

WHITE HOUSE TOURS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHO CAN TOUR THE WHITE HOUSE?

Parties of 10 or more people may request to tour the White House regardless of age or type of group. There is no maximum number; however, during peak seasons smaller groups may have an easier time getting in for a tour. A Member of Congress or their spouse may also request to escort up to six individuals per day on a Member tour.

ARE WHITE HOUSE TOURS GUIDED?

All White House tours are self-guided; however, tour officers are positioned throughout the White House to help answer questions and share interesting information.

HOW DOES ONE REQUEST A GROUP TOUR?

Each Congressional office designates a staff member as their tour coordinator. This person serves as the liaison between their constituents and the White House Visitors Office. The tour coordinator submits tour requests to the White House on behalf of their constituents. Requests may be submitted up to *six months* in advance. Since tours are scheduled on a first come basis, tour coordinators should advise constituents to submit tour requests as soon as possible particularly for dates during peak seasons. Tours are scheduled approximately one month prior to the requested date. It is the responsibility of the requesting office to relay confirmation or regret information to the group and to collect the required security information if the tour is approved. The group will not be contacted separately by the White House Visitors Office.

HOW DOES ONE REQUEST A MEMBER TOUR?

Member tour requests may be submitted up to *six months* before the requested date. Member tours can be led by the Member or the Member's spouse.

WHAT IS MY SPONSOR CODE?

Typically, the sponsor code is the first four letters of the Member's last name, the first letter of his/her first name followed by the state abbreviation. (Example: John Smith - SMITJ-VA) In some situations where this would result in a duplicate code for more than one sponsor, the code is altered. Contact the Visitors Office if you have questions about your sponsor code.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR GROUP TOURS?

Group tours are scheduled on a first come basis in the order in which the request was received by the White House Visitors Office.

WHEN DO TOURS TAKE PLACE?

Group tours are scheduled Tuesday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m, Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. These hours will be extended when possible based on the official White House schedule. Member tours are scheduled at 8:00 a.m., Tuesday through Saturday. White House tours are subject to last minute cancellation. Occasionally, it will be necessary to deviate from the regular tour schedule and reschedule or change the time and date of an approved tour.

HOW OFTEN CAN A GROUP TOUR THE WHITE HOUSE?

Groups are eligible to receive only **two** tours per calendar year. This is not a restriction on the number of requests from a particular office, but rather on the requesting group. Specifically, the requesting entity or group contact is limited to two tours (i.e., a professor may request one tour for his/her spring semester students and one for his/her fall semester students in one calendar year). For groups that are part of a larger organization (i.e. a scout troop), please note that it is the particular troop that is limited to two tours a year, and not the national entity. Since most groups plan an annual trip to Washington, this policy should not have a significant impact on groups. By limiting the number of tours per year, we hope to provide a fair opportunity for all requests and grant tours to a broad spectrum of groups.

CAN I MAKE CHANGES TO A REQUEST?

If there are any changes to the size of the group or date(s) requested after the original request is submitted, the original request must be cancelled and a new request submitted. This will change the order in which the request was received. Minor changes to contact information may be done online until two days before the tour.

SECURITY MEASURES

Congressional offices are responsible for relaying important security information between their constituents and the White House. After a group has been confirmed for a tour, the congressional office sponsoring the tour will be responsible for collecting security information from each of the attendees. All attendees ages 14 and above will be required to submit their name, date of birth, social security number and country of citizenship to their congressional office. Attendees under the age of 14 will only need to submit their name, date of birth and country of citizenship. Security information must be received at least five (5) business days prior to the tour date. Parties whose information is not submitted to the White House in the proper format and in this time frame will be subject to cancellation. It is the responsibility of the congressional office sponsoring the tour to ensure this information is submitted in a timely fashion. No changes or additions can be made to the security information after the deadline. Security information for Member tours should be submitted with the tour request. All attendees 15 years of age or older will be required to present photo identification with the information exactly matching the name previously submitted for clearance. Individuals whose identification does not exactly match the name or data cleared for entry may be denied admittance. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, the following: **handbags**, bookbags, backpacks, **purses**, food and beverages of any kind, strollers, **cameras**, video recorders or any type of recording device, tobacco products, personal grooming items (make up, hair brush or comb, lip or hand lotions, etc.), any pointed

objects (pens, knitting needles, etc.), aerosol containers, guns, ammunition, fireworks, electric stun guns, mace, martial arts weapons/devices, or knives of any size. Umbrellas, car keys and cell phones are permitted. The U.S. Secret Service reserves the right to prohibit any other personal items. Neither the White House nor the U.S. Secret Service will provide coat or package check facilities. Individuals who arrive with prohibited items will not be permitted to enter the White House. All necessary medications must be identified and remain in the custody of an adult chaperone or contact for the entire tour. All persons and items entering the White House will be screened through a security process. Individuals may be requested to consent to an interview or additional security procedures before they are admitted to the White House complex.

MOBILITY-IMPAIRED/WHEELCHAIRS

Please ask guests requiring the loan of a wheelchair to notify the officer at the Visitors Entrance upon arrival. Unfortunately, reservations are not possible. Visitors in wheelchairs, or with other mobility disabilities, use the same Visitors Entrance and are escorted by ramp from the Entrance level to the Ground floor, and by elevator from the Ground floor to the State floor.

HEARING-IMPAIRED

Tours for hearing-impaired groups of ten or more may be requested through one's Member of Congress. The Visitors Office TDD (telephone device for the deaf) is 202-456-2121.

VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Tours for visually-impaired groups of ten or more may be requested through one's Member of Congress. Guide animals are permitted in the White House.

PARKING

The closest Metro stations to the White House are Federal Triangle (blue and orange lines), Metro Center (blue, orange, and red lines), and McPherson Square (blue and orange lines). On-street parking is not available near the White House, and use of public transportation is strongly encouraged. Parking is available on **Upper East Executive Avenue** (between the East Wing and the Treasury Building, across from the Liberty Bell) for Members or spouses meeting guests on Member tours.

RESTROOMS

The nearest restrooms to the White House are in the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion (the park area south of the White House) and in the White House Visitor Center. Restrooms are not available at the White House.

WHITE HOUSE VISITOR CENTER

All tours are significantly enhanced with a stop by the White House Visitor Center at the southeast corner of 15th and E Streets. The Center is open seven days a week from 7:30 a.m.

until 4:00 p.m. and features many aspects of the White House, including its architecture, furnishings, first families, social events, and relations with the press and world leaders, as well as a thirty-minute video. The National Park Service at the White House Visitor Center is also available to provide your group with a variety of alternative experiences related to the White House. These include guided walks, talks, films and lectures.