Out	B-114
Longworth Food Court	B-223 (5-0878)
Longworth Convenience Store	B-224B (near the Food Court)
Longworth Starbucks/Breyers Ice Cream	Basement (across from the Food Court)
Longworth 24-Hour Vending Room	Basement (adjacent to the Food Court)
Rayburn Cafeteria	B-357 (5-7109)
Rayburn Special Orders Deli	B-326 (5-6768)
Rayburn Pizza Plus	B-357 (5-3504)
Ford Cafeteria	H2-135 (5-1444)
Ford Carry-Out	H2-126



Senate side

Dirksen North Servery and Dining Room	Basement (north side) (4-2263)
Dirksen South Buffet	Basement (south side) (4-4249)
Dirksen South Side	Basement (south side) (8-2810)
Hart “Senate Chef”	Dirksen/Hart Ground Floor connecting corridor (4-4587)
Hart Sundry Shop	Dirksen/Hart Ground Floor connecting corridor (4-4586)
Russell Food Court and Coffee Shop	Basement (north corridor)

Library of Congress (menu information 7-8300)

Main Cafeteria	Madison Building, 6th floor (7-8301)
Montpelier Dining Room	Madison Building, 6th floor (7-8300)
Coffee Shop	Madison Building, ground floor (7-3035)
Adams Coffee Shop	Adams Building, 1st floor (7-8111)

House. Since the restaurant schedules regularly change according to the legislative calendar, operating hours will be posted at each location. You may also find them online on the House and Senate intranets and on each chamber's closed circuit TV channels. Sometimes access may be restricted to staff only, so always bring your I.D.

Union Station Food Court (Senate side)

Located in Union Station (landmark train station on the Senate side) are a wide assortment of small takeout eateries, serving up everything from sushi and bagels to burritos and ice cream (but not together!) Open from the early morning to late in the evening, Union Station a very popular spot for staffers and tourists alike to grab a bite to eat or catch a flick. Union Station also comprises a number of full-service restaurants, nice close-by places to bring Mom and Dad when they can pick up the tab.

“The Strip” (House side)

On the House side, find assorted luncheon/dining spots on Pennsylvania Avenue S.E. (past the Madison Building). The fare ranges from Greek to Thai to Chinese to Mexican to deli to good old American cheeseburger and fries. Most places display a menu in the front window so you can get an idea of both price and selection. Note: The Senate side does not enjoy so confined a strip, but it does have Union Station as well as more than a half dozen restaurants within easy walking distance, mostly in a cluster down around Massachusetts Avenue and D Street N.E.

Travel

Some of the following information is drawn with permission from *Washington, D.C. The Complete Guide*, by Judy Duffield, William Kramer and Cynthia Sheppard (New York: Random House, 1982).

Getting Around Town

Washington has the reputation of being a difficult city to move around, but it does have a rational plan to it.

The basic layout is simple. The city is divided into four sections—Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest, usually denoted by initials, NE, NW, SE and SW. The dividing lines are North Capitol Street, South Capitol Street, East Capitol Street and the Mall, radiating like the spokes of a wheel from the Capitol. North-south streets are numbers; east-west streets are letters in alphabetical order (there are no J, X, Y or Z streets). When the city planners ran out of letters, they gave the streets two-syllable names (*e.g.*, Newark Street) in alphabetical order, and followed with three-syllable names (*e.g.*, Fessenden Street) reaching out to the Washington-Maryland border in upper Northwest and Northeast. Diagonal thoroughfares, designated “Avenues,” are named for various states. Circles and squares occur at the intersection of diagonal avenues and numbered and lettered streets. Got that?

Be careful to check the quadrant indicators—500 C Street can be found in four locations as 5th and C streets intersect in NW, NE, SE and SW. A Washington trick to ascertaining just where a location is entails knowing that the street number will help you figure out the identity of the crossroad. For example, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, is at 16th and Pennsylvania; 1990 K Street, NW, is between 19th and 20th Streets; and 510 7th Street, NW, is found between E and F Streets—that is, between the fifth and sixth letters of the alphabet. Again, be sure to always acquire the quadrant designation before embarking on your destination. Many newcomers have fruitlessly sought an address in one section of town while they really wanted another quadrant altogether. Find out whether it's NW, NE, SE or SW. You still may get lost, but not on such a grand scale!

Metrorail

Red line, blue line, yellow line, green line and orange line—rapid transit is an integral part of the D.C. transportation scene. “Riding the Metro” is a normal activity for thousands of commuters each day. In addition to the dozens of stops within the city, the subway can shoot you to many outlying suburbs and National Airport.

Each station displays a stylized map of the various train lines, which are identified by different colors, plus find an overview of the system with the area streets and landmarks above it. If your destination is on another train line, the map shows where to transfer from one line to another.

Metrorail currently opens at 5:00 a.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. on weekends, closing at midnight Sunday through Thursday, and 3:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday nights. (If you’re going to be out that late, make sure to check which time the last train departs your station – it could be anywhere from 2:30 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. and you don’t want to miss it at that hour!) Trains run roughly every six to ten minutes. The weekday rush hour—when fares are higher but trains come through the station more often— runs from 5:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. On major holidays, the system runs on a weekend schedule. On special occasions, such as certain sporting events or concerts, the system may run special routes or additional trains to handle the extra volume of passengers.

Fares, which are posted in each station, vary according to the length of your trip, as well as time of day (*i.e.*, rush hour costs more.) Ask for help or acquire various brochures from the information booth in any station or visit them online at <http://www.wmata.com>.

Capitol Hill Metrorail Stops

- *Senate side*—Union Station (use Red Line)
- *House side/Capitol/Library of Congress*—Capitol South (use Blue/Orange Lines)
- *Ford HOB*—Federal Center Southwest (use Blue/Orange Lines)

Metrobus

Red, white, and blue metrobuses traverse the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area following hundreds of basic routes. Fares are exact change only (either in cash or via a special Metro pass), and vary



according to your destination and the time of day. If your trip requires changing to another route, you should tell the driver your destination when you board, pay your whole fare on the first bus and ask for a transfer. Each transfer is punched to indicate the zone and time; transfers are free and good for up to two hours. Should your trip require using both Metrobus and Metrorail, you can get a free transfer from rail to bus (to be taken from dispensers near the escalators when getting ON Metrorail), which reduces your bus fare. By visiting Metro sales offices or commuter stores, or by calling 637-7000, you can:

- Acquire a timetable for your route (if your main mode of travel is the bus, you might get an assortment of these brochures that spell out the bus schedule of every line).
- Find out directions/times/schedules/routes via the bus/subway system (tell the agent where you are and where you want to go, and he or she will tell you “how to get there from here”).
- Obtain information on how to purchase the most economical fare/pass depending upon your specific commute.

M System Map

Legend

- Red Line • Glenmont to Shady Grove
- Orange Line • New Carrollton to Vienna/Fairfax-GMU
- Blue Line • Franconia-Springfield to Largo Town Center
- Green Line • Branch Avenue to Greenbelt
- Yellow Line • Huntington to Mt Vernon Sq/7th St-Convention Center



- No Smoking
- No Eating or Drinking
- No Animals (except service animals)
- No Audio or Video Devices (without earplugs)
- No Litter or Spitting
- No Dangerous or Flammable Items

Taxicabs

Taxis in Washington are relatively inexpensive because they are based on a zone system rather than on the number of minutes/miles traveled. The best bargain zonewise is the huge zone that encompasses Capitol Hill and downtown within single fare. But zones are tricky and if you are standing on the “wrong” side of the street, you can end up paying a lot for a threeblock ride, whereas a two mile ride may cost the same amount.

By law, basic rates must be posted in the cab. If you’re unsure of just how much a ride may cost you, be sure to ask how many zones will be traversed and the cost (agree on price with driver before leaving if you want to be sure of a charge for your ride). If you venture across the District line, the zones disappear to be replaced by mileage and minutes on the meter, an even more complicated exercise from the vantage point of being a knowledgeable consumer. In addition, you may be assessed surcharges for baggage handling, extra passengers, rush hour trips, transport during snow emergencies, waiting time, and if you summoned the cab via telephone call (rather than flagging them down on the street). Also, don’t be surprised if the cab stops for multiple fares as part of the same journey—it’s legal and common practice. To prevent sticker shock at the final fare, your best bet would be to review the zone maps and fares and use the trip calculator provided by the DC Taxicab Commission on their Web site at <http://dctaxi.dc.gov>.

Parking

Offices are allotted a certain number of parking slots. These are assigned to staff members on a permanent basis. Usually, there are not enough to go around, so an intern is rarely accorded this luxury of luxuries. Street parking is very tough/nearly impossible. “Permit Only” parking rings the House/Senate office buildings for employees lucky enough to acquire permits. Also, for most of the Capitol Hill residential roads, you are prohibited from parking on the streets for more than two hours unless your car sports a special sticker that can only be obtained if you own/rent a place on the Hill and register your car in the District.



If you feel like going through the trouble, the residential parking office is at 301 C Street NW, Room 1157. You’ll need a valid DC registration card, a valid DC driver’s license, and \$15. Paid congressional staff, students attending DC colleges and military personnel can keep home state car registrations and acquire “reciprocity stickers” for \$250. More info: 727-5000 or visit them online at <http://dmv.dc.gov>.

There are rare blocks here and there where this special neighborhood restriction does not apply, but chances are they have been discovered by some early birds who fill them up quickly. A public parking lot is available at South Capitol Street and Washington Avenue SW for a daily fee (\$7 in 2006). Otherwise, spaces are few and far between, and good only for two hours.

Warning: the District of Columbia government has perfected ticketing parked cars into a science that reaps gobs of fines for city coffers. They have no qualms about: dragging away the cars of tourists who unwittingly park along roads that are legal spots all day long until 4 p.m. when tow trucks literally line up to pick them off for their rush hour indiscretions; or enforcing very stiff fines for cars that remain at expired meters; or applying a “boot” to a non-permit car that has parked all day in a residential area. Before you park, read and heed those signs posted nearby that inform you that you can’t park there without a residential permit or between certain (usually rush) hours or only for two hours or when street sweeping is in effect or whatever. And don’t forget to bring lots of quarters if you plan on parking anywhere on the street. Most meters in the city only take this 25¢ coin and only provide you a few moments time for that amount of cash.

The D.C. government unleashes tons of parking enforcement officers onto the streets daily and each one constantly patrols and re-patrols a designated area in a blanket sweep. And they can appear out of nowhere. You think nobody will notice that you squeezed the old car too close to the stop sign on a seemingly out of the way street before embarking on a stroll through Georgetown? Hah! Escaping the reach of the parking enforcers is a difficult and likely a losing proposition. The fines are exorbitant, so don't take any chances with your wheels or your wallet. Also see more on parking below.

Rush Hour

There is rush hour and there is rush hour. Rush hour can refer to some informal time period when traffic is especially heavy and rush hour can refer to very specific time frames when particular roads are restricted to car pools or when traffic reverses on certain streets thus changing from a two-lane road to a four-lane road. Are you confused yet? Informal morning rush hour runs from approximately 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. while afternoon rush hour begins as early as 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. and extends to around 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. If you travel on a few particular roads, such as Rock Creek Park or Route 66, you must familiarize yourself with the designated times that those road respect their own "rush hour." On other roads, rush hour includes HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) restrictions, requiring two or three riders in the same car, depending upon the road.

And then some main arteries in the downtown area don't allow parking during the evening and morning rushes so as to use the parking lane as a traffic lane. Read those posted signs before parking anywhere for any amount of time. People who dutifully feed a meter at 9:00 a.m. on an artery that prohibits traffic from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. will be in for a rude awakening and a steep fine when they return to a ticketed car (if the car hasn't been towed away!). As a rule, between 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., double or triple the amount of time it takes to get from point A to point B. If it's raining, the town goes berserk; it closes down completely if it snows, and sometimes too much sunshine will slow traffic as well (serious, almost blinding, glare heading south in the evening...) Whew! Got it all straight yet? 🙄

chapter 5 summary



do

- **Explore.** Learn the layout of the Capitol complex and all the House and Senate office buildings, including how the room numbers are determined.
- **Bring your ID** when traveling underground in the subways and tunnels that connect the Capitol complex.
- **Learn legislative basics** about each chamber: floor procedure, voting, the galleries and gallery passes, and the electronic bell systems.
- **Remember that the city is divided into four quadrants (NE, NW, SE, and SW)** that originate from the Capitol building; north-south streets are numbered while east-west streets are in alphabetical order; diagonal avenues are named after states.
- **Take advantage of DC's subway, "the Metro."** It is safe, clean, and convenient for thousands of commuters. It is also easy to use!

don't

- **Forget that each building has multiple exits** that are usually on differing floors.
- **Forget to check which quadrant your desired location is in.** The address 500 C Street can be found at the four different intersections of 5th and C Streets.
- **Count on parking in the District.** There are a limited number of garage spaces, and street parking can be difficult to come by in certain areas, including Capitol Hill. Tickets are also frequently issued and can quickly become expensive.

ethics: responsibilities, risks and rewards

It seems that ethics used to be a rather abstract concept, at least in public discourse. It was the stuff of philosophy classes or Sunday school sermons. Today, ethics has emerged as part of the “character issue” used to gauge the suitability of presidential candidates and is a hot social topic—from Web sites and blogs to corporate boardrooms and legislatures debating human cloning. Ethics cuts across all layers of life and all ages. And even though they haven’t necessarily made headlines, old-fashioned values have always been around to guide human behavior and set standards for conduct.

This chapter discusses real-life ethical situations that you may confront on Capitol Hill. Funny things can happen to us when we’re plucked out of our normal surroundings. Often human nature rationalizes a different, and sometimes dubious, behavior in a new environment—it’s like it doesn’t “count” because we’re not at home and nobody’s looking who knows us. That shouldn’t be the case in general and that certainly isn’t true on Capitol Hill where a wrong move can humiliate not only you, but can reflect negatively on the person for whom you work.

While you are here, there are obligations to abide by certain standards of conduct, risks involved in flirting with the bounds of integrity, and rewards for ethically representing your boss and an honorable institution. It’s a grown-up world with lots of repercussions. Step lightly.

*Let your conscience
be your guide.*

—JIMINY CRICKETT
IN *PINOCCHIO*

*Anything good in life
is either illegal,
immoral or
fattening.*

—*THE OFFICIAL RULES*

Oh behave!

—MIKE MYERS
(AUSTIN POWERS) IN
THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME
1999

Understanding Ethics on the Hill

Members of Congress are subject to very specific codes of official conduct that regulate everything from gifts to financial disclosure to the use of campaign funds. There are committees within the House and Senate charged with the responsibility of investigating ethical improprieties of its membership, and with providing advice on how infractions might be avoided. Irregularities can include seeking private gain from public office, nepotism and misusing the frank.

While all Senate interns (paid and unpaid) are subject to rules stipulated by the Senate ethics manual, unpaid House interns are not legally bound by the Ethics Committee's rules and regulations as are Members and staff, but don't think you've got a free ride. The House ethics manual lays it out very clearly:

Volunteers, interns, and fellows should be made aware of the implications their activities have for the Members in whose offices they work. Technically, House rules cannot be enforced against individuals who are not House employees. However, such individuals may be in a position to take actions and make representations in the name of a Member, for which the Member may be responsible. The Member or office may also be subject to a claim of liability for work-related injuries to, or caused by, a volunteer. The (Ethics) Committee recommends that Members and House offices obtain the agreement of such individuals that, although not House employees, they will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects creditably on the House.

Moreover, even the unwritten rules of conduct are quite strict since staff and interns are extensions of their offices, and their actions reflect on their bosses. As one L.A. remarked on describing an intern's transformation from entrepreneurial student to organizational animal—"You're not a free agent anymore—you're in another world." And so you are.

This chapter offers a collection of some of the best wisdom we could beg, borrow or steal (excuse the expression) on the subject of ethics. It is meant to teach more than preach. As with life in general, people develop or adhere to varying standards/moral codes of personal behavior most of which have nothing to do with breaking or not breaking the law. The thoughts presented raise issues and offer generally accepted conditions that interns buy into by virtue of assuming a position on Capitol Hill. You've got to develop your own standards and values for 99.99 percent of your life's behavior, but when the choice is between legal and illegal, or the stakes are high in that gray area of how certain conduct might be perceived, think twice about the decisions you make as an intern.

You represent your boss and you reflect on the institution. Remember that Members of Congress and Senators are so scrutinized that the appearance of impropriety can be as serious as an actual indiscretion. Some action may not violate any legal rule, but fly in the face of the political rules that dominate Hill comportment (*i.e.*, you may be able to get away with certain actions from a strictly legal standpoint, but if they look terrible politically, the consequences can be equally or even more damning). Remember that perception is reality on the Hill. General ethical standards call for abiding by the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Test of propriety: if what you are about to do was to be reported on the front page of the largest paper in your district/state, would you still do it? If you're ever in doubt on how to behave or what to say, just play it safe.

It should be noted that interns do not often deliberately choose to do something wrong or off-key. Many times, it is a combination of innocence, ignorance and naivete. Interns, by virtue of their newness on the scene, may not even consider some behavior as inappropriate, especially where political subtleties come into play. Perhaps what follows can layer a bit of insight onto the fresh veneer of a novice internship, and bring some perspective.

Finally, the trappings of professional responsibility, etiquette and ethics that you adopt during the course of your internship will serve you in good stead down the road. You won't necessarily learn such standards of behavior back on campus. More than researching comprehensive healthcare reform legislation or drafting a major speech, mastering the ideals of professionalism will reap big rewards in the future. They are transferable and portable qualities and can be used for the rest of your life.

More than a mirror: reflections on your office/the institution

When you enlist in the internship corps, you sign onto a set of responsibilities beyond the purely personal ones you had back at school where, to a great extent, you were autonomous and answerable only to yourself. All of a sudden you're picking up the phone and speaking for a United States Senator or attending a reception wearing a badge with your Congressman's name under yours. Pretty heady stuff.

Since you work for a public official, your own actions have to reflect a higher standard because, like it or not, your behavior or misbehavior can reach beyond that of an "ordinary" citizen; it can affect your Member/Senator, the party with which he/she is affiliated, or the institution itself. When a staff member or intern gets into trouble, the media sources reporting his/her name will, in the same breath, identify the office he/she works for; you are linked together.



- At all times, in or out of the office, conduct yourself in a manner that reflects honorably on the U.S. Congress. Your conduct should promote public confidence in the integrity of your boss and the institution. This standard includes respect for and compliance with the law.
- You should not engage in any activities that would jeopardize the propriety of your conduct in carrying out the duties of your office. You should not allow family, social, or other relationships to influence your official conduct or judgment. Never lend the prestige of your office to advance the private interests of others, nor should you convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence you. Likewise, don't pretend you have any influence over the Member/Senator.

In this vein, note that Senate rules state that individuals providing unpaid services (interns, volunteers, etc.) cannot work on issues of particular benefit to an outside entity that may be providing substantial personal funding to the individual (*e.g.*, housing). For example, ExxonMobil can't put you up at The Hyatt for two months while you're interning at the Energy and Commerce Committee. Of course, "outside entity" does not refer to your parents. It's still legal for them to supplement your summer internship.

- Don't engage in other political activities while working for the Member/Senator without informing your supervisor and receiving his/her input. This practice is especially important if your internship is in the district/state office where you are closer to the scrutiny of the local press. However, in Washington as well, you are a representative of your office and your activities should appropriately reflect that relationship.
- When you return home, you should recognize your added responsibility to make the legislative system work by helping the folks back home understand the political process (since *The Daily Show* may be their only point of reference!). But do so in a manner that doesn't make you appear like a know-it-all, which can cause resentment.

Misuse of privilege: samples

During an internship, you will be enticed with many temptations that face anybody in any office situation, such as using the office copier for running off personal papers, writing a term paper on the office computer or taking home office supplies. And then there are allurements unique to Capitol Hill and special to an intern's particular status within the office. First, several anecdotes for illustration purposes:

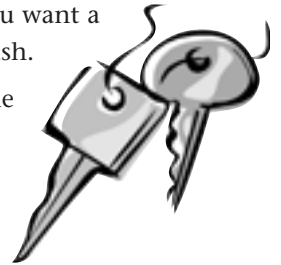
- One office routinely provided its interns keys to the office as a matter of courtesy and convenience. Also along those lines, the Member kept his office refrigerator well-stocked with soda for office personnel to partake of during the long legislative weekdays. One Sunday during the NCAA basketball playoffs, an intern brought his buddies into the office to watch hoops on the office tube. An entire refrigerator full of soda disappeared in one March Madness afternoon. The office doesn't give keys to interns anymore.
- An intern asked his Chief of Staff if he could sign a letter on arms control that other interns were circulating. He said sure. The letter was not only signed by the intern, but listed the intern's affiliation (*i.e.*, the Member's name was typed under the intern's name) as well, thus implying the Member supported the letter's message. In addition, the letter, an informal intern communication/declaration, was circulated through inside mail. Both tying the Member into a position he knew nothing about and using an official mode of mail delivery for an unofficial document ended up embarrassing the Congressman.
- One intern (who apparently had not read Chapter 2 of this guide) was asked to order business cards for a staffer whose supply had run out. He placed the call and ordered those for the L.A., but also added an additional order for himself, listing his title as "Staff Member." Needless to say, he will never hold that position—or any other—in this office.
- Another intern called the Congressional Research Service (CRS) after his Hill internship had ended and he had taken employment elsewhere. He informed CRS that he was "with Congresswoman X" and needed the information for his job. Even after the office caught up with him and called him on the carpet, he contended that he had not done anything wrong because he was a constituent. Constituent or not, the office will not do him any favors ever again. He crossed the line.
- For a "harmless" prank, some interns drafted a decidedly left-wing policy statement over the signature of a right-wing Member of Congress for inclusion in the *Congressional Record's* Extension of Remarks. Evidently, the conservative Member used the Extension of Remarks almost daily for expressing his viewpoint. The interns who worked for a liberal Congressman were tired of it and thought they would have some fun. Not only did the antic publicly embarrass the interns' boss with headline-making news coverage, it reflected poorly on the institution since the *Congressional Record* is an official document and so widely read. It also necessitated a permanent change in the procedures for submitting Extensions of Remarks (which now includes requiring a Member's signature to reduce the chances of mischief) that affected all offices.

Misuse of privilege: dos and don'ts

- Use the Member's/Senator's frank to mail material relating to official duties, activities and business of a congressional office. In other words, it can't be used for political or personal mail. There are criminal and civil penalties attached to violations of the franking law. An inadvertent mistake or willful abuse on a single letter or a mass mailing will be attributed to the Member/Senator. Interns

should not send letters over the frank to Mom, or friends, or anyone else unless the communication relates solely to official business.

- Stationery is meant to be used by the office for official purposes only. Using it for any other reason, like writing your cousin or showing off to friends back home, is uncool and unacceptable. Worse yet, using the stationery to deliberately try and impress someone with your importance in order to register a complaint or elicit some favor (*i.e.*, writing the mayor's office about a traffic ticket or asking the sponsor of a concert for a pair of free passes) is way out of line. Even when using stationery for official business, interns should always obtain permission from a supervisor who can authorize the application.
- When it comes to office supplies, fingers can be sticky for staff and interns alike. Pens and pads emblazoned with "U.S. Senate" or "U.S. House of Representatives" work their way out of an office with great speed. Accidents do happen, but deliberate stealing is obviously unethical. If you want a huge quantity of souvenirs, avail yourself of the stationery/supply store using your own cash.
- The office key implies a trust. Don't trash the office with your friends or otherwise treat the place as a student lounge.
- When it comes to using office equipment for personal use (*i.e.*, calling long distance after hours or using the computer to type your resume), there is one simple rule: Don't. Office equipment is owned by the taxpayers and is for official congressional business only. Beware that, even if you try and sneak something by someone, computers can do the strangest things, like print your party invitation in the middle of a correspondence run.
- And speaking of school papers, interns are most tempted to utilize the vast resources of CRS to actually conduct original research. CRS is overburdened as it is just answering official requests. It doesn't need to direct its resources to furthering shortcuts to the higher education of the intern corps. You might hear about how intern pals/colleagues ripped off CRS or how staff used it to get information for purely personal purposes. This abuse does not give you permission to join in these types of activities. You can, however, read and print a wealth of reports on their Web site (<http://www.crs.gov>) or visit a CRS research center to do your own research.



Confidentiality

The relationship between a Member/Senator and staff is essentially a confidential one but, conversely, what goes on in the office obviously represents the juiciest source of intern conversation. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to refrain from talking about the perils, pitfalls and politics of your office, know that your trust with the office is on the line every time you bring up the subject with friends, colleagues or folks back home. Think before you speak or you might find your foot in your mouth (or worse yet, out the door).

- You should never disclose any confidential information received by you in the course of your duties, nor should you employ such information for your personal gain.
- Bars, buses and Metro are the most popular places to talk. Be aware that you can be overheard very easily. One intern, trying to impress a woman he met on the Metro, carried on about office politics/his boss' votes/embarrassing situations, etc., unaware that the Chief of Staff was sitting a few rows down from him, overhearing every word. Who knows who else tapped into that information or just thought poorly about the Senator that would hire such an immature loudmouth? There are very big ears in Washington, D.C. Be professional.

- There is a variation on the above theme of taking care where you talk. That is, who you talk to is not always apparent on its face. Washington, D.C. is a small town. In many respects, everyone is involved in the same business. And if they aren't actually working on identical pursuits, they often are married to, related to, involved with, friends of, acquaintances of, roommates of or have connections three times removed with someone who is engaged in similar employment. All's fair in love and politics—and both rely heavily on reconnaissance! Don't be paranoid, but do be particularly mindful of Washington's web of interrelationships.
- Avoid gossip and speculation with others about how your Member/Senator feels about or will vote on specific issues unless, of course, it is a matter of public record.
- Feel free to question the Member's/Senator's position (nobody should expect lockstep agreement on every issue) but do this only in the privacy of your office. You should never publicly challenge your boss' position, whether or not it coincides with your personal belief. Be loyal to your assignment.
- When dealing with the public or with other offices, always remember that you represent the Member/Senator. Project a positive image of the office and staff. Internal office disputes or conflicts are none of anyone else's business. If you have a disagreement or are upset about something, take it up with appropriate people on staff rather than gripe with other interns or, worse yet, carry your unhappiness back home.
- Don't publish anything (*e.g.*, school column, story in local paper, blog posting) about your internship without first receiving input on the piece from your supervisor. This advice is offered more in the spirit of sensitivity than censorship.

Honesty

Honesty is the best policy, but sometimes because of gray areas it is difficult to know where the line is drawn which you should not cross. Other times, don't kid yourself, the line is real clear, but you'll be tempted to take a chance and fudge things anyhow, especially when your ego gets the best of you. Don't do it.

- Never pretend to be someone or something that you are not (*e.g.*, Full-time staff member, lobbyist, personal friend of the Member/Senator, etc.). This make-believe invention is very tempting, at receptions especially. Every staff member has seen/heard interns get a little carried away with themselves in certain situations. The people back in the office may know you're a lowly intern, but what do these people at the reception know? Why not sound a little more important than you are? It may seem harmless, but you can get caught, look foolish and find yourself in deep trouble if the deception gets out of hand.
- Do not accept money, gifts or favors from any office or professional contacts without first checking with your office. Some offices have a strict policy prohibiting staff from accepting any gifts from any professional contacts, while other offices follow the prevailing House and Senate gift rule limitations, and still others have fashioned their own hybrid policy. You need to make certain that you are abiding by both your office's gift policy as well as the applicable House or Senate gift rules stipulated by the ethics manuals.

Under no circumstances may you solicit a gift, even if you offer nothing in return. Also be aware gifts can encompass a whole range of items that might be offered to you as an intern: dinner, baseball caps, t-shirts, sports tickets, holiday treat baskets.



“How to Stay Out of Jail”

Monica Lewinsky occupies a class of her own when it comes to legal troubles stemming from an internship. While it is difficult to fathom how any intern will ever again attain that level of notoriety, Capitol Hill interns are subject to a variety of rules covering their activities. It is unlikely that an intern will be legally prosecuted for violating a law governing congressional offices, but stepping over the legal line, even unintentionally, still represents a sure-fire way to earn a quick and ignoble boot from the office. One Chief of Staff, who left day-to-day intern management to others, always insisted on delivering his “How To Stay Out Of Jail” speech to every new intern. The excerpts below detail activities he guaranteed would make his boss “go nuclear” if interns ever engaged in them.

- **Fundraising/Campaigning.** During your internship you will probably hear about the fundraising activities of your boss. He/she may even invite you to a fundraiser, which you should gladly accept (free food!). However, if anyone outside of the office raises the issue of fundraising, treat it like it's radioactive and run the other way! Seriously, Members of Congress and some staff have served jail time for engaging in fundraising or campaign-related activities in a congressional office since it is illegal. Refer any inquiries about fundraising related to your Member to the Chief of Staff. Most Members have established a system to respect these laws, and make it a point to use other offices, purchase separate cell phones, and hire additional campaign staff to help with these efforts. Senate staff, even on their own time away from the Senate, cannot raise funds for federal campaign contributions unless they are a political fundraising designee (interns are not typically so designated).

For the most part, there should be a clear “firewall” visible between clocking time for the government and toiling on the campaign trail. While congressional staff are permitted to campaign for their boss, they must separate such work from their government job. In case you're tempted to join the campaign ethics police, note that there are a variety of campaign-like activities in which congressional staff can legally engage—such as coordinating the Member's schedule or press calls. So, it's best to concern yourself with your work. In the unlikely event that you are asked to work on a campaign-related activity in the congressional office (e.g., stuffing invites for a fundraiser), feel free to politely decline. Like congressional staff, you are permitted to volunteer time to your Member's re-election effort, but you shouldn't feel obligated to do so. After all, you are serving an internship to learn about government, not campaigns.

- **Franking Privilege.** As noted in Chapter 3, “frank” is the word used to describe the signature of a Member of Congress that constitutes postage for congressional mail. It is illegal to send franked mail, or to use office-purchased stamps, for any activity other than official business. Once upon a time, an L.A. walked by an intern who was engrossed in typing a letter on official stationery while nearby sat a franked envelope filled out to the DC DMV/Adjudication Services. The letter concerned a traffic ticket incurred by the intern. Of course, the letter was never sent and the intern spent the rest of his internship learning the finer points of the copier machine.
- **E-mail.** While no laws specifically cover e-mail, all sorts of e-mail communications—investment fraud, illegal solicitation, vulgar jokes—can lead to dismissal. If you are provided an e-mail address, it's best to use it only in the manner prescribed by your supervisor, and never for messages unrelated to official responsibilities. Most offices allow interns to access their personal e-mail through the Web, but you should check with your immediate supervisor before doing so. Also, remember that there ain't NO privacy when it comes to computers in Congress, or just about anywhere else you work these days and computers store even the most long-ago deleted messages. Anything entered into an office computer is fair game for accessing by the office staff, even when using your personal account. So, you should treat everything you read and send via e-mail as part of the public domain, and alter your behavior accordingly.

- Never alter documents, dates, signatures, etc. or hide or throw away mail. If you're having trouble keeping up with your correspondence assignments, tell your supervisor that you're feeling overloaded. Don't stuff the letters in drawers; they'll just grow more and more outdated, which compounds the situation. And they certainly won't go away.
- Do not presume to speak for the Senator/Member/staff. If asked to state/discuss the Member's/Senator's position or voting record on a specific issue or provide information to constituents/interest groups/lobbyists, make sure you have the authority to talk to the people, and be positive that what you are about to say is accurate. If you are unsure, don't be afraid to say so. You won't be faulted for honesty, but you can get your boss in trouble for providing false/inaccurate information. It's perfectly okay to say: "I'm sorry, but I don't know the answer." Also, it may help to offer to research the question, and get back to the person requesting the information.

One intern took a call from a person seeking cosponsorships for a bill. He signed up his boss as a cosponsor, unbeknownst to anyone else in the office. A month later (the intern had since returned home) the rest of the office found out by accident when the issue started to heat up. The Chief of Staff called the chief sponsor's office and inquired how his boss' name could have possibly gotten on such a bill. The office replied with the intern's name and the date. The Chief of Staff couldn't believe it. The bill was not controversial from a constituent viewpoint, but cosponsoring it would have made a substantial impact from the perspective of the Member's historical stand on this issue. In the meantime, the chief sponsor of the bill had begun touting this other Member's name to pump up his cause, since it was unusual for that Member to support such a measure. The Member who found himself signed up for a bill he didn't support, with much embarrassment had to pull his name off the measure. To this day, the Chief of Staff doesn't understand why the intern committed such a grievous error of judgment—an intern, who in no other respect betrayed such inclinations. While the Chief of Staff's 30-minute spiel to new interns did not previously contain a reference on this point, he now tells them never to state the Member's view on legislation. Bottom line: Don't set yourself up as an expert. Err on the side of professing ignorance. It's safer that way.

Living under the same laws as everyone else

Ethics is a two-way street, encompassing not only how an intern approaches his/her job, but also how an office treats the intern. Professional standards may evolve from time to time, but mostly boil down to common sense and common courtesy. The Golden Rule applies here: treat others as you'd like to be treated, and expect the same. Inappropriate behavior is unprofessional, can negatively affect job performance, and in some cases may carry legal consequences. Further, the House and Senate ethics manuals also stipulate that is the responsibility of both the office and the intern to ensure the internship provides an educational benefit to the intern and not just an administrative "gofer" for the office.

The 1995 Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) requires Congress and certain legislative branch agencies to live under 12 workplace laws that the private sector is obligated to follow, including minimum wage/overtime, anti-discrimination, and the Family and Medical Leave Act. In general, the CAA stipulates that an employee with a complaint first seek counseling and mediation through the Office of Compliance. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily at that level, the employee has the option of pursuing an administrative hearing or a lawsuit in federal district court. For more information, visit the Office of Compliance Web site at <http://www.compliance.gov>.

Note that the CAA does establish certain exceptions just for Congress. For instance, Members may continue to consider party affiliation and ties to the district in hiring decisions. Also, interns are specifically exempted from the minimum wage/overtime provisions (sorry, folks).

Sexual harassment

One part of the CAA deserving special mention involves the prohibition against sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment. It may be unfortunate that many Americans got their first glimpse into the world of internships through the eyes of White House intern Monica Lewinsky, but one positive side effect included heightened awareness of this issue—by Members and staff, local press and interns themselves.

Many interns may already arrive in Washington, D.C. with a basic understanding of the do's and don'ts and some wisdom on how to handle sexual harassment, but let's cover the basics. Sexual harassment is defined as:

- Unwelcome sexual advances (verbal or physical);
- Requests for sexual favors; or
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to, or rejections of, such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment, or is used as a basis for making employment decisions.

Additionally, any unwelcome conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, is likewise prohibited.

The key to understanding the definition of sexual harassment lies in the word "unwelcome." Sexual harassment can take the form of verbal abuse, such as sexual insults, suggestive comments, or dirty jokes. It may entail physical touching or horseplay. It may also include visual materials such as cartoons, photographs or e-mail greeting cards.

Interns, due to their young age, inexperience, and newness to the Hill, will more likely be exposed to or participate in unwelcome activities. Young women, in particular, are exposed to a higher incidence of harassment, both on and off the Hill. In addition to the advice provided on the next page, resources are available to help you learn more about sexual harassment or what to do about it. The Senate and House Offices of Employment Counsel currently offer harassment-training seminars, and some offices have required interns to attend. Interns from both chambers may also seek confidential advice from counselors at the Office of Compliance at (202) 724-9250.

It is important for interns to recognize that a Member's office is both a normal professional working environment like any other, and a special working environment subject to greater scrutiny by the press and public. If you participate in unwelcome activity, it not only reflects poorly on you, but on your Member/Senator as well. Harassment is a delicate matter anywhere, and especially in such a powerful and power-driven environment like the Hill.

However, everyone, including interns, has the right to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination or harassing conduct. Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship and demeans both sexes. Verbal or physical behavior toward an intern that constitutes unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures of conduct is illegal and should not be tolerated in the workplace.

Empower yourself

So, what can you do if you feel you're a victim of unwelcome behavior? Experts offer the following advice:

- **Trust your own feelings.** Do not ignore the behavior or remain silent, which may be interpreted by the harasser as consent.
- **Ask the person to stop the behavior.** Politely, but firmly inform the harasser that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive and request a change. For example,
"Yesterday when you did X, [i.e. made sexual comments at the meeting], I felt uncomfortable and upset. Please don't do that again."
You are not obligated to take this step, but it may end the harassment before it goes any further. Sometimes learning that their behavior is unwelcome is enough to stop the person from repeating it.
- **Seek additional help if the harassment continues.** Report the offensive behavior to your supervisor or Chief of Staff. You may also seek guidance from the counselors at the Office of Compliance (724-9250). They can provide specific advice on your particular situation and, if you want, help you prepare for and initiate that difficult conversation with your office.
- **Record and document all incidents.** Keep a detailed log of the behavior you have experienced, who witnessed it, who you have talked to, and what action you have taken.

Final words on ethics

- If you ever do something and later have second thoughts on whether it was a proper activity or correct decision, alert the appropriate people in your office. They will appreciate your honesty and, if the action is questionable, they can make the corrective moves to right the situation. This is called damage control and it's a lot easier to take than the surprise of being blind-sided. Supervisors on and off the Hill, in and out of Washington, don't like surprises.
- What should you do if you observe what appears to be unethical actions on the part of other interns or staff? In most cases the best course of action is to take up your concern directly with the individual involved. This can clear up misperceptions and set an ethical "tone." If the unethical activity persists, or if it is of a grave nature, it should be brought to the attention of your own outside supervisor, the appropriate staffer within the office or the Member/Senator.
- Ethics is not a one-way street for interns. If you believe you are being abused or otherwise requested to do something improper or unethical, talk to an appropriate person within the office first and then, if not satisfied, talk to your outside supervisor if you have one. People are around who can counsel around bad situations and help you work out solutions with the parties involved. You are not alone. If something doesn't ring true, seek help. 🙏

chapter 6 summary



do

- Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects positively on the Member/Senator and honorably on the U.S. Congress.
- Treat your work and the activities of your office as confidential. Refrain from spilling the beans to your friends, on the Metro, or even to the folks back home.
- Use common sense and common courtesy. Follow the Golden Rule.
- Trust your own feelings if you have experienced unwelcome behavior. Inform the person of their offense and ask them to stop. If it continues, report any incidents of sexual harassment to your supervisor, or seek guidance from the resources identified in this chapter.

don't

- Engage in any activities that might jeopardize your internship or relationship with your employing office.
- Think you can get away with anything. Staff have been here a long time – they've (almost) seen it all.
- Use official time or official resources for personal use. This includes office supplies, office equipment, CRS research, inside mail, and the congressional "frank."
- Engage in conduct that could be considered sexual harassment. This includes both inappropriate physical touching and verbal abuse, such as dirty jokes or suggestive comments.
- Forget that perception is reality on Capitol Hill. When in doubt, play it safe.



fun in the city

Washington is jam packed with workaholics—a bunch of people competing with one another for the who’s-exerting-themselves-the-most award. This behavior does not lend itself to much of an existence beyond the office. Yes, it is true that bosses tend to look quite favorably upon interns who genuinely desire to pitch in where needed and work hard, but GET A LIFE! Even though Washington covers only a few square miles, it boasts more sights and attractions than most cities three or four times its area. The following pages are offered to help you on your way to making the most of your Washington experience—that is, your experience outside the halls and walls of Capitol Hill.

*Are we having
fun yet?*

—CAROL BURNETT
FOUR SEASONS
1981

*What do you think
they do for
excitement
in this town?*

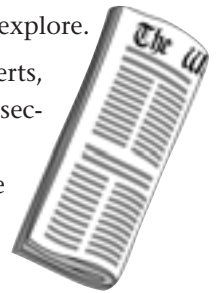
—BURT REYNOLDS
SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT
1977



Getting started

Since interns earn next to or exactly nothing in wages, you can be thankful that there is quite a lot to do nearby that is cheap or free, two words that will become among your favorites during your stay in Washington. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Surfing the Net:** Delve into the “Visiting DC” page found on the U.S. House of Representatives public site at <http://www.house.gov>. It’s got every tourist site imaginable and more! Also, Hillzoo.com and Washingtonian.com are a couple of other informative sites that can provide loads of information on upcoming events, hot spots, restaurant information, recreational activities and community updates, and serve as an all-around social activity resource.
- **Getting there from here:** Any good tourist starts out with a regulation road map to help identify sights, figure out the location of neighborhoods and generally get a visual feel for how the place is laid out. Your office probably keeps some on hand for visitors. Also check out http://dcpages.com/Tourism/Maps/Washington_DC_Map/ for a handy and very cool map that provides an aerial view of the city and its main attractions, allowing you to click on each monument/museum/whatever and learn more about it. Get your hands on a map of the city and explore.
- **Newspapers:** For what’s on tap fun-wise for the upcoming weekend, check out events, concerts, observances and celebrations in the *Washington Post*, *Express*, or *Washington Times* weekend sections and the *Washington CityPaper* (a FREE weekly available on the Hill and at many newsstands, Metro stations and congregating spots around the city where they are stacked for the taking). All of these newspapers also contain a wealth of information about what to do, where to get directions or how to get outta town on their Web sites, so check them out as well.
- **Receptions:** Fundraisers and cocktail parties are a growth industry in this town. If you’re lucky you may get to tag along with someone from your office and learn the fine art of “schmoozing,” all the while taking advantage of free refreshments.
- **The Mall:** “The Mall” in Washington is not to be confused with the commercial variety back home. The Mall is the big wide-open space extending from the west front of the Capitol building to the Lincoln Memorial and is a great place to people watch, hang out, play Frisbee, join a game of flag football or just do nothing. During the late afternoon and evening hours in the summer, it becomes overrun with softball games. Games are held weekly, with congressional offices, associations, think tanks, etc. playing each other. You may see the National Democratic Institute pitted against the Republican National Committee. Don’t hesitate to join if your office fields a team. Softball experience is not necessary—you can just form part of the cheering squad if that’s your preference. The games are usually not ultra-serious and they’re great ways to bond with your co-workers and meet other people.
- **Guest Speakers:** Lectures and speeches are hosted all over town by groups like the Young Republicans, College Democrats or by a university. They are usually free and geared toward interns/young adults working in politics and allow a period for Q & A at the conclusion of the lecture/speech. Notices may arrive at a Member’s/Senator’s office by mail, fax, phone or simply through word of mouth. You should try to make the time to attend a few.



Hard rock

The granite and marble that comprise Washington's profusion of monuments and museums make it one of the best sightseeing cities in the world —*just don't forget comfortable shoes!* The following is a list of highlights.

Tours that can be arranged by a congressional office

Congressional offices are accorded a limited (read: few) number of reservations for some of the most popular attractions around town. Constituents visiting Washington write their Member/Senator for these special tickets. In many cases, there just aren't enough to go around. However, you can check with the staffer who oversees tours in your office on how you might be able to wrangle a ticket for yourself. If you provide enough advance warning, you'll probably be accommodated; alternatively, you can call the general information numbers listed here like the rest of the world:

- **The White House** (1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. of course!): The White House offers group tours and Member tours that are only available through congressional offices – public tours are no longer offered due to security restrictions – so the available slots are in high demand and fill up rather quickly. Tours are also self-guided and limited to select rooms, so a White House tour is not the greatest thing going, but its popularity is still understandable (456-2322 or <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/tours>).
- **U.S. State Department** (22nd and C Streets, N.W.): You won't see the Secretary of State carrying on diplomacy, but you will be treated to a tour of the antique-laden diplomatic reception rooms (647-3241 or <http://receptiontours.state.gov>).
- **The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts** (27th and F Streets, N.W.): This is a general tour of the theaters (416-8340); you can also call for tickets to performances (467-4600 or <http://kennedy-center.org>).
- **The Capitol** (ground zero geographically speaking for interns): Public tours of the Capitol are guided and are available from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Visitors must obtain free tickets for the tours on a first-come, first-served basis, at the Capitol Guide Service kiosk beginning at 9:00 a.m. daily. Staff and interns, however, can conduct their own tours of the Capitol for groups up to 15 people. To learn how to do this properly, talk to your supervisor about taking the class offered by the Capitol Guide Service (4-8406).
- **Bureau of Engraving & Printing**: This guided tour shows you millions of dollars being printed (but no coins, that's the United States Mint). They also print billions of postage stamps. Congressional tours are approximately 45 minutes long and are offered at 8:15 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. with extended summer hours (874-2330 or <http://www.moneyfactory.gov>). No sampling allowed!



Other attractions on the Hill

You're here most of the day anyhow. Be sure to catch some of the close-in spots. Use the contact information to find out hours, tour info, exhibits, etc.

- **Library of Congress** (Jefferson Building) (First Street and Constitution Avenue S.E., located diagonally across from Cannon HOB): See displays and partake of the public tour or explore the dramatic reading room (707-5000 or <http://www.loc.gov/library/hours.html>).

- **Supreme Court** (First Street N.E. directly across from the Capitol): Court is in session between October and June. If you are in Washington during those months, do not miss seeing a case argued. Public lectures are given every hour on the half-hour from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. M-F on days the Court is not in session (479 3499 or <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/visiting/visiting.html>).
- **U.S. Botanic Garden** (at the foot of Capitol Hill, House side at Maryland Avenue and First Street S.W.): This is the unusually shaped glass building where year-round displays feature an abundance of flowers and exotic plant life. It is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (226-4082, <http://www.usbg.gov>).

A sampling of city neighborhoods

- **Chinatown** (7th and H Streets, N.W.): This unique combination of shops and restaurants near the heart of downtown D.C. has undergone an extensive revitalization making it one of the most popular and convenient neighborhoods. It's obviously a good place to sample Chinese cuisine too! Gallery Place-Chinatown Metro stop.
- **Cleveland Park** (environs of 3400 block of Connecticut Avenue N.W.): While this neighborhood boasts huge, beautiful old homes with wrap-around porches and tree-lined streets, you will most likely come into contact with its two-block commercial strip on Connecticut Avenue N.W. The Uptown Theater hasn't shrunk its grand scale screen to those teeny boxes at the multiplexes, which makes watching blockbuster movies a treat. Cleveland Park Metro stop.
- **C & O Canal**: This woodsy trail begins in Georgetown and winds its way along the canal through Maryland, 100 or so miles away. The tow path close to D.C. is home to runners, bikers and walkers. In the summer, a barge totes passengers up a portion of the C & O Canal from the 30th Street N.W. landing.
- **Downtown**: Make sure to visit Ford's Theatre (10th and F Streets N.W.) and the house where Lincoln died, across the street. The theatre's probably a lot smaller than you think. Free admission, open daily 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (426-6924 or <http://www.fordstheatre.org>). The National Geographic Society's Museum Explorers Hall (17th and M Streets N.W.) has neat exhibits and a splendid gift shop. Stop by the restored Post Office Pavilion down on Constitution Avenue N.W. for your choice of eats and outdoor concerts in the summer. And depending on your mood, check out the nearby National Portrait Gallery, Corcoran Gallery of Art, or Hard Rock Cafe as well. Several Metro stops.
- **Dupont Circle** (intersection of Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues N.W.): The city's largest circle park, is surrounded by great night spots, restaurants and bookstores. The grassy circle itself is a hang-out for all kinds—dog walkers, performance artists, street musicians, in-line skaters, noontime brown-bag lunchers and bike messengers. Pigeons and buzzing bees abound as well. Tons of chess games are underway on summer week nights and weekends. Dupont Circle Metro stop.
- **Embassy Row**: If you want to encounter the digs of the diplomatic world, explore the embassies that line much of Massachusetts Avenue N.W. from Dupont and Sheridan Circles to Wisconsin Avenue N.W. Spot the missions of countries from Togo to Great Britain to South Africa.
- **Foggy Bottom and George Washington University** (environs around 23rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.): Hangouts galore. There's culture nearby at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Across Rock Creek Parkway from the Watergate and Kennedy Center is Thompson Boat House—one place, among others, to rent canoes and bikes for getting up-close-and-personal with the Potomac and the many area bike paths. Foggy Bottom-GWU Metro stop.

- **Georgetown/Upper NW:** Great shopping and restaurants along Wisconsin Avenue N.W. Lots of partying, shopping, hanging out going on around here. No Metro stop, but you can walk from the Foggy Bottom stop or the Rosslyn stop. You can also take Metrobus, the Georgetown Shuttle (<http://georgetowndc.com/shuttle.php>) or the DC Circulator bus which has a route that runs from Union Station to downtown to Georgetown (<http://dccirculator.com>).
- **U.S. Naval Observatory** (34th Street and Massachusetts Avenue N.W.): The observatory provides the accurate time and astronomical info necessary for safe navigation in air and space. Public tours are available with a reservation on selected Monday evenings from 8:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m., except on federal holidays. Also on the grounds is the official residence of the vice president, which is not open for touring, but can be seen more closely here than from any other public place. No Metro stop. For reservations and more information visit http://www.usno.navy.mil/tour_info.shtml.
- **Rock Creek Park:** The Park is not so much a confined park as a path for jogging, roller-blading, and biking (and dotted with picnic areas) that runs from the Kennedy Center to Maryland. The park also contains a nature center, some historic sites and a planetarium.
- **U Street N.W./Cardoza** (U Street N.W. from 9th to 14th Street N.W.): This recently rejuvenated neighborhood is filled with clubs offering live music and great jazz. Metro stops.

Off the Hill

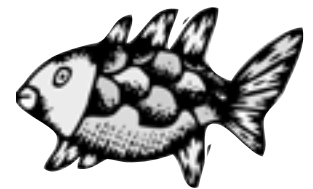
Guidebooks are chock full of what can rightfully be included under this heading. High spots include:

- **Arlington National Cemetery** (across the Potomac in Virginia via Memorial Bridge): Arlington Cemetery contains the grave of President John F. Kennedy and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the latter of which is guarded by a single soldier whose watch is changed in a simple, but impressive ceremony either hourly or on the half-hour depending on the season. Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. October through March and 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. April through September, seven days a week. Arlington Cemetery Metro stop or just a nice walk over the Memorial Bridge (703-607-8000 or <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org>).
- **Corcoran Gallery of Art** (17th Street and New York Avenue, N.W.): The oldest and largest private gallery in the city is open Wednesday through Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with extended hours on Thursday when it closes at 9:00 p.m. Admission is \$4 with a student I.D. (639-1700 or <http://www.corcoran.org>).
- **Defense Department** (just across the 14th Street Bridge in Virginia) Group tours of the Pentagon are available by reservation only (703-695-1776). Pentagon Metro stop.
- **Holocaust Memorial Museum** (14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.): The museum provides an historic story of the Holocaust through artifacts, photographs, films and eyewitness accounts. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., daily; admission is free but timed passes are needed for the permanent exhibit and must be acquired in advance (488-0400). For a service charge tickets can be obtained by calling Protix at 1-800-400-9373 (703-218-6500 if calling from D.C.) or at <http://www.tickets.com>. You can also get in line for one of the 1,700 free tickets handed out daily. The line for freebies can form around 9:00 a.m. for the 10:00 a.m. opening, and tickets are usually gone by noon. Smithsonian Metro stop.
- **Iwo Jima Memorial** (just over Theodore Roosevelt Bridge in Virginia at the edge of Arlington Cemetery): This memorial to fallen Marines is open 24 hours daily. The Marine Band provides concerts Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. May through August (619-7222). Across from Rosslyn Metro stop.

- **Jefferson Memorial** (south bank of the tidal basin-about a 10-minute walk from the Smithsonian Metro): Open 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. daily. In the spring/summer, rent a paddle boat from a nearby concession shop and pedal yourself some exercise-open seven days/week in the summer and Wednesday through Sunday in the fall, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; prices vary for two- or four-seat boats.
- **Korean War Memorial** (west end of The Mall, south side-across from Vietnam Memorial): Beautiful carvings of soldiers' faces in the granite wall and life-size statues of soldiers on the grass.
- **Lincoln Memorial** (end of The Mall and 23rd Street N.W.): Open 24 hours; staffed from 8:00 a.m. midnight daily.
- **National Archives** (7th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W.): Major American documents on display such as the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Open 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the spring, 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the summer, and 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the fall & winter (501-5205 or <http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/washington/index.html/>). Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro stop.
- **National Zoo** (3001 Connecticut Avenue N.W.): It's all happening at the zoo, including the widely popular pandas. Grounds are open 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Oct. 29 through Mar. 11) and 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (April through Oct. 28); buildings open 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., respectively (633-4800 or <http://nationalzoo.si.edu>). Woodley Park/Adams Morgan Metro stop.
- **Newseum** (555 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.): The old museum in Arlington, VA closed in 2002, and a new, state-of-the-art building near the Smithsonian and National Archives is slated for opening in 2007 (1-888-NEWSEUM or <http://www.newseum.org>).
- **Phillips Collection** (1600 21st Street N.W.): This gallery, the country's first museum of modern art, is housed in a cozy old mansion that used to be the home of the benefactor. It's a small gallery, but the exhibits on display in sitting rooms and parlors comprise choice 20th century paintings. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday/Wed/Fri/Sat, 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursday; 12 noon to 7:00 p.m. on Sundays October through May, while Sundays June through September it is open until 5:00 p.m. (387-2151 or <http://www.phillipscollection.org>). Admission to the exhibits is typically \$10 for students, which includes access to the Permanent Collection. The Permanent Collection is free on weekdays!
- **Smithsonian Institution:** The many museums that constitute the world's largest museum complex, are open daily (except December 25) from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with extended summer hours determined annually. Admission is free; call 633-1000; go to <http://www.si.edu>; or visit "The Castle" Smithsonian Building at 10th and Jefferson Streets S.W. for more info. The most popular museums include:
 - **National Museum of the American Indian** (4th Street and Independence Ave., S.W.): Opening its doors in 2004, it's the newest addition to the Smithsonian family. It is the first national museum dedicated exclusively to Native Americans. Video screens greet visitors in 150 Native languages. L'Enfant Plaza or Federal Center SW Metro stops.



- **National Gallery of Art** (West and East wings) (4th Street between the Mall and Constitution Avenue N.W.): These buildings contain some of the finest collections of art in the world. Look for special exhibits. Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro stop.
- **Air and Space Museum** (at the National Mall Building, 7th Street and Independence Avenue S.W.): Be sure and catch the flight flicks, space capsules and airplane prototypes here-everything from the Spirit of St. Louis to Skylab workshops. The soaring movies on the five-story high viewing screen can take your breath away. Also worth visiting is the museum's Udvar-Hazy Center near Washington Dulles International Airport, which is large enough to display the SR-71 Blackbird, the *Enola Gay*, and the Space Shuttle *Enterprise*. If you don't have a car, the museum offers an express shuttle between the two locations for a fee. L'Enfant Plaza Metro stop.
- **Museum of American History** (12th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W.): This one is so chockfull of stuff that it takes many visits to begin to see it all from Dorothy's slippers in the Wizard of Oz to First Ladies' gowns to Seinfeld's infamous "puffy shirt". Unfortunately, it is also closed for renovation from fall 2006 to summer 2008. Smithsonian Metro stop.
- **Museum of Natural History** (12th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W.): See the Hope Diamond and a host of other major baubles, in addition to the requisite reconstructed dinosaur skeletons. Smithsonian Metro stop.
- **National Portrait Gallery** (8th and F Streets N.W.): Portraits of prominent figures in American history, including every president and many, many more. Gallery Place-Chinatown Metro stop.
- **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden** (7th Street and Independence Avenue S.W.): Cylindrical-shaped museum is furnished with modern art collections and exhibits. L'Enfant Plaza Metro stop.
- **National Museum of African Art** (Independence Avenue, S.W.): This Smithsonian museum is located mostly underground with architecturally fascinating grottos and skylights. Smithsonian Metro stop.
- **National Museum of African American History and Culture** (Future) As of the printing of this handbook, a site across the Mall from the Museum of American History was chosen for the construction of the new museum.
- **National Aquarium** (14th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W. in the Department of Commerce.): Open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily; admission \$5 for adults and \$2 for children (482-2825 or <http://www.nationalaquarium.com>). Federal Triangle Metro stop.
- **Vietnam Veterans/Women's Memorial** (west end of The Mall, north side): Striking V-shaped black marble memorial inscribed with the 58,000+ names of those who died or remain missing in Vietnam and three life-size statues of female nurses who cared for the wounded in Vietnam.
- **Washington National Cathedral** (Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues, N.W.): On the highest point in the area, a beautiful church (the world's sixth largest cathedral) provides a spectacular view of the entire city (364-6616 or <http://www.cathedral.org/cathedral>). It's also quite possibly the only building with Darth Vader as part of the design-you'll have to see it to believe us!



Tourmobile

These are those red, white, and blue shuttle trams around the city. A ticket is good for one day's touring of more than a dozen sites. You can begin your tour at any site, purchase a ticket on board and hop on and off all day since the \$20 ticket (2006 prices) is good for unlimited reboarding that day, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A daily ticket also includes an Arlington Cemetery Tour. Tickets can be purchased at Tourmobile booths, by phone through Ticketmaster at 800-551-SEAT, or from the driver of the Tourmobile, which stops at the blue and white circular signs at each site every 30 minutes. Your office should have a brochure on Tourmobile for constituents. (888-868-7707 or <http://www.tourmobile.com>)

Mall-ing of America

A note about the "other" malls. While D.C. is populated with neat retail shops all throughout its many neighborhoods, there are many suburban shopping malls within your reach. If you're in the mood to spend some money or just need a fix of window shopping, your best bet is the Pentagon City Mall, which is located in Virginia just over the 14th Street Bridge. It's situated on top of the Yellow/Blue line Metro stop of the same name and houses plenty of stores to keep you busy. It also offers a food court that is bathed in light from an atrium high above, which makes for pleasant dining if you have any money left.

For the real deals, Potomac Mills is a huge outlet mall anchored near IKEA, about half an hour down the road in Virginia—if you're interested in wearing yourself out bargain shopping. A car is a good bet, but buses from various points in the city/suburbs will shoot you out there as well. Check out <http://www.potomacmills.com> for bus and shuttle information.



Outside D.C. proper

If you don't have a car, quickly make friends with a fellow intern with wheels (preferably with working air conditioning in the summer) and take a day trip. Pick up any sort of guide book to the area and head out!

Virginia

- **Old Town Alexandria** is the oldest port town in the U.S. has some nice shops and lots of history. It features another great weekend farmer's market. King Street Metro.
- **Charlottesville** is the home of the University of Virginia, Monticello, and the estates of Madison and Monroe. Charlottesville is a two-hour drive from D.C.
- **Luray Caverns**, 90 miles from D.C., is the largest cavern in the eastern U.S., offering amazing formations (540-743-6551 or <http://www.luraycaverns.com>).
- **Mt. Vernon**, George Washington's estate, is located only 20 miles away in Virginia. If so inclined, rent a bike and pedal along the Potomac River to visit Washington's private estate that includes a mid-Georgian-style mansion, lovely gardens, a museum, farm and outbuildings. Admission charged (703-780-2000 or <http://www.mountvernon.org>).
- **Colonial Williamsburg** is a three-hour drive south of Washington in Virginia where you can relive 18th century life by strolling the town's authentically restored 88 buildings and gardens. Busch Gardens Williamsburg is also nearby (1-800-HISTORY or <http://www.history.org/>).

Maryland

- **Annapolis** is about 45 minutes away from D.C. It's a seaport steeped in history; home of the U.S. Naval Academy, and fun shops and restaurants. There's also a harbor cruise.
- **Baltimore**: Take the MARC train from Union Station to a baseball game at Camden Yards (Note: MARC runs only during the week and offers buses on the return trip after the ball games, not trains, and they have limited schedules, so make sure to verify the return trip departure schedule AHEAD of time to make sure you are not stranded!). You can also take Amtrak to Baltimore or a car to visit the famous Baltimore Aquarium and walk to dinner at the nearby Inner Harbor or on Fells Point; then grab a gelato in little Italy before heading home.

And don't forget...Philadelphia, Boston, New York and many other east coast cities are all easily accessible by Greyhound (<http://www.greyhound.com>) or Amtrak (800-USA-RAIL or <http://www.amtrak.com>).

Final words

There are a zillion other places to see in the Washington area and beyond if you have the time—from the Catoctin Mountains to Virginia Beach, from Harper's Ferry to Ocean City, from Gettysburg to Fredericksburg. The list is endless so you can scout out those places for yourself. Hello, Manhattan! 🗽

chapter 7 summary



do

- Take advantage of all the inexpensive or free activities the city has to offer, such as receptions, the National Mall and Smithsonian Museums, guest speakers, and discounted movies and concerts.
- Participate in the various congressional tours that your office can arrange. Though limited, you should be able to get in with enough advance planning.
- Explore the shops and nightlife in various DC neighborhoods (but do your research first!).
- Ask the colleagues at work for their recommendations on things to do and see. You might be surprised what can be found off the beaten path.

don't

- Act like a local and take all the DC sightseeing for granted. See everything you can while you're here!

life in the big city: playing it safe

It's not in every job that you will go to work guarded by police officers with machine guns and walk through metal detectors to get to your desk. Welcome to Washington. As one of the most powerful cities in the world, DC is definitely an "at risk" place, but it is also one of the safest and most secure. While veteran Hill staff have incorporated new security precautions and personal safety practices into their day-to-day routines, most newcomers need a helping hand. This chapter will provide you with an overview of your new environment and offer guidance to help make sure that no matter where you roam, you are safe and sound.

*We live in an age
when pizza gets to
your home before
the police.*

—JEFF MARDER

*And hey, let's be
careful out there.*

— MICHAEL CONRAD
(SGT. PHIL ESTERHAUS)
IN *HILL STREET BLUES*



A secure and sensitive environment

The city, and especially high-profile areas such as the Capitol complex, has always been mindful and preoccupied with keeping its residents and workers safe. Hill employees have witnessed a bomb detonating in the Capitol (1983), a gunman taking the lives of two U.S. Capitol Police officers (1998), the events of 9/11 and the subsequent anthrax attacks in October 2001 – all of which have resulted in the Hill becoming a more secure and sensitive environment. A quick look around – security enhancements are everywhere – easily demonstrates that the safety of all congressional employees is a top priority. Some enhancements are highly publicized and on a large-scale (the creation of the Capitol Visitors Center) while others are internal and unique to each office (your staff’s meeting places in an emergency).

Due to the sensitive and sometimes confidential nature of these developments, we can’t go into too much detail in this book. And this material isn’t intended to scare you away from an internship on the Hill. Instead, the following section is an overview of certain procedures and scenarios that you should be aware of during your internship. Check with your supervisor or Office Emergency Coordinator (OEC) for a more comprehensive security briefing with all the details specific to your office’s emergency action plan.

Current threat level—Know your color wheel

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) maintains an advisory system that is used to gauge our country’s vulnerability to attack. As part of this system, a color-coded threat level is in effect which can change for the entire country or simply be raised for specific geographic regions or industries (the financial services sector in New York City, for example). What this means is that if or when the threat level is raised from Code Yellow to Code Orange, increased security precautions are implemented throughout the city. Vehicles will be stopped and inspected before allowed to proceed through the streets around the Capitol. You may also see an increased police presence on the Metro, among other things.

Move it on over

Evacuations of the Capitol and any of the congressional office buildings can happen at any time. Notice may be given through fire alarms, the public address system in each building, verbal orders, and/or wireless emergency annunciators (one-way emergency communication devices which are located in every congressional office).

When instructed to evacuate, *remain calm* and move as quickly as possible (without running) to the nearest exit or, if necessary, to an exit directed to you by the Capitol Police. Do not use the elevators unless specifically told to do so. However, if you are a mobility-impaired person, or are assisting a mobility-impaired person, you may evacuate via a designated emergency elevator. Once outside, you should proceed to your office’s pre-determined meeting spot in the building’s designated evacuation assembly area(s). (*Note:* most buildings have primary and alternate assembly areas. Proceed to the primary one unless you are directed to avoid it, at which time you should go to the alternate area.) At that point, you should check in with your Office Emergency Coordinator (OEC). This person is a full-time member of your staff whose assignment it is to make sure that every staff person who works in your office is accounted for during an emergency. This person will also likely train you on the office’s procedures as well as tell you where all the evacuation areas and staff meet-up spots are.

General evacuation procedures are rather straightforward. Executing them in the often-confusing maze that is the congressional office buildings, the Capitol, and the connecting subways and tunnels

is another matter. (*Even veteran staff still get lost in Rayburn.*) It's hard enough to find your way out of the building from your own office, but what if you happen to be purchasing supplies in another building, are returning from the flag office in the Capitol, or are running an office errand to the opposite chamber? Do you know what to do if you are giving constituents a Capitol tour when the alarm sounds?

Given your active role on the bottom of the office's totem pole, take the time now to familiarize yourself with the different buildings and the various evacuation routes provided to you by your office. Discuss different scenarios with your OEC to determine what actions you should take, especially if there's a chance you will be responsible for escorting constituents through an evacuation. If you are mobility-impaired, contact your OEC so that he or she may notify the House Office of Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Operations (OEPPPO) (6-0950) or the Senate Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness (OSEP) (8-6737) who can record this information for better coordination and provide additional training.

Suspicious minds: Courses of action for threatening behavior

If someone is causing trouble in your office and you believe it is an emergency situation, you have several courses of action.

- All offices are outfitted with “duress” alarms—buttons that are placed around offices and under desks that when pressed, ring into the U.S. Capitol Police's communications complex, which dispatches immediate help. When you press that button, the alarm is silent in your office, but it indicates an emergency signal to the Capitol Police. Ask your OEC where the buttons are located.
- If your office does not have duress buttons or you are not near one, call 911 to report an emergency situation in your office. Again, that call will be directed to the U.S. Capitol Police communications center and help will be sent immediately.
- If someone is demonstrating threatening behavior in your presence, but you do not want to tip them off that you are calling for help, there is a code phrase that is employed on the Hill that alerts the U.S. Capitol Police that you need emergency assistance. For obvious reasons, this guidebook is not going to provide the phrase, but you can ask your intern supervisor or a U.S. Capitol police officer to fill you in on the “passwords.”

If you receive a threatening phone call, or if you believe someone calling is potentially dangerous, transfer the call to the Capitol Police Threat Assessment Section at 4-4195. It is illegal to make threats against federal employees (whether it's a Member/Senator or staff person) and this department specializes in determining if potential threats are legitimate. Since this type of work is beyond the scope of your internship, it's best to alert the Capitol Police, who are experts in determining whether that constituent is just angry with your Member's vote or if they could possibly take more serious and life-threatening action.

On the lookout

If you receive anything suspicious in the mail, fight your gossipy urges to share it with everyone in the office. Instead, do not touch it, do not open it, and leave the area. Report it to your OEC and the Capitol Police (4-5151 Senate and 5-5151 House). While all incoming mail is decontaminated off-site before being delivered to your office, you should still be cautious and alert to all possible threats. The Capitol Police have published guidelines on recognizing suspicious mail—ask your OEC for the information.

Escape hoods for other threats

Even though mail is screened, offices are also protected against other chemical, biological, and radiological threats with “escape hoods.” These hoods cover a person’s entire head and seal at the neck. A filter absorbs chemical gases and removes biological and radiological particles. Ask your OEC about the use of and training on these hoods.

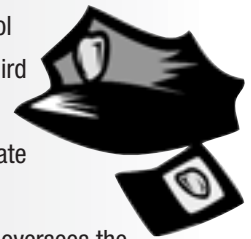
Be proactive, be safe

Security procedures – both on the Hill and in the city – are continually changed and improved to keep you safe. But don’t simply rely on others to take care of you or follow the lead of unconcerned friends or colleagues. While most offices are rather protective and concerned for their interns, they may be too busy with the frantic Hill schedule to get you up to speed on safety. You should make it a priority. Don’t wait for an evacuation (hopefully it’s just a drill) to learn the ropes. Trust us – your parents will thank you.

When out of the office, it’s good policy to be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to the actions of those around you, whether you’re commuting on the Metro or just walking on the Capitol campus. Don’t hesitate to report suspicious activity. And keep your congressional ID and staff emergency contact information with you at all times. Visit <http://www.ready.gov> for general safety tips and the intranet Web sites of the OEPPPO (<http://oeppo.house.gov>) and OSEP (<http://webster>) for specific House and Senate information. As the saying goes, it’s better to be safe than sorry.

The U.S. Capitol Police—here, there and everywhere

The U.S. Capitol Police—around 1,300 strong—control a 40-square block area around the Capitol building bounded by Union Station to the north, the Southwest Freeway overpass to the south, Third Street N.W./S.W. to the west and Second Street N.E./S.E. to the east. Their presence pervades these boundaries and is most evident at the pedestrian and parking entrances of the House, Senate and Capitol buildings. However, they are all around and may be closer than you think.



The Capitol Police are headquartered at 119 D Street N.E. An office in the Longworth building oversees the House side buildings and annexes; the police office on the basement floor/Senate side of the Capitol building monitors the Capitol building and its immediate area; and the headquarters office oversees the Senate portion of the complex, including Postal Square and the Page School. The general, non-emergency number for the U.S. Capitol Police is 4-5151 (Senate) and 5-5151 (House).

Be aware that the halls and streets are patrolled at all times by uniformed and plain clothes U.S. Capitol police officers. If you are accosted on the street within the Capitol Hill complex and if you yell, you are likely to be quickly surrounded by police officers. Some of the roving patrol officers are dubbed “STRESS” officers for Stop The Robberies: Enjoy Safe Streets. The presence of uniformed officers acts as a deterrent to crime because the response time is good for the victim and the perpetrator’s getaway opportunity is limited.

Upon request of official Capitol personnel (including interns), the Capitol Police will provide a police escort at night to escort the caller to his/her vehicle or a nearby Metro stop. Call 4-5151 (Senate) and 5-5151 (House) to obtain such service and provide the building entrance to which a police officer should report. A police officer will be dispatched to meet the caller.

Off the clock

What about when you get outside the building?

There are many safety awareness tips that are so self-evident that most of us, when we read or hear them, wonder why someone would waste our time providing such obvious information. Keep an open mind and make sure that while you're in the nation's capital you remember to practice some of these seemingly apparent safety measures. They are only obvious if we are aware of them. The word "aware" is the key to this entire section, and fundamental to personal security in general.

Attitude: Adopt a common-sense approach to safety

- Carry yourself with confidence—walk with your head up and with an assured attitude. Criminals like easy victims; don't invite someone to even focus on you by looking down or otherwise appearing weak or vulnerable. *Look and act like you belong where you are at any given moment.*
- Always be aware of your surroundings no matter where you are—on the bike path, waiting for a bus, walking to your car, turning the key in your front door.
- Retreat is the simplest and safest form of self-protection and self defense. If you sense something is wrong (heed your gut), leave immediately. If need be, inconvenience yourself—walk an extra block out of your way or change direction as necessary.
- Set boundaries. Create a safe distance between you and a potential attacker. If someone is walking behind you, turn around and look at him. If you feel that you are too close, don't be afraid to set and maintain a safe distance. If the person does want to harm you, once you confront and look at him head-on, he usually will think "Hey, he's got an eyeball on me. I'm gonna find an easier victim."

Surprise: At first don't get physical. Get verbal

- Self defense does not necessarily mean physically attacking. It can also mean using verbal defense. Attackers do not like noise. Do not be afraid—do not hesitate—to make it.
- Well over 75 percent of potential assault situations can be easily defused by using your wits and your voice—the louder the better. FIND YOUR VOICE. Your strong, loud, firm voice demonstrates strength, which telegraphs assailants that they might have a fight on their hands. That strong and firm voice also draws attention to yourself, which may bring help (but don't depend on it).
- The word "No" shouted with full force and amplification does wonders especially when accompanied by running away. The odds are way in your favor that if you scream or run you will likely end an attack.
- Surprise your attacker. He may surprise you initially, but then surprise him back. Criminals normally expect a quiet, submissive victim. Put energy into your voice and turn on your attacker and ask, "Are you following me? What do you want?" More than likely, he or she will back off or leave you alone because you're more trouble than you're worth, especially when there are unassertive targets around.

This section draws on information provided by several principal sources: The "Are You Following Me?" security awareness guidebook and program conducted by the U.S. Capitol Police; *Defending Ourselves* by Rosalind Wiseman (New York: The Noonday Press/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994); and personal safety tips collected from The Empower Program, a non-profit, self-defense educational organization directed by Rosalind Wiseman and located in Bethesda, Maryland. The material is used with permission, and is often cited verbatim from the original source. For further information about the U.S. Capitol Police program, contact the U.S. Capitol Police public information office at 224-1677.

- If someone bothers you, don't be embarrassed to attract attention to yourself. You might think: "What if that person ISN'T following me? Won't I look like some uptight idiot?" Better to laugh off embarrassment than die from having feared it.
- Always be ready to set up that element of surprise. Perhaps you see someone moving toward you and you feel fairly confident that he is bent on doing something harmful and there's no time to flee. As he moves closer, just put your arms straight in front of you, palms flat out and look him in the face and say "Hey, please watch where you're going. You're going to run right into me!" An action this simple may be enough to throw off the attacker's rhythm and he'll decide to skip you and go onto someone else.
- Let's say there is no question that someone is approaching you to do harm. Take a step back and loudly say "Back off" or "Go!" Escalate your voice and deliver a direct order— a simple, clear message. Again, use the element of surprise.

Escape: Get outta there

- If you are confronted by an armed attacker, cooperate with him if all he wants is your valuables. Don't fight for personal items. Defend yourself only when your body is under attack. Most attackers want two things, your valuables and a run for it.
- If you turn around and ask someone what they want, and they menacingly respond that they want your purse/wallet and perhaps brandish a weapon, throw the item or your keys at the robber's feet or off to the side of the street and head for the hills. This surprises robbers. Most aren't ready for that type of behavior; it gives you enough time to put some distance between you and the attacker. He is unlikely to run after you, especially if you can achieve some type of haven, such as the security of a busier, more well-lit area. You can also distract him by pointing and yelling for a make-believe friend. By the time he figures out that there is nobody there, you can be long gone.
- If the person goes after you instead of the items/keys and you have not been able to gain sufficient distance to be safe, face the person, look him in the eye, and in a strong, confident voice use your verbal self-defense. You want to face him because if you turn your back, there is a strong possibility that you will be thrown to the ground. Also, facing him is the last thing he expects, and, again, surprise is a very effective weapon. You are transferring the power from him to you. Remember, holding your ground and refusing to be seen as a victim usually stops the attack.
- If the attacker still threatens force after you have handed over what the attacker wants, fight back. You are now fighting to protect yourself, not property.
- If you suspect the assailant intends to hurt you or if he tries to take you to an isolated area, resist with every fiber in your body. It is unlikely you will be better off for having cooperated with him. Do not allow force or threats to get you into a car. Never allow yourself to be isolated.
- What if your attacker has a gun? Let's say your attacker approaches you and there are other people on the street and you determine that he does not want your purse, he wants you. Do not go anywhere with this individual. If he is going to shoot you in public, he will definitely shoot you after taking you off into the woods to attack or assault you.

Reporting incidents

Report any attacks or potential attacks to the police immediately. Once you escape, you may want nothing more than to go home. However, the longer you wait the more unlikely your assailant will be caught. Reports add up and create profiles that can help the police catch the criminal, link him to other assaults and lead to further prosecution.▲

Everyday common sense safety tips

- There is safety in numbers. When possible, travel in pairs.
- Realize that you are vulnerable when you leave the workplace and approach your vehicle or public transportation, and vice versa, especially when it's dark, early morning or late at night.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view; especially in public places. Women—find a place to lock or secure your purse. Don't hang it over your chair or leave it out in the open. Men— don't leave your wallet in that coat jacket that you drape over your chair or hang on the door hook; keep it with you.
- Be mindful of what kind of target you present to a potential attacker. Are you carrying packages that look inviting? Is your purse or jewelry visible or vulnerable? Are you wearing headphones or talking on your cell phone while walking home from work?
- Avoid carrying large sums of money and unnecessary credit cards.
- If someone asks you the time, don't bend down to look at your watch and don't move closer to the person. Instead, hold your wrist up to eye level facing the person and provide the time from that stance.
- Avoid being alone in an underground/multilevel parking garage. If in one, walk down the middle of the lane where light is brightest, look around you at all times and visually inspect the area around your car before getting into it.
- Before getting into the car, look in the backseat or anywhere else a person can hide in your car. Assailants often hide under cars as well. Take a quick look under the car about 10 feet from reaching the car.
- Always lock your car doors after leaving your vehicle and immediately after getting back in. Also, keep the windows rolled up in traffic and avoid traveling alone at night.
- Have your keys ready to unlock the car door or the apartment door and enter without delay.
- Confine your walks and parking to well-lit, high visibility areas. Avoid alleys, walking alone or driving alone at night.
- Day or night, never open your apartment or home door until you see who is on the other side.
- Take care at ATM machines; if possible use ATM machines accompanied by a friend who can stand behind you facing the street and potential robbers.
- If taking a long day trip or week-end trip, leave someone your planned route, itinerary and expected time of arrival home.

chapter 8 summary



do

- Be aware of what's going on around you and don't forget to keep your congressional I.D. and staff emergency contact information with you at all times.
- Ask your supervisor or Office Emergency Coordinator for a comprehensive and detailed briefing on your office's specific emergency action plan.
- Learn the evacuation routes and nearest exits in all the congressional buildings, because you never know where you'll be in the event of an emergency.
- Be cautious and alert to all potential threats, even chemical and biological ones. Every office has "escape hoods" that can be worn by staff and visitors in such an attack.
- Follow the personal safety tips provided in this chapter. They may seem obvious, but only if you are aware of them. The Capitol Police can also provide you with additional security information.
- Look strong, alert, and confident wherever you are. If you seem to belong and act like you know what you're doing (even if you don't), it will decrease the likelihood of a personal attack.

don't

- Panic or run when directed to evacuate. Remain calm and follow the instructions given by the Capitol Police.
- Touch or open any suspicious mail or packages, but immediately leave the area and report it to your supervisor, your Office Emergency Coordinator, and/or the Capitol Police.
- Wait for an evacuation to learn security procedures. Being proactive is in your best interest.
- Be afraid or hesitate if someone attacks you. Most situations can be easily defused by using your wits and your voice. **GET LOUD.**
- Take the relatively safe and small Capitol Hill community for granted. Bad things can happen anywhere and at any time, but your actions can help determine whether or not you will be a victim.

gimme shelter

you can only work and play just so long. At some point, you have to hit the sack and catch a little sleep or just veg out with your iPod. And you've got to have a place to shower, brush your teeth and put all your worldly possessions in-between trips to the office and weekend recreational pursuits. The following chapter offers by no means an exhaustive list of all places to hang your hat, but an overview of spots that offer short-term leases that are mostly geared toward summer internships. Please note that the dates and prices quoted reflect those provided in the spring of 2006 and are all subject to change.

*Anywhere I may
roam, where I lay
my head is home.*

—"WHEREVER I MAY ROAM"
METALLICA
1991

*Try imagining a place
where it's always safe
and warm.*

—"SHELTER FROM THE STORM"
BOB DYLAN
1974



Home sweet home



Finding a place to call “home” for your stay in D.C. can be a little intimidating—especially if you have to undertake house-hunting from several hundred miles away! But it makes sense to conduct some long-distance research, especially in the summer, when many interns live at universities. If you don’t survey the lodging landscape, you will spend your first week (or two) playing catch-up—living out of a duffle bag and schlepping through neighborhoods in the evenings when you should be making new friends and enjoying the city. It’s not a disaster if you don’t nail down something before you arrive, but you will be a step ahead of the game.

Like anywhere else, some areas of Washington are considered more desirable or safer than others. Before blindly calling 10 universities from home or striking out to look at group houses or an apartment in the city or the suburbs, talk to people in your office who are familiar with the neighborhoods. That great deal on a room may be such a find because it’s located in a marginal section of town or miles from good public transportation. When scanning/surfing the newspaper classifieds or bulletin boards, keep those geographical antennae in good working order and learn your surroundings before committing yourself to a lodging locale.

Universities and apartment complexes

To help get you started, we have placed charts in this chapter providing information on a number of universities and apartment complexes geared toward interns. It is by no means a comprehensive list, but should point you in the right direction. All information presented is 2006 data.

Take note that the dorm-like setting of a university offers three pluses: 1) a university is used to dealing with transient students and stands ready to accommodate you, which makes for an easier process than searching for rooms to rent in the paper; 2) dorms are the cheaper than furnished apartments; and 3) a campus offers an easy and fun setting to meet other interns. The dorms, however, do fill up quickly, so it is your best interest to call for a free application even before you have finalized your internship plans.

House hunting tips

If you don’t have friends or family in Washington (if you did, you’d be living with them, right?) you might ask your new office for any information they might have on where your colleagues will be storing their suitcases. Some tips:

- Some out-of-town universities conduct their own “D.C. program” and require students in that program to reside in one specific location. If you are arriving independently, seek out some housing suggestions from whomever is in charge of your school’s program.
- If you are staying into September or after the available time has expired for university housing, you can find a room or apartment to rent in the classifieds of the *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *Washington City Paper*, *Roll Call* or *The Hill*. Or, there are bulletin boards all over the city—in sandwich shops, cafes and in Capitol Hill office buildings offering rooms to share with other interns and entry-level staff. Finally, check out Web sites with local housing information, such as <http://www.washingtonian.com> and <http://www.hillzoo.com>.
- Visit your school’s career planning and placement center, talk to a counselor or someone who has been to D.C. who may have some good leads or the names of others with whom to speak.
- Make sure to take care with reading and understanding the lease to which you are about to affix your signature. Don’t sign on the dotted line until you’ve asked the rental agent to explain the

terms including the return of the deposit, the length of the lease and any fine print. You may be asked to “initial” certain items on lease, which provides another opportunity to affirm the details. This initialing process is conducted to protect you and the rental agent. Don’t ask questions after you’ve signed the lease; ask them BEFORE you sign anything. You don’t want to unexpectedly owe rent for a third month when you’re ready to head home after a two-month internship.

- Finally, if you plan to be in Washington between May and September, make sure you have access to air conditioning. One intern read in her housing brochure that rooms in her lodging of choice had air conditioning. However, it didn’t say all rooms. Upon arrival, she found that all those cool rooms had been snapped up by others who had specifically requested them. She had to endure a long, hot summer. 🌞

Universities

<i>Name and Location</i>	<i>Approximate Availability and Rates (14.5% DC tax not included)</i>
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Summer Programs 800 Florida Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20016 http://www.american.edu/ocl/housing/summer_housing_conferences/intern_housing.html	Housing available May through August 4-week minimum \$200 deposit Single ~ \$300/wk; Double ~ \$250/wk Priority consideration to those who apply online and pay deposit with credit card. A/C; phone; meals and parking available Shuttle to Union Station metro
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY Office of Housing and Residential Services St. Bonaventure Hall Washington, DC 20010 (202)319-5277 http://conferences.cua.edu/summer/ Scenic university setting just a few Metro stops away from Union Station/Capitol Hill.	Housing available late May to early August 1-3 week minimum \$50 deposit (non-refundable) \$25-35/night A/C; cable; Ethernet; phone, meals and parking available
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY Summer Housing Services 2020 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W. Box 327 Washington, DC 20006 P (202) 994-9193 F (202) 994-0353 sumhouse@gwu.edu www.gwired.gwu.edu/summer Downtown D.C. living. Busy metropolitan campus scene.	Available late May to mid-August 5-week minimum stay \$680 deposit ~ \$220-\$260/wk

*Note: All information presented reflects data as of 2006 and is subject to change.

Universities

<i>Name and Location</i>	<i>Approximate Availability and Rates (14.5% DC tax not included)</i>
<p>GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY Office of Summer Housing 103 Harbin Hall Box 571117 Georgetown University Washington, DC 20057-1117 P (202) 687-4560; F (202) 687-4590 summerhousing@georgetown.edu www.georgetown.edu/housing/ohcsor http://och.georgetown.edu/ for off campus housing Regal campus setting. Cobblestone roads lead to busy shopping and food locales.</p>	<p>Available late May to early August 5-week minimum stay ~ \$1,225-\$2,520 per session</p>
<p>GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER 600 New Jersey Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001 (202) 662-9290 housing@law.georgetown.edu www.law.georgetown.edu/reslife/summer/index.html Convenient to Capitol Hill and Union Station Metro and shopping.</p>	<p>Available early June through early August 4-week minimum stay \$50 application fee ~ \$1,074 (4-wk shared)-\$3,000 (10-wk single) per session.</p>
<p>HOWARD UNIVERSITY 2401 4th Street, NW Washington, DC 20059 (202) 806-9539 Howard Metro Diversity abounds on this historically black campus.</p>	<p>Available early June through late July. ~ \$25 per night Call for more information On Georgia Avenue bus line (#70)</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE Conferencing Office 125 Michigan Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20017 (202)884-9136 Metrobus to Brookland Metro.</p>	<p>\$18/night + \$5/wk for linen rental No minimum stay A/C & parking available Call for more information</p>

*Note: All information presented reflects data as of 2006 and is subject to change.

Furnished apartments with short-term leases*

<i>Name and Location</i>	<i>Availability and Rates</i>
ADAM'S INN 1744 Lanier Place, NW Washington, DC 20009 1-800-578-6807 www.adamsinn.com	\$500/week for rooms with shared bath \$570/week for rooms with private bath (\$70/week for each additional guest)
THE PARC VISTA 801 15th Street SouthArlington, VA, 22202 (703) 415-3600 ParcVista@ArchstoneSmith.com Polished, Modern buildings near mall, shopping, eats and movies.	299-unit apartment complex. 1 Bedroom from \$1365/month 2 Bedroom from \$2320/month Near Pentagon City Metro.
RANDOLPH TOWERS 4001 9th Street North Arlington, VA 22203 P: (703) 525-9000 F: (703) 525-1426 RandolphTowers@DittmarCompany.com Urban apartment living in northern Virginia; close to everything without being downtown.	509-unit apartment complex. 1 Bedroom - \$1325-\$1490/month 2 Bedroom - \$1970-\$2120/month Includes utilities, indoor pool and fitness center. Near Ballston Metro.
THOMPSON-MARKWARD HALL 235 2nd Street, NE Washington, DC 20002 (202) 546-3255 http://www.ywch.org/ Capitol Hill living for women on a budget.	120 beds in small dormitory. 2-week minimum \$100 deposit \$800/month, including 13 meals. Shared bathroom; A/C. No men above lobby level. Across street from Hart Building; walk to Union Station/Capitol South Metros.
Washington Intern Student Housing (WISH) 305 Massachusetts Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20002 (202) 548-2720 http://www.internsdc.com/housing.html	Rentals are 3-5 months. ~ \$975 - \$1500/month Fully furnished and includes utilities

*Note: All information presented reflects data as of 2006 and is subject to change.

chapter 9 summary



do

- Your research on available housing and talk to people in your office who are more familiar with the city. They may also have a lead on some unadvertised deals and can serve as a personal reference for you.
- Make sure you read the fine print before signing any leases or contracts.
- Review the charts and additional resources provided in this chapter to find the best fit for you.

don't

- Wait until the last minute to find housing in DC. While it's hard to house-hunt from several hundred miles away, premium locations will fill up quickly and usually several weeks in advance.
- Commit to anything without doing your homework. That great deal may be too good to be true. Always check the neighborhood and commuting options before finalizing your "home."
- Be afraid to ask questions. You don't want to get into a sticky situation later on because you were in a hurry or too shy to speak up.



weather report

In a previous era, British soldiers stationed in Washington, D.C. were provided tropical hardship stipends to help alleviate the suffering caused by having to withstand withering summers in America’s capital city—or at least that’s how the story goes...While the advent of air conditioning ended that practice, Washington’s weather can still be in-your-face in any number of ways: a smile won’t be much of an umbrella if you are caught unprepared in a torrential July thunderstorm; your good shoes are in danger of being ruined (and your backside badly bruised) if you omit a pair of boots with traction in the winter; and sleeveless arms will resemble mogul runs of goose bumps when the AC is cranked up to combat summer’s sizzle. The following chapter will help you prepare for the climate and combat the elements.



The trouble with weather forecasting is that it's right too often for us to ignore it and wrong too often for us to rely on it.

—PATRICK YOUNG

That's hot.

—PARIS HILTON

Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.

—MARK TWAIN

It's all relative

How you characterize Washington, D.C.'s weather depends on your hometown habitat. A Californian accustomed to bone dry summers may be surprised at the year-round rainfall and lush summer foliage. A Southerner may judge winters to be a mite nippy. Wisconsinites used to fastening their top button only when temperatures approach 40 degrees will likely suffer most during summer's oppressive heat. Those from Minnesota or other cold climates may be totally dumbfounded by the ensuing havoc around town when a few snowflakes hit the ground. And finally, no matter where anybody comes from, few are prepared for the sauna-like summer humidity.

Weathering the capital climate

Summer preview: you've heard of wind-chill temperatures that let you know it's even more bitterly cold than the thermometer says it is? Well, during summer in D.C. (and other soggy environs), the meteorologists have been known to intone the word "humiture," a saturated number that combines the humidity with the temperature to make you really feel miserable.

Basically, Washington, D.C. is located too far north to claim a southern climate and too far south to wear a northern weather label. Typical of the eastern coast of the U.S., warm weather prevails from April until as late as October, with August traditionally shining in as the year's sultriest month. Winters are short, and usually coldest during January and February.

Washington weather stats

month	average high temperature	average low temperature	average precipitation
january	42	27	3.21"
february	47	30	2.63"
march	56	37	3.60"
april	66	46	2.77"
may	75	56	3.82"
june	84	65	3.13"
july	88	70	3.66"
august	86	69	3.44"
september	79	62	3.79"
october	68	50	3.22"
november	57	40	3.03"
december	47	32	3.05"

Amazing Washington, D.C. Weather Facts

- The coldest day recorded was -15 degrees on February 11, 1899. On that same day in 1932, the temperature was 76 degrees. Go figure.
- July and August both claim the record for hottest day: 106 degrees on July 20, 1930 and August 6, 1918.
- On average, the warmest month is July. The coolest month is usually January. May and September are the wettest months.

Source for stats and facts: Bob Ryan's 2005 Almanac and Guide for the Weatherwise, NBC4, Washington, D.C., and The Weather Channel (<http://www.weather.com>)



In average terms, Washington suffers from no weather extremes (see chart above). You'll have to pack warm clothes for winter (in addition to a warm coat, don't forget gloves, a hat and a pair of boots/sturdy shoes), but you can usually leave the Arctic gear at home. In the summer, lightweight, light-colored and loose fitting clothes make life more bearable, and a raincoat comes in handy as well. Thankfully, two periods—spring and fall—compete with each other for the title of *Most Glorious Season*—temps usually range between the high 60s and high 70s with low humidity.

Weather warnings

Two exceptions exist to the general rules above, however. First, artificial “weather”—air conditioning and heat—confounds common sense on what one may believe to be suitable attire. For instance, a cotton sweater in the summer is almost a necessity to shield bare arms from frigid conditions found in some indoor spots—offices, hearing rooms, movie theaters, restaurants—that turn their air conditioning to deep-freeze levels. Similarly, heavy wool sweaters worn during the winter commute to the office will most likely be shed not long after entering certain overheated offices or apartment buildings from which all moisture has been extracted. Survivors of these dry winters also use more than their fair share of hand lotion, lip balm and hair conditioner just to ameliorate the arid indoor atmosphere.

Second, those of you with allergies will view spring and fall through different lenses, and your sight will probably be obscured with itchy eyes aggravated by excessive sneezing and sniffing. While most of us revel in the Fantasia-like spectacle of azaleas, cherry blossoms, tulips, daffodils and carpets of newly-mown lawn, many others suffer from the proliferation of pollen that accompanies flourishing plant life. In D.C., a powdery yellow-green film provides cars with an eerie glow and the pollen count turns into a major news story. Whether a recognized medical condition or a minor nuisance, allergies will no doubt be magnified by a full dose of Washington spring and fall weather.

Facing the elements

Whatever the time of year, think about your head and your feet. Again, looking at the chart, just about three inches of some sort of precipitation falls in Washington, D.C. during any given month (though not daily by any means). Take heed if you care about keeping your hair and shoes dry while waiting for a bus, grabbing a bite to eat or walking home. A hat and raincoat sometimes fare a lot better than an umbrella rendered useless by gusty winds that turn it inside out.



Severe summer thunderstorms can soak you to the skin in a matter of seconds (even with an umbrella), but they don’t last very long. So if you’re about to take off for somewhere and hear a thunderclap, you’re better off just sitting tight and letting it blow over—usually 20 minutes or a half hour, max. And don’t think that just because it’s sunny when you set out on a bright summer’s morning that you can leave the umbrella at home; summer days are unpredictable! It’s a season when heat builds up all afternoon and the skies darken to something out of *Lord of the Rings* until nature unleashes a drenching deluge complete with a sound and light show—often synchronized to hit just around quit-tin’ time!

A few words on outdoor activity in the middle of the good old summertime. Notwithstanding daily showers and plenty of anti-perspirant, your body’s thermostat will probably work overtime to adjust itself to D.C.’s sweltering summers. The heat alone is tough to withstand, but the summer weather scene can be complicated even further by occasional air inversions that can help rev up your body’s cardio-pulmonary system with every unhealthy breath you take. In addition to whatever else you may take in, bring along plenty of water to those after-hours softball tournaments, weekend volleyball matches, pick-up basketball games, bike rides to Mt. Vernon or picnics around Great Falls. The heat, humidity and air pollution sometimes gang up to such a degree that your body will require hydration of the non-alcoholic, non-caffeine variety just to stay even with the elements. And heat stroke ain’t a condition just for your elders. If you’re not used to the humidity, don’t push yourself too far or too fast. Take rests and time outs. Give your body a break now and then. ☔

chapter 10 do summary



- Prepare for the summer's humidity, especially in August. Lightweight and light-colored clothes are a necessity. So are umbrellas.
- Bring gloves and a hat for the winter. Though considered relatively mild for most people, DC winters can still produce enough snow and wind to make you miserable on your commute.
- Invest in layers. Though it may be 86 degrees and humid outside, it could be a chilly 60 degrees in your office (and vice versa for the winter-time). Your best bet is to be able to adapt to changing temperatures throughout the day.

don't

- Be alarmed when the entire city panics at the mention of snow. Stock up on water and canned goods, and talk to your office about its "snow days" policy.
- Forget allergy medication for the spring and fall, hand lotion, plenty of anti-perspirant, and water for the summertime.



district/state internships

home is where the people are. Home is where the votes are. More and more, home is where the interns are. This chapter presents information tailored to the needs of an internship spent in district/state offices.



*'Mid pleasures
and palaces though
we may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
there's no place
like home.*

—JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

All politics is local.

—THOMAS P. "TIP" O'NEILL

*In love of home,
the love of country
has its rise.*

—CHARLES DICKENS

Home sweet home

Internships in congressional district/state offices have grown in tandem with the tremendous expansion of “back home.” Just look at the numbers: the percentage of congressional staff in House district offices has grown from 22 to 43 percent in the last two decades. And Senators now field as many as seven or eight state offices where once there was a solitary outpost.

The reasons for this shift are varied and volatile:

- Agencies have firmly settled into institutional niches within regional districts. The world doesn’t necessarily revolve around Washington, D.C.—business is conducted closer to home.
- Computers, the Internet and e-mail tie the district/state with Washington. Through heightened communication links, information-sharing is instantaneous, and the district/state offices can dip into database resources formerly denied them—they don’t have to be at the mercy of whatever the Washington office chooses to relay to them whenever they chose to transmit it.
- Grassroots politics, combined with a smarter electorate and savvier press corps, tether the Member/Senator to a more rigorous district/state travel schedule of town meetings and carefully planned outreach appearances. In the absence of the Member/Senator, district offices maintain a strong congressional presence with mobile vans, special evening and weekend district office hours, and surrogate speaking engagements.
- Casework is direct help and good politics. Almost 90 percent of all casework is conducted in the district/state and, while computers and standardized procedures have streamlined casework management, there has been a corresponding escalation in the number of cases to match the new efficiencies.
- Budget and space constraints come into play as well. Since the cost-of-living is usually lower in the state/district than in Washington, D.C., salary distribution can parallel this economic-geographic fact of life; the district/state office can offer more bang for the buck. And even if Washington wanted a few more bodies, where would they put them? Space is at a premium on Capitol Hill, where an uncluttered area to turn around in is sacred and staffers practically sit on top of one another. Space in the district/state can be reasonably priced (again, there are exceptions like Manhattan) and much more accommodating.

Future district/state interns may be able to take advantage of the confluence of two opposing forces in the district/state arena—increasing responsibilities and limited budgetary resources. That is, while district/state activity has exploded, and there has been a steady expansion of district/state responsibilities, there has not been a corresponding increase in congressional office budgets. This gap between supply and demand can allow interns to pick up the slack and make a contribution of greater consequence than has previously been the case. Opportunities exist for those interested in practicing social work with a political twist, learning how federal agencies function or acquiring a feel for grassroots and local politics.

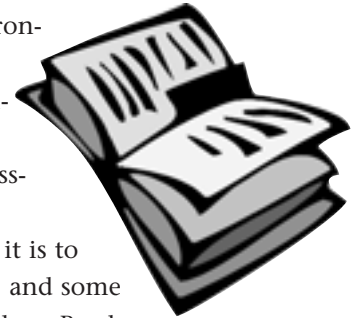
Working in the specific functional areas of the district/state office can render an overall appreciation for representative government. While textbooks can speak to abstract theory and noble ideals, interns can rescue someone’s mislaid Medicaid form, patiently listen to an irate constituent rant about the Senator’s last vote on defense authorization and expedite an order of tour tickets for Washington-bound constituents. District/state offices rarely deal in the hypothetical. Especially with casework, district/state offices are working on the most basic level of reality. As one congressional aide recently

noted, “Most people don’t sit around at home and talk about the status of Middle East peace process. It’s about what you did today—and if we can get grandpa into that veteran’s home.” Interns not only enjoy a bird’s eye view of constituent service, they are foot soldiers on the front lines of making that service count.

Utilizing this manual

This portion of the *Handbook* is written for the intern assisting an office in the home district/state. Other sections of the guide are drafted for the intern serving a stint on Capitol Hill. While some of the references in those chapters may not be relevant to your efforts in a district/state office, other entries can be adapted to your sojourn.

You should read the entire book to understand holistically how the Member’s/Senator’s office works and make appropriate adjustments to apply the information to your working environment. For instance in Chapter 3, “Acquainting Yourself With the Office,” you can still pick up tips on how to answer the phone, information on who’s who in a congressional office, definitions of types of congressional mail and advice on how to write a letter. Read the chapter and adopt and adapt the sections that are true across-the-board regardless of where the internship is located.



The Congressional Research Service is also accessible to you, via the Internet, as it is to anyone in the Washington office. So is almost every other resource in this chapter, and some of the “hard” copies of the books cited may be in your district/state office bookshelves. Read about your boss and the state in the *Almanac of American Politics* or *Politics in America* if they’re around, or dip into the district/state office’s inventory of *Congressional Records* if you’re so inclined. And take advantage of the online information available through Washington.

While Chapter 6 on “ethics” may be sprinkled with some Washington, D.C. twists, the lessons contained in it are universal both within and outside of the “beltway” (*i.e.*, don’t abuse the frank in D.C. or the district). On the topic of ethics it should be noted that, as a district/state intern, your affiliation with the Member/Senator is even more delicate since not only constituents but also the local press is literally closer to you and your association with an elected official. Take care to be on your best behavior.

District/state constituent relations: Cast of characters

Chapter 3 contains some brief descriptions of assorted jobs performed by Washington, D.C.-based congressional staff. Listed below are a couple of the tasks and matching job descriptions that clarify the most important district/state roles.

Maintenance of district/state offices is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of congressional staffing. Whereas 50 years ago such offices were non-existent, today every Member/Senator maintains one or more district/state offices. These offices usually perform little or no legislative work, and instead focus on community and political affairs. This front-line constituent emphasis includes scheduling the Member/Senator in the district/state, managing casework systems, meeting with local agencies and groups, coordinating with local and state government authorities, conducting outreach and public relations activities, and providing personalized constituent service.

District/State Director

The top person is usually called the district or state director, and he or she will typically work out of the main district/state office, hiring regional directors or senior field representatives to help with the job and manage the satellite district/state offices. A Senator from a large state or one with a very high-profile presence at home may field as many as seven or eight state offices, each with its own coordina-

tor, plus someone in charge of the entire statewide operation. Though the structure and titles may vary from office to office, the general responsibilities of this function are consistent.

The district/state director directs the overall district/state operation and workflow, and represents the Member/Senator with hometown political interests, government liaisons, citizen action boards, organized interest groups and the public at large. They oversee the Member's/Senator's district/state schedule, maintain community visibility and run interference on a multitude of district/state-based problems. They also monitor the local political scene and help create the best possible relationship with the party apparatus.

Day-by-day these responsibilities can translate into delivering a speech before a civic association, accompanying the Member/Senator on district appointments, getting involved in special cases and making sure the copy for the town hall meeting is delivered to the printer on time. Several aides, caseworkers and assistants support the district/state director.

Field Representative

Field representatives are sometimes considered the “eyes and ears” of the district/state because they spend a great deal of time meeting with constituents and local leaders and groups, generally conducting the outreach operation for the Member/Senator. More seasoned field reps may represent the Member/Senator at events if the boss cannot attend. They report to the district/state director and help shape the district/state schedule based upon what they're learning “on the ground.” In some offices, field reps may follow a very aggressive outreach schedule, spending most of their time on the road or participating in “mobile office hours.” In other offices, they may also serve as caseworker/constituent services representative.

Caseworker/Constituent Services Representative

Casework is most basically the “ombudsman” role of a Member/Senator. An ombudsman is a government official appointed to receive and examine complaints made by individuals against abuses of the public bureaucracy, in this case, the U.S. federal government. Members of Congress/Senators investigate lost Social Security checks, rejected Veterans Administration loans, requests for visas and many other constituent appeals. In most instances, the Member/Senator is the court of last resort. Members/Senators delegate this casework responsibility to staff who perform the often-times complicated and tedious legwork to resolve individual problems.

Caseworkers (also called “Constituent Services Representatives”) are the Member's/Senator's agents in clearing up red tape and expediting processes for constituents lost in the federal government's bureaucratic maze. Caseworkers, usually assigned specific subject/agency areas, work with initial problem identification, contacts with executive agencies, follow-up letters and case completion. A casework routine can include checking the case for facts, talking or meeting with the constituent, acquiring Privacy Act clearance, deciding the most appropriate agency to contact, forwarding the case letter with a Member's/Senator's cover letter of inquiry to the proper department, sending the constituent a progress report and following through to the case's conclusion.

Casework problems also offer insight into the impact of law and regulations on individuals and can provide the Member/Senator information needed to effect any necessary legislative correction. All along the casework road, the staff person sifts information; searches out answers, and attempts to develop solutions that help individual constituents and that may subsequently contribute to the public good.

The culture of the district/state office

Much has been written in business literature about the “culture” of successful corporations—what management philosophies, customer service theories, sales promotion campaigns or employee recognition programs underlie their accomplishment and make them tick. When looking at a district/state office, there are at least two major characteristics or behavioral patterns that underpin the prevailing culture of a fine-tuned local political reconnaissance network. Each office will differ in its appreciation of these functions and in how aggressively it pursues their attainment. For the most part, this culture is embodied in the previously described field representative and caseworker.

No doubt about it, politics pervades district/state office culture because, like it or not, politics just about underlies anything going on in an environment of an elected official. District/state interns are often involved in special projects such as research on local and state politics and how it affects federal legislation (and vice versa) as well as letter writing and event coordination/staffing, all of which carry political repercussions. So some part of the office is always tuned into the overall repercussions of the Member’s/Senator’s actions, as well as the particulars of the local political scene. Field representatives (and the district/state directors) are built with special high-powered political radar just for this purpose that can pick up signals of which the rest of us may not be aware. Interns who listen and learn can begin to detect a few of the vibes as well.

On the other front, interns can also play a role in constituent service. Basically the script calls for an understanding that the constituent is king. While this truism resonates in both the Capitol Hill and district/state offices, the location of the home office obviously heightens the staff interaction with the local populace. It’s one thing to receive and reply to pieces of paper back in Washington, D.C., and it’s quite another to meet face-to-face with folks who march into the office or who speak (sometimes, loudly!) at the other end of a phone line. This is flesh and blood constituent service and a key component of representative government.

District/state intern duties

The jobs and responsibilities assigned to interns in the district/state vary considerably from district to district and from state to state. Some offices plunge their interns into casework immediately while others don’t let their interns anywhere near casework. Instead, they have a lot more routine work to which to attend and may put aside a bunch of projects that need that special intern touch. How these assignments sort out is left up to the district/state office, and its priorities, focus and temperament. Each office has determined intern emphasis according to its own needs. No office makes up work for interns to do. Every assignment is important.

Listed below are a sampling of tasks selected from many offices, accompanied with an explanation of just what exactly these tasks entail.

Special projects and outreach

Special Projects

The range and type of projects performed by district/state interns are difficult to catalog since they are so great and so varied. Following are real life examples of projects handled by interns in the district/state:

- The preparation, press, outreach and logistics associated with the Congressional Arts Contest;
- Updating a directory of services for senior citizens, covering local, state and federal programs;

- Interviewing local hospital administrators on the effects of a program that used mental health agencies to provide counseling for farm families suffering from stress associated with financial difficulties and foreclosure (this intern also happened to be pursuing a Master's degree in social work);
- Accumulating data related to the financial services industry including assembling an advisory committee of local contacts to consult on pending legislation (Member was on the Banking Committee);
- Preparing a list of district organizations for the Member to consider visiting during an upcoming recess;
- Identifying community members who attended a roundtable on healthcare and drafting letters thanking them for their input;
- Assisting the district staff member assigned to coordinate a youth institute of 400 students from 10 high schools in the district, requiring a great deal of detailed planning and production;
- Staffing a booth at the local health fair and gathering brochures and information for distribution on site;
- "Shadowing" regular staff people in carrying out their responsibilities, such as helping plan a regional Senate hearing, gathering background information to brief the Senator on a local issue, assisting with tracking cases and monitoring the state impact of federal legislation.

Bottom line: a special project can range from driving in a presidential motorcade to reorganizing the storage room, so an intern should be ready for anything and everything.

Events Coordination and Logistics

Interns in district/state offices are often afforded opportunities to get out into the community. This interaction can mean accompanying the staff on community office hours or to meetings on public issues. And then there are town hall gatherings where the Member/Senator has scheduled public gatherings to talk with constituents or a zillion other kinds of special events with constituents.

Interns may be involved in greeting people as they come in the door, recording questions for future follow-up, testing the microphones, driving the Member/Senator to the next stop or the myriad of tasks involved in putting on a logistically successful event. Town hall-type meetings, especially, represent a modern-day version of representative government as envisioned by the founding fathers. They are usually great theater where Members/Senators must be on their toes as they go one-on-one with the people they represent.

Before events, staff will have briefed the boss on likely issues that will be raised. Staff will have also made all logistical arrangements including sending out announcements, inviting outside experts, securing rooms and alerting the press. During the meeting, staff take note of any items that require follow-up, be it an individual case or an issue question for which the Member/Senator couldn't completely provide an answer. Afterward, staff will perform the follow-up and perhaps send thank you letters to attendees.

An intern may help out anywhere along the road, including, quite literally, being on the road in the car with the Member/Senator. An intern will rarely have a better chance to exchange a few words with the boss, and become better acquainted. While "working" a town meeting may mean sacrificing a weekend, its reward is watching the Member/Senator in action, something few people ever get a chance to do up close and personal.

C is for casework

NOTE: Some of the following information is borrowed from the CRS Report RL33209 *Casework in a Congressional Office* and casework material prepared for the U.S. Senate handbook.

Casework is a service performed by Members/Senators and their staffs at the request of and on behalf of constituents. Casework involves individuals and will always include a problem, grievance, question of eligibility, need or other tangible interest or benefit to these individuals. Whether it is a delayed Social Security check, a denied veteran's claim or a Medicare reimbursement issue, the source of the constituent's problem will usually be a federal program, rule, regulation or administrative decision resulting from the implementation of the public law, or another need connected with governments, national or foreign, with which a Member/Senator may be of assistance. In addition to helping an individual, responding to constituent complaints and problems can serve as an early warning system—providing a Member/Senator with an opportunity (through legislative oversight of agencies) to determine whether the programs of the executive agencies are functioning in accordance with the law or whether the law needs amending.

Introduction

The focal point of many district/state offices is a smoothly run and responsive casework operation—one that is almost mechanically efficient in managing an enormous caseload, but one that at the same time never loses the human touch in dealing with the people whose problems it seeks to solve. Members of Congress/Senators usually allocate casework responsibilities to one or more staff members who perform the sometimes-complicated task of solving constituent problems, or who investigate and refer them to other sources that may provide relief. Individual caseworkers equipped with polished people skills and armed with an encyclopedic knowledge of agency personnel and procedures, create a system within each congressional office to handle the daily onslaught of new appeals for help. Interns are sometimes asked to assist.

People Skills

Before reviewing some of the procedural aspects of casework, an intern should be aware of the personal skills that come into play when resolving problems. If involved in casework, an intern will have to adopt them as his/her own:

- Personable, understanding, and a desire to assist those with problems;
- Patient and polite, with excellent listening skills (you must listen to everyone's hardship case, even if you've heard the same story a hundred times before);
- Compassionate and empathetic (frequently the Member/Senator is a last resort and they don't know where else to turn);
- Resourceful with problem-solving skills (detective talents are used to track down information and put the pieces of the puzzle together);
- Part teacher (instructing the constituent to perform certain tasks himself) and part counselor (if you have to deliver discouraging news);
- Flexibility and determination (to deal with an often-times frustrating bureaucracy of government "red tape");
- Analytical and detail-oriented (you must have the ability to absorb, analyze, and communicate a lot of information, as well as thoroughly document every action taken).

Casework Defined

Caseworkers are often assigned certain subject areas and receive all letters/calls within their designated domain. In this manner they gain expertise and develop contacts with particular agency personnel. If you are assigned to a caseworker, your work will be defined by the agencies overseen by that caseworker.

- When caseworkers read a letter, receive a referral from other office staff or intercept a phone call from a constituent, they must take care to collect all the relevant information needed to proceed. Identifying the total problem is the first step. Sometimes individuals do not provide the entire story—they can be so wrapped up in their own circumstances that they exhibit difficulty communicating or may simply omit or inadvertently forget crucial information. The caseworker must know the kind and level of information needed, and then go about obtaining it.
- Most caseworkers believe it is advisable to send an acknowledgment by letter to the constituent immediately upon receipt of the inquiry to let him/her know that the Member/Senator is aware of the request and is inquiring into the matter, and that the constituent will be contacted again when some word is forthcoming. Both the initial receipt of information and the follow-up to the first inquiry begin a tracking process within the office. All offices differ in how they file casework. Though most casework is done on the computer, it may be logged by year, by agency, by request, by constituent's name, on a case history sheet or even in a master file of some sort. In most all cases, there is a hardcopy file to match the computer records. Interns working on cases must follow the internal filing system of their offices to record, track and close cases.
- Every caseworker has to develop his/her own method of analyzing the nature of the constituent's problem, and of generating the most expeditious resolution. Knowing where to go first can save time. Caseworkers should have a working knowledge of federal agencies, which includes a command of the relevant agency programs, how they are administered and what current legislation affects program eligibility. Regional and local offices of federal agencies are among the best sources of this information for district/state office caseworkers. These offices usually have a congressional liaison office, as well as informed staff in program administration. Personal contacts with regional/local office personnel are invaluable, and most offices/caseworkers have painstakingly built up an established list of contacts for each type of case within each agency.
- In contacting an agency, the caseworker must convey concern and—if necessary—urgency, must communicate information clearly and must be reasonable but persistent. The caseworker must also decide how best to transmit the case whether by phone, buck-slip or correspondence. In some instances referral to state or municipal government is appropriate.
- If the case is to be handled with a letter, the caseworker usually makes a photocopy of the constituent letter and forwards it to the relevant agency, sometimes with a personally written letter, but more often with an appropriate “buck-slip”—a form letter that asks for action on the part of the agency. A letter is sent to the constituent over the Member's/Senator's signature assuring the petitioner that the Member/Senator is looking into the matter. The executive branch department/agency usually responds to the case within a relatively short period of time, and a copy of that response is forwarded to the constituent with observations, suggestions or sentiments as fit the circumstances, which often means translating agency bureaucratese.
- The resolution of a case brings either good news or bad news to the constituent. Successful resolution of constituent problems are rewarding for the constituent, the Member/Senator and the caseworker. But there are times when no amount of casework will be able to achieve the end goal that the constituent has requested. Perhaps it is the appropriate denial of a loan or an agency, well with-

in its rights, not changing its mind about benefits. Caseworkers should know when to relent, when it is no longer worth their time or the time of their Member/Senator to continue. Non-federal sources might be helpful in such instances. On the other hand, caseworkers should know when to persist in the face of agency recalcitrance and do their utmost to find out and inform constituents of their rights to appeal, to reapply, to request an evaluation of their application or a review of their eligibility and to seek any other recourse possible.

Procedural Pointers

Every office has developed its own rules for dealing with casework in general—its own procedures on handling each case specifically. As an intern, you will have to learn the guidelines instituted in your office—no two do casework exactly the same. With this background, the following general hints may be useful.

- Be sure to accept federal government cases from district/state residents only. If the issue to be resolved rightfully falls under the jurisdiction of a state or local agency, write/call the constituent with information on the proper office to contact. Make sure the petitioner is a constituent: check zip codes if necessary and refer others to appropriate elected officials.
- Ask all case clients to fill out a Privacy Act release form, which is an absolute necessity for legal reasons; do not fail to acquire a completed release. The Privacy Act permits a person to seek agency records or files pertaining exclusively to him/herself, and is used by caseworkers to request federal department/agency records on behalf of constituents. Make a written record of all pertinent information when speaking with a constituent. Be sure to acquire their full name, address, zip code and telephone numbers. Also record relevant numbers as appropriate (*e.g.*, social security, civil service, medical I.D., etc.) Reassure the caller of your interest and advise him/her that you will take appropriate action and report back to him/her. Never promise that a case will be resolved right away. The wheels of government move slowly. This understanding will prevent the constituent from calling back every day to inquire about what you've learned.
- Be specific in recording case notes, dates of calls, agencies contacted, names of contacts, phone numbers and information received. Also keep a constituent apprised of his/her status by telephone or in writing, and note each contact with the constituent.
- Do not accept checks or other original documents. Make copies for the files.
- As appropriate, advise constituents to file applications themselves. A congressional office is a liaison between a constituent and an agency. It is the purpose of the office to bring a case to the attention of someone in the agency. It does not exist to do the work for the constituent or the agency.
- All communications to and from a congressional office are private and should never be discussed outside the office. No case should ever be a subject of gossip. This principle cannot be overemphasized when dealing with individual cases.

Reception duty

Answering the Phone/Greeting Constituents

See Chapter 3's discussion on answering the phone—the system and the procedures to learn about the mechanics and methods of the phone system in general. Your own office will fill in the customized details.

A large portion of the “attention” that can be provided to constituents revolves around greeting constituents and answering the phone, which are among the most important functions of a district/state office. It is not as easy as it may first seem; there are many variables at play. You must be polite and patient while reflecting at all times the caring and consideration your boss would want his/her office to convey. The Member/Senator is a public servant and, as an extension of him/her, so are you.

A professional, courteous greeting of constituents is a consistent hallmark of all congressional offices. You represent the Member/Senator, and the impression you make on a constituent can and does influence how he/she feels about your boss. Constituents come in all shapes and sizes from welfare recipients to Internet moguls, from Generation X to senior citizens, from bee bop to hip hop. Some are illiterate or misinformed. Others are belligerent and try your patience. Each deserves red carpet treatment. Each deserves respect. Always put your best foot forward and paste a smile to your face. Remember that a very, very small percentage of constituents ever personally interact with the office of their Member/Senator. Don't lose a chance to make that contact lasting and affirmative. Whether in the office, on the phone, or in a town meeting, promote the understanding and supportive culture of your office.

Issue Calls

Constituents call to make statements, speak their mind or voice opinions on issues that range from a presidential veto to dogs barking next door. Most offices have an issue sheet or constituent services form or other like-named mechanism that is used to record comments on a given subject. Be neat and accurate when taking messages and always acquire the person's name, title, address and zip code. Some offices may ask for other information such as occupation, your assessment if the caller is pro or con a particular bill, etc. And some offices may require you to record this information directly on a computer.

Remember, although these calls may be heated or frustrating or irritating, your role is to listen, be pleasant and to refrain from getting involved. Never engage the caller in a debate; this tactic can lead to an argument or a misunderstanding or something way over your head. Good phrases to use are “I understand what you are saying,” or “I'll be glad to pass your comments onto the Member/Senator.” The comments may be sent to Washington via the mail, fax or electronically, to be answered by the appropriate legislative staff member or you may get involved in researching the answer yourself.

Say What?

Frequently a constituent will ask a question that you simply can't answer, and no staff member may be available to help you at the moment. Never hesitate to say, “I'm sorry, I don't know the answer and most of the office is at lunch or on the phone. May I please take a message and have someone call you back?” You might be prepared to research the answer yourself or find the right person in the office to handle it. If you are polite, most callers accept a delay in receiving the information.

Press Calls

Press calls are a very touchy matter. When someone calls and identifies him/herself as a member of the press, the call usually will be instantly relayed to the district director or press person. Never make any statement to the press unless you are authorized to do so, even if you know the answer.

Requests

Documents

(See also “Requests” in Chapter 3)—Constituents call for a variety of publications, documents, and materials that are available (or they think are available) from congressional offices. You may be in a position to handle many of them. In addition to name and address, be sure to get as much information as you can from the constituent, such as bill name, number or other identifying characteristics. Constituents can be very vague on what material they’re exactly looking for so adequate questioning at this point can save a lot of frustration—yours and theirs.

You can order bills from the Document Room, reports from the Congressional Research Service or testimony from a committee as easily as can your D.C. counterparts. (You will, however, have to draw the line at Page service!) Similarly, you can go online and tap into LIS and other House and Senate services for legislative status reports and other information that can tie directly to a constituent request. Reminder: While many publications are free, some do carry a cost that must be borne by the constituent. Make sure you know your office’s procedures in this department. When a constituent calls in with a request, you can use your initiative and acquire the information yourself, within the framework of your office policy on handling constituent information requests. This is called research and filling a need when you see one.

Tours

Constituents call, e-mail, and write for tour tickets for the White House, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, Bureau of Printing and Engraving, etc. Passes are limited and are distributed on a first-come basis, usually several weeks or months in advance. Each office maintains its own procedure, but normally, you must acquire the constituent’s name, address, phone number and dates they will be in Washington. You will probably call the tour person in the D.C. office to inquire on the availability of passes. Whether they are attainable or not, you will likely call the constituent and advise one way or another. In conjunction with their Washington visit, constituents also request passes to the House and Senate galleries. These can be picked up in the Member’s/Senator’s Washington office when the constituents visit Capitol Hill.

Flags

Constituents request flags flown over the Capitol building. Flags are available in a number of sizes and fabrics, and the price varies accordingly. If you have a price list available, you can inform the constituent of the prices (if that is the policy of your office) and ask that a check be sent to the Washington office for processing and handling.

Other

Administrative Duties

Filing, copying, logging mail, stuffing and sealing mail, faxing, typing, data entry, maintaining the office supply inventory, running errands, preparing “buck letters” to refer casework and similar tasks are performed by interns. So is regretting invitations that the Senator received to attend events around the state or preparing certificates of recognition for the good works of various organizations. It is these daily nitty-gritty responsibilities that keep the office on an even keel and prevent it from being swallowed up by a mountain of paperwork.

Goodwill Letters

Some offices ask interns to monitor an array of local newspapers for announcements, stories on weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, notable honors, new businesses, births, Eagle Scout awardees and the like. The interns are responsible for tracking down the correct addresses and writing the appropriate congratulatory correspondence.

Press

Work in the area of press relations can range from clipping local newspapers to cataloging photographs, to helping with preparation of the Member's/Senator's newsletter. Many offices routinely clip from the local papers articles that are of interest/relevance to the Member/Senator and faxing them to the Washington office. The clips can then be stored in files/binders by subject for future reference. News clips can also be found online and offices may save and file electronic copies as well. An intern can be an important part of this practice. One Senate office asks an intern prepare a newspaper summary of the state's dailies for relaying to Washington. By performing this clipping task, the intern will undoubtedly grow into a mini-expert on issues of local concern as well as on local coverage of national issues. Also, as appropriate, interns can track down information for inclusion in the newsletter, assist the press person in placing actualities with radio stations and help with getting out press releases.

Last words

There is a lot going on in a district/state office. You can participate if you find out what's being planned. If something interests you, see what kind of role you can play in the activities, roll up your sleeves and get involved. As with internships in Washington, your experience as a district intern will be what you make it.▲

chapter 11

summary



do

- Recognize the significantly different, yet important, role played by the district/state offices. While the DC office is primarily focused on legislation, staff in district/state offices are focused on various constituent services and local politics and events.
- Note that, just like the DC interns, the duties and responsibilities given to district/state interns will also vary by office. Administrative tasks will be part of the assignment, but it also may include work on special projects, event coordination and logistics, and casework.
- All tasks exceedingly well to prove that you're able to handle bigger assignments.
- Understand that casework is a top priority of district/state offices and it offers you the unique ability to actually help people on a very practical level. Observing and assisting with casework will not only give you first-hand experience with constituents, but it will also improve your listening, customer service, and problem-solving skills.
- Respect the privacy of all citizens contacting your office for assistance. Case details should not be shared with anyone outside the office under any circumstances.

don't

- Go outside the bounds of the problems you can help constituents with. Sometimes an unfavorable resolution (from the constituent's point of view) is legitimate and appropriate. Other times, their request may be outside of the jurisdiction of your office.
- Promise any action or resolution without authorization.
- Forget to review Chapters 3 and 6 for more information on basic duties and ethics, both of which are relevant to district/state internships.



finding a job or another internship: the final frontier

a lot of interns toil on Capitol Hill not only for the experience itself, but for the get-your-foot-in-the-door-and-it-looks-good-on-your-resume reasons that may reap a full-time job following an intern stint or post-graduation. Using an internship as a stepping stone to permanent congressional employment is a tried and true method of advancement. If you've already graduated, or are thinking of staying on in Washington to take on another internship or a "real" job (on the Hill or elsewhere in the city), this chapter includes a few hints for when you head out to hit the pavement.



*There's no fool
like an old fool.
You can't beat
experience.*

—JACOB BRAUDE

*You're young and
you've got your
health. What do you
want with a job?*

—JOHN GOODMAN (GALE)
IN *RAISING ARIZONA*
1987

*I think luck is the
sense to recognize an
opportunity and the
ability to take
advantage of it...
The man who can
smile at his breaks
and grab his
chances gets on.*

—SAMUEL GOLDWYN

One step ahead

Job seekers on the Hill will grow weary of hearing one phrase more than any other: “Congressional experience required.” How can you acquire Hill experience if you can’t land a job on the Hill? The fact is, if you’ve served a Hill internship, you are way ahead of everyone else who hasn’t put in any time at all. You know the language, you know your way around and you know what to expect. You’ve already taken one of the most important steps toward competing for a paid job.

While you’re still an intern...

- Keep your eyes on the prize; that is, the opportunity and experience of your current internship commitment. It can be real noticeable if you’re looking elsewhere. Remember that it’s better to make a name for yourself first as an intern; then seek out other employment. You need to put in a stellar stint at the internship post first before you can take off for greener pastures (especially if you want help getting there). If you work hard, you’ll earn (at least) a letter of recommendation from the Member/Senator and the endorsement of your supervisors. A well placed phone call from an enthusiastic supervisor can seal the deal when you’re up for a job in the office down the hall, but it won’t happen unless you’ve proven yourself a dedicated intern.
- Make a point of saving some copies of your work for your own personnel file. You will almost certainly be asked to provide some writing samples; the letter you wrote on Medicare or a copy of that *Congressional Record* insert you drafted is a great testament to the fact that you can actually do the job for which you are interviewing. Make several copies and keep them handy for just such occasions.
- Once you’ve met your obligations to your current office, however, don’t shy away from informing your supervisors and colleagues that you are job/internship hunting. Any connection can help, and a referral from a fellow staff member can boost your chances of standing out from the crowd. Most staffers have walked in your job hunting shoes themselves and are happy to try to help a loyal, productive intern.

The job search

There are basically two approaches to job-search on the Hill—formal and informal. The formal, standardized route involves scanning job notices and visiting placement offices. The other, more informal avenue revolves around networking. Each has its pluses and minuses. The serious job hunter should pursue both strategies, leaving nothing to chance and no stone unturned.

Practical Pointers

- **Senate:** The Senate Placement Office helps Senate personal and committee offices fill open positions by providing resumes of qualified candidates. The Placement Office keeps a resume bank and tries to match potential candidate’s with each office’s specified criteria. To be considered for one of the positions, you should complete a Senate Employment Application Form and their informational interview process. Each week they also publish the Senate Employment Bulletin which contains a sample of the openings available. Since it does not include all the job openings, it is highly recommended that you become part of the resume bank. The application form, Employment Bulletin, and placement information can be found on their Web site at <http://www.senate.gov/employment>. SH-116 (4-9167), 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. M-F, with informational interviews conducted on a walk-in

basis from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; Job Line (recording of Employment Bulletin) (8-JOBS).

- **House:** Each week the House Resume Referral Service (RRS) publishes vacancies in House Member and Committee offices. Job seekers are welcome to stop by the First Call Customer Service Center in B-227 Longworth HOB (5-8000, 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) to review the vacancy announcements for positions throughout the House. Applicant instructions are posted on each vacancy announcement. The House's Job Line (6-4504) also lists vacancies and provides assistance with the RRS. Resumes are kept on file for 30 days and often assist Member offices in filling specific positions. Openings in institutional offices, such as the Chief Administrative Officer and the House Sergeant at Arms, are posted on <http://www.house.gov> under "Employment Information."
- **Other Options:** There are lots of local resources to help you find Hill (or Hill-related) job openings too, including: *Roll Call*, *The Hill*, *Hillzoo.com*, and the *Washington Post*. Make sure to check out their career opportunities posted online too.

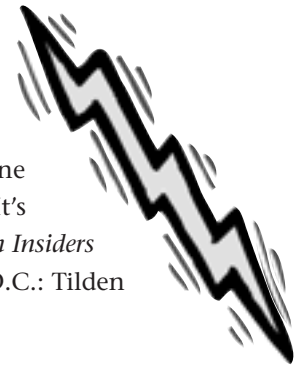
Networking news flash

Washington is a town that runs on personal connections. Now, that is not to say that it is a big, ultra-exclusive fraternity (although it can feel that way at times), or that talent counts for nothing. But carefully building and maintaining contacts, both on the Hill and in the city itself, can make all the difference. You never know when one friend will have a connection to an office in which you want a job. A case in point: "It's Who You Know (But You Don't Have to Know Them Well)" chapter in *Capitol Jobs: An Insiders Guide to Finding a Job in Congress* by Kerry Dumbaugh and Gary Serota (Washington, D.C.: Tilden Press, 1982):

The Senator had just been elected after a widely publicized and difficult campaign. It was the beginning of January and the office manager needed to start hiring staff. One of only a handful of people the Senator had brought with him from his former office in the House, she sat staring half-heartedly at two boxes filled to the brim with more than 4,000 resumes that had poured in during the past six weeks. That same day, a job seeker walked in—having been tipped off by a friend of a friend already working for the Senator—handed over her resume, and announced brightly that she was looking for a job and was ready to start immediately. Meanwhile, the friend of the friend who tipped off the applicant stepped over and gave an unsolicited on-the-spot recommendation to the office manager, who announced, "I don't know what kind of positions we need to fill, but I know we need somebody. You're hired."

Networking, or otherwise developing contacts with others, is an avenue through which another person can vouch for your resume, open closed doors and possibly provide you with an edge on your competition in the form of personal testimony on your qualifications and fitness for a job. Contacts can pay off anytime, anywhere—as in, "I didn't know you were looking for a job there—I went to school with the Chief of Staff's husband." Lightning can strike and you may find yourself in the most enviable of all positions when job hunting: being at the right place at the right time.

You can help attract your own lightning by creating your own connections. You might ask your Chief of Staff or L.D. if he or she has friends to whom you could speak in a general way. This practice is called, "interviewing for information." Ask each person to whom you talk for one or two more names, and go talk to those people, and so on. In this manner you may uncover leads on the jobs that ARE available—and put yourself on the inside track.



Then, once you've applied for a job, be sure to put that network to work for you. Ask your Chief of Staff to contact the office to which you have applied to put in a good word or help arrange an interview. Persistence and follow-up are important, but getting that foot in the door is also usually half the battle. In the meantime, make friends, prove yourself to your superiors and basically don't burn any bridges. You may need that connection down the road.

Resume, cover letter and interview pointers

A potential employer counts the following among the most important attributes in a job applicant: you know your way around the Hill; you know what you are getting into with a Hill job (and possess realistic expectations); and you know something about the office and the Member or Senator with the job opening. In short: an employer wants to be sure that you can do the job with a minimum of care and feeding. You have three chances (maybe four) to convey these qualities: your resume; your cover letter; whatever personal recommendations you can muster from a previous internship or other networking contacts; and, if you're lucky, your interview.

Resume

- Take an inventory of your skills and achievements before drafting your resume. Make notes and begin piecing together the parts of the story you want to tell about yourself. Try to think about the characteristics a congressional employer would like to see and how he/she would like to see them presented, especially as they relate to the job you are seeking (see also cover letter below.)
- Be concise and use active verbs. Don't write passively; do try to quantify achievements if possible (*i.e.*, drafted more than 100 constituent letters; logged and tracked two-months of correspondence) but sprinkle specifics with tried and true generalities on your communication skills, research attributes or initiative (*i.e.*, revamped Capitol tour for visiting constituents).
- Try to keep your resume to a page unless you have LOTS more experience working on the Hill than the average intern.
- Place your record of experience at the top of the resume. Your education is important, but your real-life occupational background provides insights the potential boss wants to know more about than the title of your senior thesis.
- A seemingly obvious but important point: highlight your accomplishments, but don't overstate your intern responsibilities. It will be immediately apparent to anyone with whom you interview, and maybe even those reading your resume, if you have tried to inflate your resume (*i.e.*, "assisted in drafting legislation" will only ring true if you're just out of law school; researching background for the bill is just that, no more).
- Attempt to make the resume readable and appealing. There is no excuse for creating an unattractive layout these days—computers with their font styles and sizes, margin variables and spacing choices help a lot. Ask your Office Manager (or career counselor if you are back at school) to look at the office stash of resumes (if one exists) and pick a style to replicate that suits your presentation.
- Finally, PROOFREAD! Don't rely on your software's spell-check program (it won't catch "there" versus "their" and things like that) nor solely on your own eyes. Sometimes we read what we want it to say, not what it actually says. Ask a friend or colleague with fresh eyes to take a look at what you're submitting. We have heard from many congressional offices who will toss out resumes because of misspelled words or sloppy writing. If you don't take the time to review your own resume, why should they trust you with writing constituent letters or briefing materials for the boss?

Cover Letter

Excerpted from Capitol Jobs: An Insider's Guide to Finding a Job in Congress, by Kerry Dumbaugh and Gary Serota (Washington, D.C.: Tilden Press, 1982).

Note that the following section is written for all job seekers, including those with more experience than you. The numbers cited in the text correspond to examples in the sample letter.

You've now reached the point where you must attempt to capture yourself on paper in a manner that accomplishes your purpose. That purpose—at this point, at least—it is to get your foot in the door to obtain an interview. Your cover letter, even more so than your resume, must do that job for you.

The cover letter has to be a grabber. It must speak directly and concisely to the Chief of Staff or other individual in that office who you have determined makes the hiring decision. It should be hard-hitting, assertive, confident and clever. It should lead with the primary quality you have identified that makes you desirable to that office. Unlike the resume, it should specify that you are applying for a particular position (which, presumably, your research has told you is vacant). For example, do not write that you are applying for a "job that will utilize my skills in a meaningful way." Apply instead for "a job as a Legislative Assistant specializing in armed services and defense matters"—or whatever.

Two items belong in your first paragraph: the specific job you are seeking (1) and the fact that you want a personal interview to discuss the opportunity (2). That's right—don't string them along. Tell the reader up front that you know there's an opening and that the reader has got to meet you

in person to fully appreciate what you can do for the office. Chiefs of Staff and Members don't have the time or patience to wade through your autobiography before you get to the point.

Next, use no more than two sentences to sum up your relevant experience (3).

Dear (name of Member or Chief of Staff):

Mr. John Smith suggested that I come to see you while I am in Washington during the week of July 11-18 (2) in order to apply for the legislative correspondent position open on your staff. (1)

Having graduated from college only last month, I cannot claim experience at a permanent, full-time job. However, I do have the kind of talent, background, and educational experience—as editor-in-chief of the college newspaper, winner of the State Honors Award for best literary essay, and student government liaison with the Dean's office to be an effective and valuable asset to your Washington staff.

I have solid experience as a news writer on deadline and as a researcher. (3) This, along with the talent and expertise I developed as the chief communicator and problem solver between the college student body and the college administration, will enable me to: (4)

- Respond to constituent mail within rapid turn-around time.
- Draft extensions of remarks for mail enclosures.
- Research legislative issues and write position papers.
- Solve minor constituent casework problems.
- Maintain effective liaison relationships with government agencies.

I am willing to contribute my writing and problem-solving skills in whatever capacity your office may need them (5) as a member of your Washington staff, your district staff, or in your re-election campaign. (6)

I will be calling you in several days to arrange a convenient time for an interview. (8) At that time, I will show you some samples of my writing and liaison work. (7) Should you need to reach me before then, my number is 312/555-1224. (9) I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
(Signature)
Name

Next paragraph: hit 'em with the buzzwords (4). Let them know you can speak the lingo and that you're aware of what's expected of you once hired. Demonstrate that you know the job description of the position you're seeking. And present it visually so it can't be missed—use bullets or asterisks, or block and indent.

String these items together in the next paragraph by relating your past experiences to the specific functions of a Hill office (5). Again, do it in two sentences.

Next, offer to work in the campaign if you're willing (6), and offer to show samples of previous work in your interview (another reason to talk to you in person) (7).

Finally, ask again for an interview (8), indicate that you'll call for an appointment, and list a number where you can be reached (9).

Adjust this structure to fit your own personal needs, style, and unique qualifications. For example, you might lead with the third-party reference you've identified to ensure you get an interview: "John Smith, Rep. Smith's father, suggested that I write you for an interview for the position of L.A...."

In addition, if you have knowledge of the Member/Senator and his/her interests and focus, convey that knowledge. If you are from the state or district, that too is important information to impart. Make a point of doing your homework and finding out those traits that would make a good match with the office—and highlight whatever you can to show that you are a first-rate fit. A word of caution, however—a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, so don't overstate what you know—or think you know. Learn from the job seeker who read some background information and made the faulty assumption that a moderate Republican to whose office he had applied was resistant to cutting spending. That member had voted against certain cuts, but in favor of many, many more, and balancing the budget had been the central theme of her tenure in Congress. The job seeker wrote that he "admired Congresswoman X for her willingness to stand up to the radical, right-wing, slash-and-burn budget cutting extremists." He didn't get an interview.

The Interview

- Dress conservatively for the interview wearing muted, businesslike attire.
- Review the high points and accomplishments of your previous experience by associating them to the specific responsibilities of the job for which you are applying.
- Use the interview to demonstrate how your skills and attributes can benefit the office. Point out your writing capabilities, issue expertise or computer proficiency, but don't be afraid to underscore those intangible qualities as well, such as loyalty, good judgment, conscientiousness, attention to detail and superior organization. Above all, show that you would work, work, work for the office.
- Be upbeat and focused. Make sure you can answer the question, "Why do you want to work for Senator Jones?" with a clear, concise, concrete answer that demonstrates that you know your material and cared enough to do some homework. Offices want to know that you want to work for them—and why.
- Be ready to provide a typed list of references with phone numbers. Also have handy any writing samples if they are relevant to the position you seek.

Timing can be everything—or not

There are always jobs open on Capitol Hill, but there are times when it is easier to find them than others. You may not be able to control when you are job-searching on the Hill, but it makes sense to know what you are up against and be aware of the "slow seasons" ahead of time.

Summertime, when interns abound, is generally not a good time to look for an entry level job because there are plenty of others around who are willing to do the job for free. In the fall, when the other interns return to college and the legislative session heats up before adjournment (especially in a campaign year), there is more work than ever and a sudden dearth of bodies to get it done. This is also the time that staffers often leave the Hill to attend graduate school, making your chances even better. Similarly, there is a lot of turnover after elections, but the pool of applicants (read: competition) is bigger than as well.

If it's financially feasible, you should consider offering to work as an unpaid intern or for a small stipend, to get back on the Hill and freshen your network. This tactic can reap benefits even if you can swing it only for a few days a week (and wait tables or work in the mall to feed yourself). There is no substitute for actually being IN the office when an L.A. hears of a position opening up in the state delegation—you can have your resume in the hands of the right person in a matter of minutes, and a phone call or e-mail vouching for your work as recently as yesterday. Remember, if you can make yourself indispensable, you have a better chance of getting paid—no matter what the season.

Final thoughts

- Maintain all of your contacts in good working order, and keep plugging away. You may go through a pair of shoes pounding the pavement, but persistence usually pays off.
- Those who don't ask, don't get, especially on the Hill. You need to earn your stripes, but once you have, don't be shy to ask for help from the office where you're interning. You can be sure that others applying for the job are readying their recommendation ammunition. Ready. Aim. Fire.
- Finally, don't forget to thank anyone who speaks or writes on your behalf. It's not only good manners, it's smart networking. You get the idea. 🙏

chapter 12 do summary



- **Make the most of your internship by gaining as much experience as you can while making valued contributions to the office. This approach should earn you a stellar recommendation for your next job or internship opportunity.**
- **Keep copies of your work for future writing samples. (Make sure to check with your supervisor first if any material is sensitive or confidential.) Also keep track of what tasks and assignments you've successfully completed that you can then list on your resumé.**
- **Carefully build and maintain contacts and keep in touch with your supervisor and other members of the staff. Networking and word of mouth are the best ways to land a job on the Hill.**

don't

- **Search for a new opportunity until you've fulfilled your current internship commitment. At best you won't receive the endorsement of your supervisors; at worst your time in the office may be abruptly cut short.**
- **Be shy about asking for help from your office once you've proven yourself. Their contacts and/or enthusiasm for your work could help you get your foot in the door.**
- **Forget to thank anyone and everyone who assisted in your search.**

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About the author

Born in San Francisco, Sue Grabowski graduated from Cal State-Hayward with a B.A. in political science. Awarded a fellowship from the Eagleton Institute of Politics, she completed her Master's Degree there on the campus of Rutgers University. Soon thereafter, she packed up all her worldly belongings into her trusty VW bug and drove east for a new kind of education.

She joined the Washington staff of Representative Pete Stark (D-CA), where she worked for three years in administrative and legislative capacities. She later moved to the Congressional Management Foundation, serving as program coordinator. She subsequently spent a checkered career at the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, MCI Corporation and Public Technology, Inc. before settling into her current capacity directing internal communications and managing the data base for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Sue Grabowski was an intern for Representative Jerome R. Waldie (D-CA) during the summer of her junior year in college. She has never been the same since.

about the congressional management foundation

the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting a more effective Congress. CMF has pursued this mission for nearly 30 years by working internally with Member offices, committees, leadership, and institutional offices in the House and Senate to foster improved management practices. Simply put, CMF advocates good government through good management. CMF engages in three primary activities, outlined below.

Management books and research tailored for Congress

Though there are ample books on the general topic of “management,” only CMF produces publications adapted to the unique congressional environment. Our management handbooks for congressional staff include: *Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide*; *Frontline Management: A Guide for Congressional District/State Offices*; *The Insider's Guide to Research on Capitol Hill*, and the *Congressional Intern Handbook*. CMF also conducts research on timely topics of importance to managers in congressional offices, which has resulted in reports such as: *Communicating with Congress: How Capitol Hill is Coping with the Surge in Citizen Advocacy*; *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*; studies on House and Senate office compensation and benefit practices; and a brief on managing the transition process for new committee chairs.

Office management services

CMF provides a range of confidential services to congressional offices including: facilitating office retreats that typically focus on strategic planning and improving office operations; conducting office assessments to examine overall office operations, identify office strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies for improving performance; and conducting assessments to improve constituent correspondence management. CMF also provides consulting services to House and Senate institutional offices, primarily on training, human resources, operational effectiveness, and strategic technology projects.

Staff training

To meet the distinct needs of congressional offices, CMF provides free training workshops to top level congressional staff on topics including: strategic planning; motivating staff and reducing turnover; assessing management skills; measuring office performance; supervising staff; and improving internal office communications. Under contract with the House of Representatives, CMF also provides orientation programs for interns and Staff Assistants and workshops on writing constituent correspondence.

For more information, contact CMF at (202) 546-0100 or visit <http://www.cmfweb.org>.



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