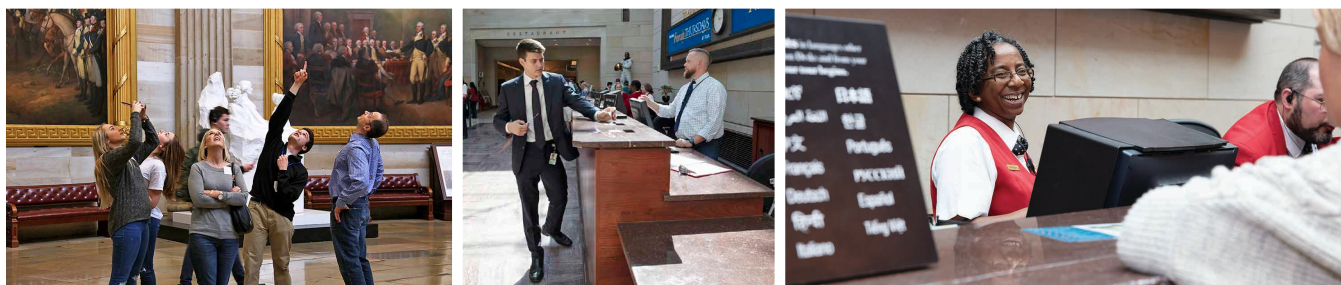


U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

TOUR REGULATIONS



2019

U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER TOUR REGULATIONS

APPROVED BY THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION AND THE
U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2019

1.0 AUTHORITY & PURPOSE

- 1.1 The U.S. Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) is an extension of the U.S. Capitol that welcomes large numbers of visitors to learn about the Constitution, Congress, and the history of the U.S. Capitol.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Capitol Visitor Center Act of 2008 (CVC Act) (PL 110-437), the CVC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has overall responsibility for the operation and management of services and activities within the CVC. The CVC Act authorizes the CEO to recommend, and the Architect of the Capitol to implement, necessary and appropriate regulations for the operation of the Capitol Guide Service, upon approval of the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the U.S. House Committee on House Administration. The statute specifically calls for “regulations with respect to tour routes and hours of operation, number of visitors per guide, staff-led tours, and non-law enforcement security and special event related support.” 2 USC §2242(b)(8)
- 1.3 These regulations were developed in consultation with and the approval of the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration.
- 1.4 These regulations do not apply to Capitol tours led by members of Congress or former members of Congress.
- 1.5 These regulations do not affect the exclusive jurisdiction of the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), the Capitol Police Board, the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, or the Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives to provide security of the Capitol, including the CVC. These regulations comply with current safety and security directives and will be updated to comply with any future directives.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 *Hours of Operation.* The period in which the CVC and its amenities are open to visitors and the Capitol is available for tours.

- 2.2 *Capitol Cafe.* The food service facility on the lower level of the CVC.
- 2.3 *Congressional Staff.* Any individual, including interns, with a valid ID issued by the House of Representatives or Senate ID services.
- 2.4 *Gift Shops.* The North and South Gift Shops on the upper level of the CVC.
- 2.5 *Tours of the Capitol.* Tours of the Capitol are provided by CVC staff or congressional staff along approved routes.
- 2.6 *Guide-led Tours.* Tours provided by CVC staff.
- 2.7 *Staff-led Tours.* Tours provided by congressional staff.
- 2.8 *Timed Tour Passes.* Time and date stamped passes distributed by the CVC.
- 2.9 *Reserved Tour Passes.* Timed tour passes reserved by congressional offices or the public using the online advance reservation system.
- 2.10 *Same-Day Tour Passes.* Timed tour passes obtained by the public and congressional staff without a reservation on the day of their visit.
- 2.11 *Public Walk-up Line.* Queue available to members of the public without reservations who wish to obtain same-day passes.
- 2.12 *Staff Walk-up Line.* Queue available only to congressional staff to obtain either reserved passes or same-day passes.
- 2.13 *Orientation Theaters.* Two theaters located in the CVC primarily used for showings of the Orientation Film prior to the start of tours. The entrances to the North and South Orientation Theaters are located in Emancipation Hall on the lower level of the CVC.
- 2.14 *Tour Routes.* Routes approved by the Capitol Police Board that CVC staff and congressional staff follow when leading tours of the Capitol.
- 2.15 *Accessibility.* The provision of tours, facilities, and materials that adhere to applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 2.16 *Galleries.* Balconies in the House and Senate chambers requiring a Gallery Pass obtained from a member's office.
- 2.17 *Capitol Tour Training.* A three and one-half hour training class offered to staff by the CVC to help them learn the tour route, ensure that their tours are accessible to

individuals with disabilities and help to ensure the safety of visitors.

3.0 HOURS OF OPERATION

- 3.1 All hours of operation are subject to change due to special events, inclement weather, or other operational adjustments.
- 3.2 *CVC General Operating Hours.* Monday through Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., including all federal holidays, except New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.
 - 3.2.1 *CVC Gift Shops.* Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 - 3.2.2 *Capitol Cafe.* Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Food service ends at 4 p.m.
 - 3.2.3 *Library of Congress Tunnel.* Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- 3.3 *Tour Hours.* The Capitol is available for tours Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. including on federal holidays except New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.
 - 3.3.1 The CVC coordinates the distribution of timed tour passes for both guided and staff-led tours.
 - 3.3.2 Timed tour passes are available to the public and congressional staff every 10-20 minutes, from 8:40 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.
 - 3.3.3 Additional timed tour passes are available for staff-led tours at 3:30 p.m. and 3:40 p.m.
 - 3.3.4 Congressional offices may also reserve timed tour passes for 8:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, March through August. These tours are guided.
 - 3.3.5 Timed tour passes for the Capitol shall be used within two hours after the start time that appears on the pass.
 - 3.3.6 All tours shall exit the Capitol no later than 4:30 p.m. The CVC shall consult with the Capitol Police Board and USCP regarding any exceptions to tour hours.

- 3.4 *CVC Events.* Congressional staff may enter the CVC no earlier than 7:30 a.m. for scheduled events. The public may enter the CVC no earlier than 8 a.m. to attend scheduled events. Events in CVC meeting spaces shall end no later than 10 p.m.
- 3.5 *After Hours Access.* The CVC closes to the public at 4:30 p.m. However, visitors with gallery passes and individuals on official business are authorized to be in the designated areas of the Capitol or in the CVC outside of general operating hours.
- 3.6 *Changes in Hours of Operations.* Notices regarding changes in operating hours shall be sent through a variety of mediums, including direct emails to reservation holders, social media, and the CVC's website.

4.0 ACCESS TO THE CVC AND THE U.S. CAPITOL

- 4.1 The public shall enter the CVC main entrance or be escorted by congressional staff through the Cannon or Russell tunnels.
- 4.2 Every individual entering the CVC main entrance shall go through security screening with their belongings as directed by USCP. Information regarding the prohibited items for the Capitol is available on the CVC website. *(See Attachment B)*
- 4.3 Eating and drinking are generally prohibited in all areas of the Capitol and CVC outside of offices, meeting spaces, and designated dining facilities.
- 4.4 Congressional staff may escort groups to the CVC via the Cannon or Russell tunnels, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 4.5 Visitors on a staff-led tour who access the Capitol through the Cannon or Russell tunnels shall go through a second security screening prior to entering the tunnel. The prohibited items list for the Capitol shall be enforced at that time. *(See Attachment B)*
- 4.6 Congressional staff shall stop at the designated tour desk in the respective tunnel to sign-in and receive destination badges to escort visitors to the CVC.
 - 4.6.1 CVC destination badges only provide access to the CVC and shall not be used for tours of the Capitol.
 - 4.6.2 CVC badges shall be returned at the North and South Information Desks prior to picking up timed tour passes.
- 4.7 Timed tour passes are required for all visitors participating in Capitol tours. Tour passes shall be displayed and visible to the USCP at all times.

- 4.8 Timed tour passes are required to view the Orientation Film at the designated time in the North and South Orientation Theaters.

5.0 RESERVING TOUR PASSES

- 5.1 Timed tour passes are reserved by congressional offices and the public through the CVC's online reservation system.
- 5.2 Congressional offices shall reserve passes for CVC guide-led tours and staff-led tours.
- 5.3 Three tour times are reserved for congressional offices. From March through August, an 8:30 a.m. tour time is available for congressional offices to reserve a CVC guide-led tour.
- 5.4 Throughout the year, a 3:30 p.m. and a 3:40 p.m. tour time are available for congressional offices to reserve timed passes or obtain same-day passes for staff-led tours only.
- 5.5 Reserved timed tour passes are issued from the North and South Information Desks in Emancipation Hall on the day of the tour prior to the time reserved.
- 5.6 If a reservation is not claimed by the time of the reservation, the unclaimed passes are distributed as same-day timed tour passes.

6.0 PUBLIC SAME-DAY PASSES

- 6.1 Members of the public may request same-day passes at the public walk-up line. The public walk-up line is located in Emancipation Hall.
- 6.2 All members of a group or party must be in the CVC before requesting or collecting passes. Only one person from each party or group should wait in the public walk-up line to request same-day passes.
- 6.3 There is no limit to the number of passes individuals may request. However, large groups requesting same-day passes may need to be divided into multiple tour times.
- 6.4 Upon exiting the public walk-up line, visitors are directed to the appropriate theater to watch the Orientation Film and be placed on a CVC guide-led tour.

7.0 STAFF SAME-DAY PASSES

- 7.1 Congressional staff may request same-day passes at the staff walk-up line located in Emancipation Hall. Congressional offices seeking same-day passes receive

priority, but due to the limited number of passes available, congressional offices and the public may have to wait to receive same-day passes, particularly during the peak visitation periods.

- 7.2 Congressional staff may request passes for their staff-led tour once all visitors going on the tour are in the CVC. Passes will not be issued prior to all visitors arriving inside the CVC.
- 7.3 Individual congressional staff may receive up to 15 same-day passes at a time.
- 7.4 Congressional staff may request more than 15 passes for larger groups. These requests will be added to a “groups list” for accommodation as soon as possible. These larger groups may be split between tour times due to the limited number of passes that become available.
- 7.5 Staff-led groups larger than 15 require additional staff for every increment of 15. If more than 15 visitors are going on a tour led by congressional staff the required number of congressional staff per 15 visitors shall be present to collect the passes for the large group.
- 7.6 If the large group will be going on a CVC guide-led tour, one congressional staff may collect the passes for the entire group.

8.0 CVC GUIDE-LED TOURS

- 8.1 CVC guide-led tours are available to congressional offices and the public by reservation through the CVC’s online reservation system, as well as by request for same-day passes.
- 8.2 CVC Visitor Guides generally lead tours for up to 50 people at a time. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of CVC management.
- 8.3 In addition to CVC guide-led tours, CVC non-uniformed staff displaying the CVC-issued “Official Program” badge may escort groups of more than 15 people into the Capitol for CVC programs.

9.0 CONGRESSIONAL STAFF-LED TOURS

- 9.1 Congressional staff with a valid ID may escort up to 15 people on tours of the Capitol.
- 9.2 Staff-led tours must follow the approved tour route and remain with their tour groups at all times while in the Capitol. (*See Attachment A*)

- 9.3 Congressional staff are encouraged to sign up for Capitol Tour Training to learn the tour route and to learn about the history of the Capitol and Congress and the artwork that represents the American story. Staff also receive information about critical safety and emergency evacuation procedures.
- 9.4 USCP may direct unescorted visitors, staff-led groups without valid timed tour passes, staff-led groups in areas off the approved tour route, and staff-led tour groups exceeding the 15-visitor limit out of the Capitol and back to the CVC.

10.0 ORIENTATION THEATER

- 10.1 Visitors begin their tours by viewing the film in the Orientation Theater. Visitors must queue in front of the appropriate theater on the lower level no later than 10 minutes after the time printed on the timed tour pass.
- 10.2 Congressional staff are encouraged to include the Orientation Film as part of their tour.
- 10.3 Congressional staff should notify CVC staff at the entrance to the theater line if the group will be a staff-led tour. Congressional staff are not required to watch the film with their group and may wait at the theater exit on the upper level of the CVC for their visitors.
- 10.4 Congressional staff planning to watch the film with their tour group need a tour pass for themselves to guarantee a seat in the theater.

11.0 TOUR ROUTE - GENERAL

- 11.1 Throughout the tour route, groups must keep all doorways and travel pathways clear to ensure members of Congress, staff, and individuals on official business can move safely and efficiently. Groups should also be respectful and quiet, particularly in areas in close proximity to working offices, such as the Office of the Speaker, Office of the Majority Leader, Office of the Minority Leader, Old Senate Chamber, and small Senate rotunda.
- 11.2 The standard route includes the Rotunda, National Statuary Hall, and the Crypt and, depending on the level of visitation, can include the Old Supreme Court Chamber and the Old Senate Chamber. Routes may be impacted by special events, construction, security, or congressional business. *(See Attachment A)*
- 11.3 Due to the limited space available for groups, CVC guide-led tours generally only expand their tour route to include the Old Supreme Court and Old Senate Chambers during periods of lower visitation, typically in the fall and winter.

11.3.1 The Old Supreme Court Chamber is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

11.3.2 The Old Senate Chamber is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

11.3.3 The Old Senate and Old Supreme Court Chambers may be closed during normal operating hours at the discretion of the Secretary of the Senate or USCP.

12.0 TOUR ROUTE - STANDARD ROUTE

12.1 Congressional staff and CVC staff are prohibited from leading tours in areas not included on the tour route, unless permission has been granted from the appropriate officials.

12.2 Following the Orientation Film, visitors exit the theater through the doors on the upper level. Visitors are assigned a CVC Visitor Guide before proceeding to the escalators, stairs or elevators to access the Capitol.

12.3 Congressional staff leading their own tours will collect their visitors and proceed up the escalator into the Crypt.

12.4 USCP located at the base of the escalators check to ensure timed tour passes are valid and staff-led group sizes are within set limits.

12.5 Elevators are available on the upper level of the CVC, the Crypt level, and the Rotunda level for visitors who cannot use the stairs.

12.6 From the Crypt, groups shall use the West Front staircase to reach the Rotunda (accessed by walking through the west archway and taking an immediate left to walk around to the base of the staircase).

12.7 Groups shall enter the Rotunda through the west archway.

12.8 Large CVC guide-led groups should gather close to the walls of the Rotunda, centered under one of the eight large paintings. Staff-led groups should gather toward the center of the Rotunda whenever possible.

12.9 The stanchioned pathway in the middle of the Rotunda is for official business only and should remain clear.

12.10 From the Rotunda, groups proceed to National Statuary Hall through the south archway.

- 12.11 Groups should remain to the right-hand side of the hallway and enter Statuary Hall through the door furthest to the right upon entering the room. The center door and the stanchioned pathway in the middle of Statuary Hall are for official business only.
- 12.12 All groups should move through Statuary Hall in a counter-clockwise path, making a complete circle to exit through the door furthest to the right when leaving the room.
- 12.13 From National Statuary Hall, groups must return to the Rotunda to exit the second floor. All groups should exit the Rotunda through the east archway and descend to the first floor via the East Front stairs.
- 12.14 Groups proceed back to the CVC via the down escalators to conclude their tours in the Capitol.

13.0 TOUR ROUTE - EXPANDED ROUTE

- 13.1 In addition to the standard route, the expanded route includes the Old Supreme Court Chamber and the Old Senate Chamber. From the Crypt, groups proceed to the Old Supreme Court Chamber through the north archway, staying to the right of the hallway, and turning into the first doorway to the right.
- 13.2 Tours take the two steps down into the Old Senate Vestibule before turning left into the Old Supreme Court Chamber.
- 13.3 Tours exit the chamber via the door leading to the Small Senate rotunda, proceeding around the right side to return to the Crypt.
- 13.4 Groups unable to use the stairs may access the Old Supreme Court Chamber via the ramp to the left of the elevators.
- 13.5 After leaving the Old Supreme Court Chamber, groups must use the West Front staircase to reach the Rotunda (accessed by walking through the west archway and taking an immediate left to walk around to the base of the staircase).
- 13.6 From the Rotunda, groups proceed to the Old Senate Chamber through the north archway, staying to the right of the small Senate rotunda.
- 13.7 After exiting the Old Senate Chamber, tour groups should return to the Rotunda by staying to the right of the small Senate rotunda.

14.0 THE BRUMIDI AND COX CORRIDORS

- 14.1 Congressional staff are permitted to include the Brumidi and the Cox Corridors as a part of staff-led tours. CVC staff may also include the Brumidi and the Cox Corridors for tours offered as special programming separate from the standard Capitol tour. If these corridors are to be included, tour groups must use low, indoor voices so as not to disrupt the daily operations of those offices located along these corridors. CVC and congressional staff should also stress that tour groups are not permitted to touch the walls of the corridors and should ensure their groups do not block doorways or hallways. *Note: The corridors are available to tours Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.*
- 14.2 It is highly recommended that congressional staff educate themselves on the historical significance and nature of these corridors prior to providing tours. Additional resources can be found at www.aoc.gov/art.

15.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- 15.1 The CVC collaborates with the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services (OCAS) to provide accessible materials and tours for individuals with disabilities.
- 15.2 Brochures in accessible formats, such as large print and Braille, are available at the North and South Information Desks.
- 15.3 The CVC collaborates with OCAS to loan devices with pre-recorded information to individuals needing American Sign Language interpretation or audio-descriptive tours.
- 15.4 The CVC makes wheelchairs available upon request at the North and South Coat Checks.

16.0 CONGRESSIONAL EVENTS

- 16.1 Routine CVC and tour operations may be suspended or altered due to congressional events.
- 16.2 When requested by the Capitol Police Board, the CVC staff provides wayfinding, informational, and other services not directly involving law enforcement in connection with congressional events. Services include assisting USCP with re-directing tours, official business, and congressional staff away from or into designated areas.

17.0 ACCESS TO HOUSE AND SENATE GALLERIES

- 17.1 Visitors can access the House and Senate Galleries without touring the Capitol.

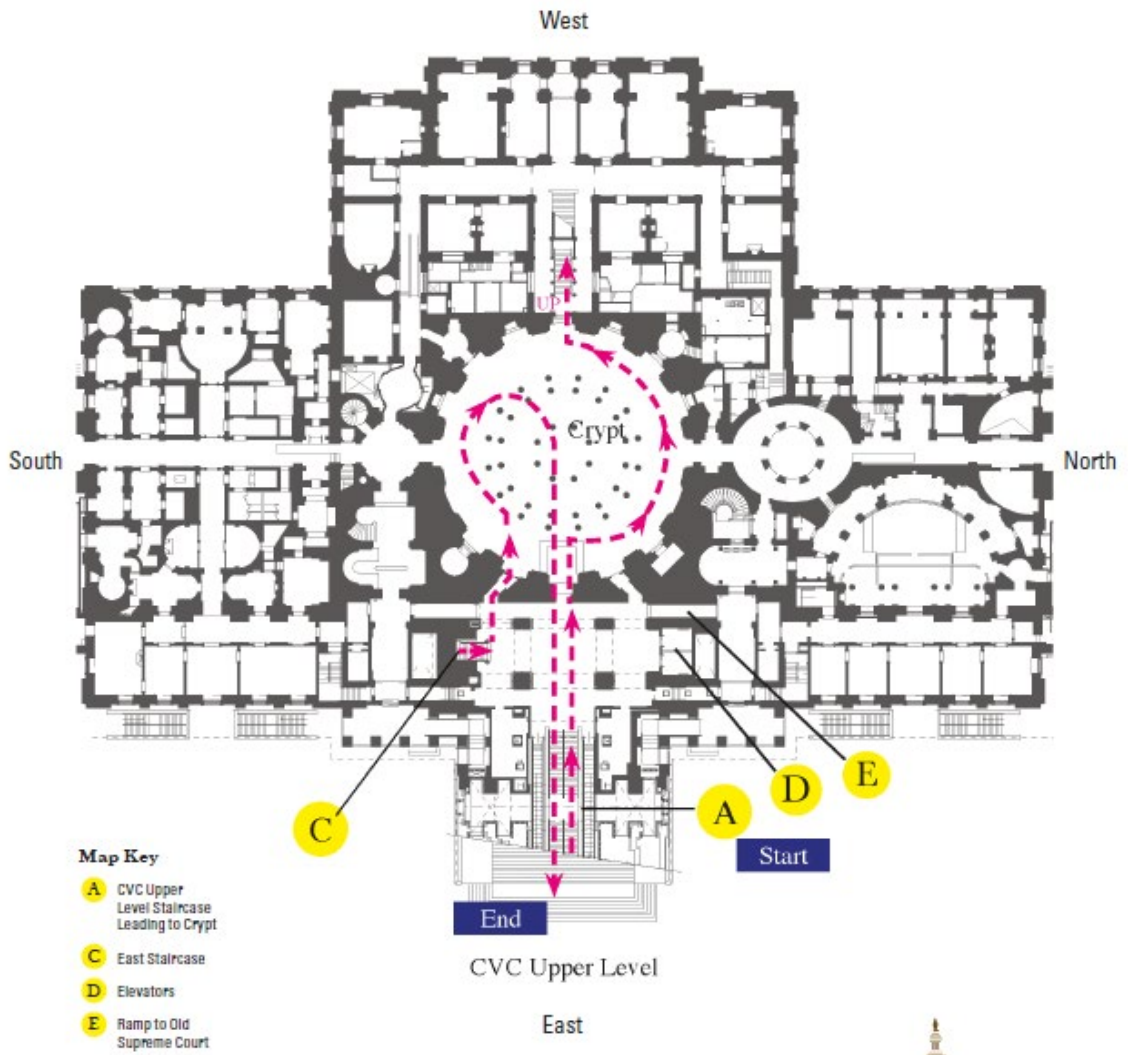
- 17.2 The galleries are not included on guide-led tours. Congressional staff may choose to include the galleries in staff-led tours. Access to the galleries is separate from the tour route and requires additional screening and compliance with an additional prohibited items list. (*See Attachment B*)
- 17.3 Separate passes are required to visit each gallery.
 - 17.3.1 Passes to visit the House Gallery or Senate Gallery are available to U.S. citizens through congressional offices.
 - 17.3.2 International guests may request passes from the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms Appointments Desks.
 - 17.3.3 The CVC does not distribute House or Senate Gallery passes to visitors.

U.S. CAPITOL TOUR ROUTE



U.S. CAPITOL TOUR ROUTE

First Floor

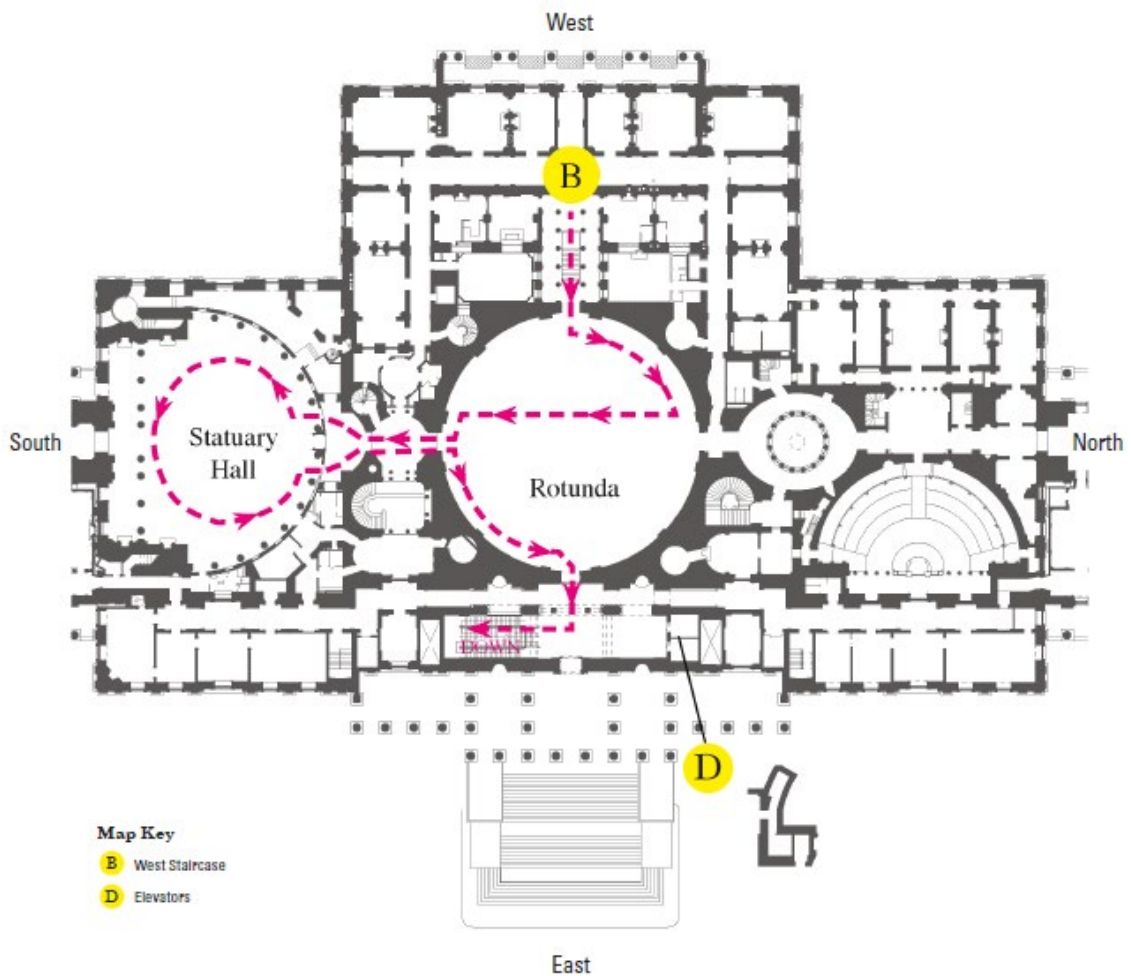


U.S. CAPITOL TOUR ROUTE



U.S. CAPITOL TOUR ROUTE

Second Floor





United States Capitol
Capitol Visitor Center
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-593-1816
www.visitthecapitol.gov

Attachment B

CAPITOL AND CVC PROHIBITED ITEMS

Before entering the Capitol Visitor Center, all visitors are screened by a magnetometer and all items that are permitted inside the building are screened by an x-ray device. The following items are strictly prohibited in the Capitol, including the Capitol Visitor Center:

- Liquid, including water
- Food or beverages of any kind, including fruit and unopened packaged food
- Aerosol containers
- Non-aerosol spray (Prescriptions for medical needs are permitted.)
- Any pointed object, *e.g.*, knitting needles and letter openers (Pens and pencils are permitted.)
- Any bag larger than 18" wide x 14" high x 8.5" deep
- Electric stun guns, martial arts weapons, or devices
- Guns, replica guns, ammunition, and fireworks
- Knives of any size
- Mace and pepper spray
- Razors and box cutters

The USCP are authorized to make exceptions if a prohibited item is determined to be necessary and required to serve childcare, medical, or other special needs. If you have questions, please call the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services at 202.224.4048.

HOUSE AND SENATE GALLERIES PROHIBITED ITEMS

The following restrictions apply only when visiting the House and Senate Galleries:

- Battery-operated electronic devices other than medical devices
- Cameras
- Cans and bottles
- Creams, lotions, or perfume
- Packages, briefcases, backpacks, or suitcases
- Strollers
- Video recorders or any type of recording device

Each gallery operates a check stand where visitors may store prohibited items while visiting that gallery.

Smoking is not permitted in the Capitol. Food and drink are only allowed in the Capitol Cafe.