



advancing workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch



## 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

Every Congress, safety specialists from the **Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR)** inspect **legislative branch offices** and facilities to ensure that they are free from known safety hazards under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHAct) and are accessible to visitors with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act Titles II and III (ADA), as applied by the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA).

### 1. What is the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights?

The OCWR (formerly Office of Compliance) is a non-partisan, neutral, and independent office established to administer the CAA and enforce safety, accessibility, and workplace rights laws in Congress, much like the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission do for the private sector and executive branch.

### 2. What are safety specialists looking for?

OCWR inspectors cover a range of safety areas—from making sure electrical wiring is protected to verifying emergency response plans are in place.

### 3. How can you prepare for the inspection?

The enclosed materials outline examples of the safety and accessibility areas of inspection.

If you need help addressing an issue, contact:

House Service Center at 202-225-4141 or  
Senate Service Center at 202-224-3141

### 4. What happens if a violation is found?

Problems identified during inspections are raised by the OCWR to the Architect of the Capitol and House and Senate safety staff members. Together, they will create a plan to correct the problems.

### 5. What happens if the office passes inspection?

The OCWR has presented Safety Recognition Awards to Members of Congress who have maintained hazard-free workplaces that were accessible to visitors with disabilities. The OCWR also requires Members' offices to complete a brief self-certification form for their district and state offices to earn the Safety Recognition Award. This self-certification is voluntary, and is not required by the CAA.

The awards ceremony for the 116th Congress is planned for 2021. We hope to see you then!

Please contact the OCWR if you have any questions.

