



# Guide to **Good Engagement** for the Engineering Profession

**Bridging Government and Engineers**



## Table of Contents

---

1.   Introduction .....	3
2.   Important Acts to Know .....	4
Things You Should Know About Lobbying.....	4
Provincial Lobbying .....	5
3.   Getting Engaged .....	6
The importance of attending events in your community.....	6
Resources to find events and times to schedule meeting .....	6
Tips on scheduling meetings and inviting MPs to events.....	7
Tips on letter writing .....	7
Tips on letter to the editors, editorials and op-ed .....	7
4.   Tools and Templates.....	9
Pre-Meeting Checklist .....	9
Engineers Canada Feedback Form .....	10

# 1. | Introduction

---

The goal of this publication is to help encourage professional engineers and all members of the engineering profession to get involved in the politics and public policy of this country at any and every level.

The guide will explain who we are and why it is so important to get involved and the important contributions engineers can make. We will provide examples of engineers who have gotten involved at various levels, it will cover some of the important laws to take note of and finally tips and strategies to most effectively engage policy makers.

## **Engineers Canada**

Engineers Canada is the national organization of the provincial and territorial associations that regulate the practice of engineering in Canada and license the country's 280,000 members of the engineering profession. Engineering is a self-regulated profession.

Engineers Canada exists to support the provincial and territorial engineering regulatory bodies. Together, we work to advance the profession in the public interest.

Engineers Canada has national position statements on key issues relating to the public interest, including infrastructure, labour mobility and regulating the profession. These are consensus positions of the regulatory bodies.

## **Why is it important for engineers to be involved?**

As an engineer, you are a professional with expertise who is accountable not only to the public, but to your profession as a whole. One of the guiding principles of engineering is ensuring public safety. There are far more ways to protect the public other than resilient infrastructure and internet firewalls. Getting involved in your community, in politics or in policy is a positive way to contribute to bettering Canadians' safety and quality of life.

## **Who are some engineers who are engaged**

There are some excellent examples of engineers who are engaged in public policy or politics at many levels. Below is a quote from Diane Freeman, FEC, P.Eng., Municipal Counsellor for the city Waterloo, Ontario, and candidate for the New Democratic Party of Canada in the 2015 federal elections, about the importance to get involved as an engineer.

“The issues that face Governments are complex and require the kind of innovative, analytical, and problem-solving skills that engineers are uniquely trained to use. As engineers we are called to serve the public. It is no doubt easier to sit on the sidelines and criticize but if we want to affect meaningful change then we need to engage policy-makers, provide meaningful comments on policy and inform good decision making that will help Canada to be a leader at home and in the global economy.”

## 2. | Important Acts to Know

---

Lobbying is defined as the process in which individuals and groups articulate their interests and press governmental decision makers in order to influence public policy. Any citizen who attempts to influence a public policy decision is engaged in lobbying and may be considered a lobbyist, but generally lobbyists are thought of as individuals who “for compensation” assist others to represent their concerns to government.

You only need to register as a lobbyist if you are paid to lobby. Considering most of you will be engaging in lobbying on a volunteer basis you will not have to register. That said, many of the guidelines and best practices followed by lobbyists can be helpful to volunteers and the public as well. However, if you do spend more than 20% of your working week being paid to lobby then you must register. If you are unsure, the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada has a very helpful tool: *Are You Required to Register in the Federal Registry of Lobbyists?*

The most important act to know when attending meetings with federal members of Parliament and any government officials is the *Lobbying Act* (the Act). The entire Act can be read here. Below are ten things you should know about lobbying.

### Things You Should Know About Lobbying

\*\*Taken from “A Practical Guide for Federal Public Office Holders” by the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada (<http://www.ocl-cal.gc.ca/eic/site/012.nsf/eng/00403.html>)

### Lobbying is Legitimate

Individuals, groups or companies have a right to communicate with elected or appointed government officials. The purpose of the *Lobbying Act* is to ensure transparency and accountability in the lobbying of federal public office holders in order to contribute to increasing Canadians’ confidence in the integrity of the government decision-making process.

### The Lobbying Act (the Act)

The preamble of the Act sets out four principles:

- Free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest;
- Lobbying of public office holders is a legitimate activity;
- It is desirable that public office holders and the public be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities;
- A system for the registration of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government.

### The Lobbyists’ Code of Conduct (the Code)

The Code is based on the same four principles of the Act. Three over-riding principles in the Code require lobbyists to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty; to be open and frank about their lobbying activities; and to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. Under the Code, lobbyists

are also required to follow eight rules regarding their conduct.

## **What is Lobbying**

Lobbying is communicating, with public office holders, for payment with regard to:

- the making, developing or amending of federal legislative proposals, bills or resolutions, regulations, policies or programs;
- the awarding of federal grants, contributions or other financial benefits; and
- in the case of consultant lobbyists, the awarding of a federal government contract and arranging a meeting between their client and a public office holder.

## **Public Office Holders (POHs) and Designated Public Office Holders (DPOHs)**

Federal public office holders are virtually any employee of the federal government, whether elected or appointed. This broad category includes Members of Parliament, Senators, parliamentary staff, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and federal government employees.

The Lobbying Act and its related regulations also created a sub-category of public office holders, namely the designated public office holders. This category includes Members of Parliament, Senators, ministers, ministers of state, staff working in the office of ministers, ministers of state and the Leader of the Opposition in the House and in the Senate

who were appointed pursuant to subsection 128(1) of the Public Service Employment Act, deputy ministers, associate and assistant deputy ministers, as well as any individual who occupies a position that has been designated by regulation.

When an oral and arranged communication with a DPOH takes place, lobbyists are required to file a monthly communication report. The Commissioner of Lobbying may ask a DPOH to confirm the accuracy of a monthly communication report. As a best practice, DPOHs may wish to keep records of these meetings in the event the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying (OCL) requests confirmation of the information reported by lobbyists.

## **Provincial Lobbying**

There are currently only six provinces with their own provincial lobbying law. You can find a link to each of them below:

### **Alberta**

[Lobbyists Act](#)  
[Guide to Lobbyists Act](#)

### **British Columbia**

[Lobbyists Registration Act](#)  
[Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists](#)

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

[Lobbyist Registration Act](#)  
[Registry of Lobbyists Information](#)

## Nova Scotia

[Lobbyists' Registration Act](#)

[Registry of Lobbyists](#)

## Ontario

[Lobbyists Registration Act](#)

[Office of the Integrity Commissioner](#)

## Quebec

[Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Act](#)

[Code of Conduct for Lobbyists](#)

[Commissaire au Lobbyisme](#)

Never hesitate to contact your provincial or territorial regulatory body if you have any questions. Contact information can be found here: <http://www.engineerscanada.ca/constituent-associations>

## 3. | Getting Engaged

---

### Community Engagement

#### The importance of attending events in your community

It is important for engineers to attend events such as town halls, discussions, political presentations and more to be able to offer their expertise and ask the difficult questions. Once again, as an engineer you are a well-respected expert and sharing your expertise is vital to improving the quality of life in your community.

#### Resources to find events and times to schedule meeting

There are many ways to find events, debates, town halls and ideal times to schedule meetings. A good first step is to sign up to your local MP or MPP's newsletter and email mailing list. Following them on social media can also really help you stay informed. Another great tool is checking their website regularly. This can also be done for any candidates running to be elected.

Monitoring political party websites and subscribing to their mailing list is another way to stay informed and know of upcoming events.

City Hall and community centers are often hubs for policy makers to engage with their community. These are two very valuable places to follow and stay in contact with when looking to participate in municipal and grass roots activities. Monitoring and contacting local counsellors is also a very good way to get engaged with decisions that will directly affect your community.

Newspapers, magazine and political websites are other excellent resources. Most will have community calendars, calendar of events or listings of opportunities to engage.

Your provincial or territorial engineering regulatory body is another source of events and resources to get engaged. Many of them have committee or taskforces that lobby at the provincial level. Some of them also host regular events where they invite policy makers.

If there is a specific topic you are interested in, local advocacy groups would also be an excellent way to get involved. These groups host events and run campaigns lobbying for their interests. These would be very helpful ways to get involved in your community and influence policy makers on a subject you are passionate about.

### **Tips on scheduling meetings and inviting MPs to events**

The first step is to remember that they are just people like you and me. Don't be afraid or intimidated by them.

Call the office or send an email and request to meet as a constituent and an expert. It is always important to be polite and straight forward. The most successful meeting requests will be about issues important to the community and the country. Being concerned about something that affects the riding will carry much weight. Remember you are not just an engineer and an expert, but you are a voter.

It is important to be understanding and realistic in your scheduling request. Do mention the times that are ideal for you in the request, but be flexible. Public officials have hectic schedules and a lot of people to meet. Your meeting may only be 15 to 30 minutes, or it may last well over an hour depending on the member of Parliament and the topic.

Another great strategy is attending event you know will be attended by politicians and introduce yourself to them. Once you have made that face-to-face connection it is much easier to call or email and mention that you would love to follow up or go more in-depth in person.

### **Tips on letter writing**

Writing letters to policy makers is another very good way to get your message heard. Letters are also a way to open doors to meetings and attending events. Here are some tips to effective letter writing.

Ensure you use the proper titles and format when writing to politicians. The standards can be found here: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1359143306677/1373983284228>

Send the letter to the constituency office or departmental office and not their Parliament Hill office or provincial legislature. It is often more effective to connect directly with them through the constituency as that is ultimately where you will want to meet with them. Always be polite but straightforward. Take the time to introduce yourself and identify your expertise, but keep it short and simple.

Explain anything technical in a way a non-engineer would understand. They are not the expert, you are.

Specifically and very clearly identify what you are requesting from them. Whether it is to schedule a meeting, amend a policy or attend an event, do not bury your request at the end of the letter.

### **Tips on letter to the editors, editorials and op-ed**

Your local and community newspapers are excellent tools to share your expertise and views on a matter of public safety or interest.

The first step is to find a subject to write about that affects your community, province or country. Voicing

your opinion and expertise through these channels is a great way to highlight an issue for your neighbours and fellow citizens.

The next step is heading to the publications' website and finding out the guidelines for letters to the editors, editorials or op-eds. Many publications will have the information directly on their website, but if not just give their office a call. It is very important to follow the guidelines as even writing a few words over the limit could have them ignore your piece.

Lastly, ensure your tone is polite, your language is understandable by the broader public and that you have mentioned that you are an engineer in the community.

## **Do's and Don'ts in Community Engagement**

### **Do:**

- Be polite to political officials and their staff at all times.
- Be flexible, they are very busy.
- Be persistent, if at first you don't secure a meeting, try and try again.
- Be visible, attend events, schedule meetings, and voice your concerns.
- Respect their schedule and be timely.
- Be informative and share your expertise.
- Explain technical things in a way that non-engineers can understand.
- Always follow up after your meeting, either via email or mail.

### **Don't:**

- Don't be intimidated or scared to talk to politicians, they are just people like you.
- Don't expect concrete answers or solutions. If you get them that is a bonus.
- Don't overwhelm them. There is a line between persistence and overwhelming.
- Don't be disrespectful at any time.
- Don't be overly technical.

## 4. | Tools and Templates

---

### Pre-Meeting Checklist

- Confirm date, time and location
- Review material you will be discussing
- Review *Guide to Good Engagement*
- Have copies of printed material to handout and to reference
- Contact your provincial regulator or engineers Canada for material
- Know the member's role and portfolio(s)
- Plan to arrive 15 minutes before the meeting
- Dress professionally

## Engineers Canada Feedback Form

**Your Name:**

**Date/Time:**

**Location:**

**Meeting with:**

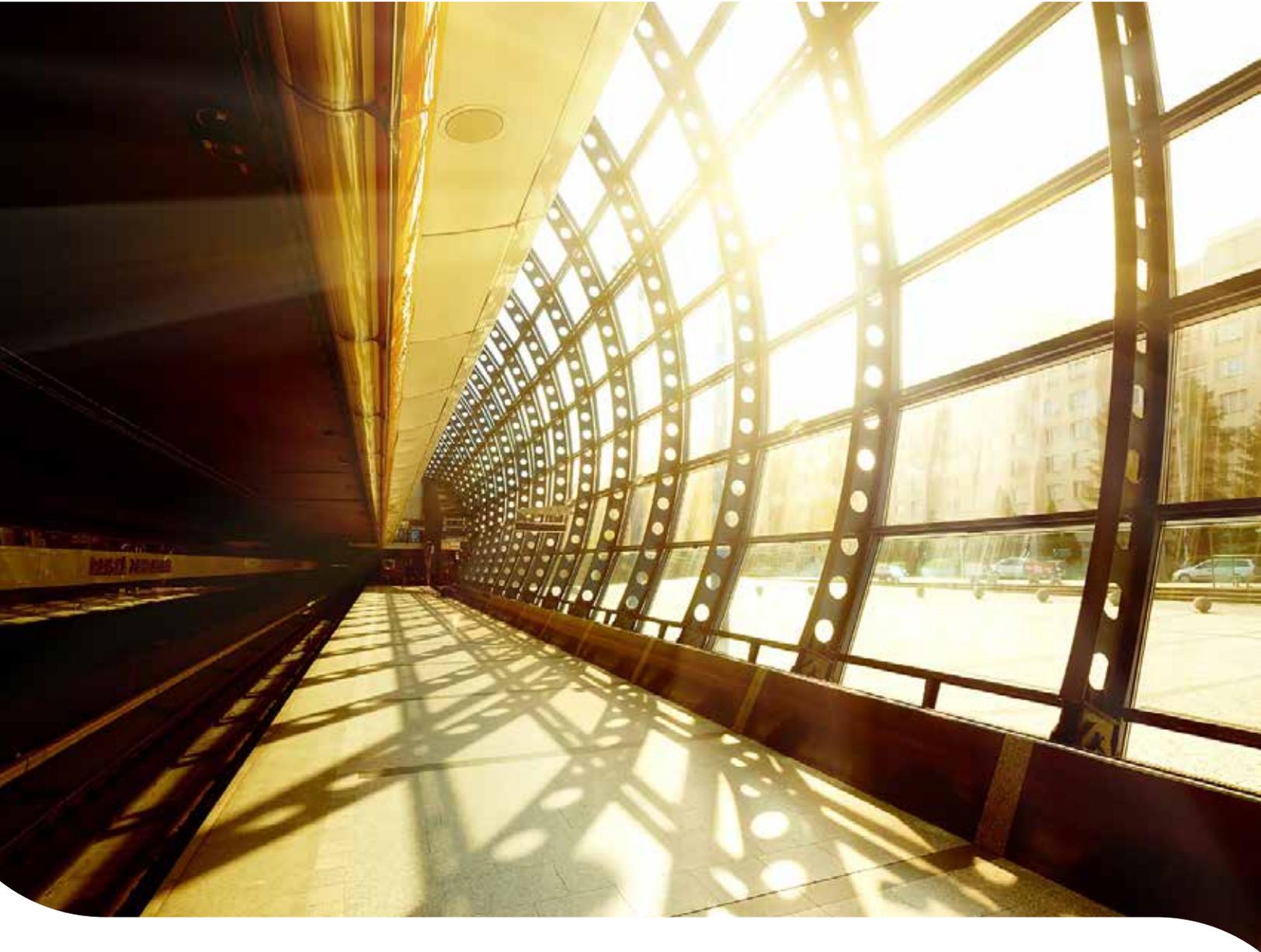
**Overall Tone: Positive ( ) Negative ( )**

**Key Points Discussed:**

**Follow-up/Questions/More Information Requested:**

**Commitments made/Deliverables promised:**

**Photo Taken? If yes share on social media and tag the person you met with**



## **Engineers Canada**

1100 - 180 Elgin St., Ottawa, ON  
K2P 2K3 Canada  
(613) 232-2474  
[communications@engineerscanada.ca](mailto:communications@engineerscanada.ca)  
[www.engineerscanada.ca](http://www.engineerscanada.ca)