

How to Connect to the Legislature (and Why It's Important)



SAFE-D
Last Monday Webinar
November 29, 2021



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1

Meet the Panel

- John Carlton
 - The Carlton Law Firm, PLLC
 - SAFE-D General and Legislative Counsel (2000-current)
 - Represents ESDs across Texas as General and Special Counsel
- Jaime Capelo
 - Capelo Law Firm
 - Legislative Advocacy on Health Care Policy



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BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS



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The “Goal”

- Have a close interactive relationship with your key Legislators.
- The Legislator must feel like you are invested in the success of the Legislator and not just using the relationship to accomplish your own goals.
- Developing a friendship is the ultimate measure of success.



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The “Relationship”

- **Definition:**
 - The relationship between two people or groups is the way in which they feel and behave toward each other.
- **Develop a relationship based on more than just the “Ask”**
- **Dedicate regular time and attention to the relationship**



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Who makes contact?

- **Attributes to Maximize Success**
 - **Social Awareness**
 - Listens, reads the room, observes
 - **Political Awareness**
 - Current climate and activities
 - **ESD Awareness**
 - Challenges and successes of ESD
 - **Community Awareness**
 - Active in community events



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First Steps

- Write letter or email to your Legislator (introduce yourself)
 - Ask for opportunity to meet
 - invite the Legislator to lunch, coffee, social event, fire department activity, Christmas Party (group, hospital or family)
 - *SAFE-D can help*
- Be persistent.
- Make in person visit to District office to ask for meeting.



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First Contact

- Give Personal History
 - Who, What, Where, Why
 - Community ties
- Ask About Legislator's Personal History
- Provide ESD "work" background
 - *SAFE-D can help with this*
 - key facts about your ESD and your role
- **DO NOT ASK** for Legislator's help
- **ASK** what you can do for Legislator
- **PROVIDE** personal contact information and ...
- **COMMIT** to follow up with Legislator



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After the First Contact

- January:
 - Invite your Legislator to lunch
- February:
 - Send your Legislator a pertinent news article
- March:
 - Invite your Legislator to your board meeting
- April:
 - Invite your Legislator on a tour of your station(s)
- May:
 - Invite your Legislator to a group event that you are a part of:
 - end of school event, Kiwanis, etc.
- June:
 - Invite to lunch again



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After the First Contact

- July:
 - Invite Legislator to 4th of July activities
- August:
 - Invite Legislator to National Night Out Activities
- September:
 - Invite Legislator to have breakfast/lunch in the Station
- October:
 - Invite to your Stations/Events for Fire Prevention Week
- November:
 - Send another pertinent news article or report
- December:
 - Invite Legislator to Christmas/Holiday Party and send a Christmas/Holiday card



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After the First Contact

- **Bonus Activities!**
 - Send birthday card and invite to lunch
 - Invite to sporting events
 - Invite to speaking possibilities
 - Invite to small dinner or social events that spouses are included in
 - Invite to church
 - Invite to fishing, hunting, etc.



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Ongoing Efforts

- **Maintain regular contact with Legislator**
 - Common social activities, hobbies, etc.
- **SAFE-D Legislative Task Force Participation**
- **Keep up with current events and ESD issues**
 - SAFE-D will provide information and list of recommended activities



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*Online Resource for
Legislative Information*

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>

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Questions?

www.safe-d.org

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14