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District of Columbia Laws and Rules for Engineers

by

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Examination

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District of Columbia Code

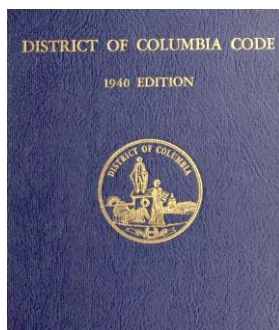
The District of Columbia, often referred to as Washington D.C., is a portion of the territory of the United States ceded by the State of Maryland for the permanent seat of government of the United States. See area in white on the map on the right. The District of Columbia includes a portion of the Potomac River and associated islands in its course through the District.

The U.S. Constitution dictates that the federal district be under the jurisdiction of the US Congress. The District of Columbia operates like a state while also performing functions of a city and a county.



The *Council of the District of Columbia* passes laws that make up the *District of Columbia Code*. The Council has 13 members, including a Chairman and at least one member from each of the District's eight wards.

A proposed law, or bill, is introduced in the Council and then referred to a committee. The committee decides if the bill should move forward and may propose amendments. If the bill passes through the committee, it returns to the Council for discussion and a vote. The Mayor reviews passed bills and may approve or veto them.



The U.S. Congress must also approve all legislation passed by the Council before it can take effect. Congress also has the authority to modify or overturn DC legislation.

The *District of Columbia Code* (also called *District of Columbia Official Code* and *Code of the District of Columbia*) is cited as D.C. Code or D.C. Official Code.

See the “Helpful Resources” section for the website addresses with the latest laws, rules, and Board information. The laws and rules in this course are current as of November 2024.



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Laws of the Board

The District of Columbia Code is divided into dozens of titles. Laws with relevance to engineering are under Division VIII, Title 47, Chapter 28, Subchapter I-B, Part J, which is cited as D.C. Code 47-2853.131 to 133, and informally called the “Laws of the Board” (along with Part H – Land Surveyors). The organization is as follows:

District of Columbia Code

- Division VIII: General Laws
 - Title 47: Taxation, Licensing, Permits, Assessments, and Fees
 - Chapter 28: General License Law
 - Subchapter I-B: Non-Health Related Occupations and Professions Licensure
 - Part J: Professional Engineers
 - Sections: 131, 132 & 133

Subchapter I-B covers various professions and is referred to as the “Non-Health Related Occupations and Professions Licensure Act of 1998”. There are general laws in Subchapter I-B with limited relevance to the practice of engineering.

The Laws of the Board gives authority to the *District of Columbia Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors* (Board) to enact the laws and manage licensing. The following is the contents with **bold** sections being of particular importance for practicing professional engineers.

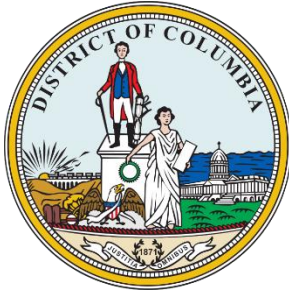
D.C. Code 47-2853.131 to 133: Professional Engineers

- § 47–2853.131. Scope of practice for engineers
- § 47–2853.132. Eligibility requirements
- § 47–2853.133. Certain representations prohibited



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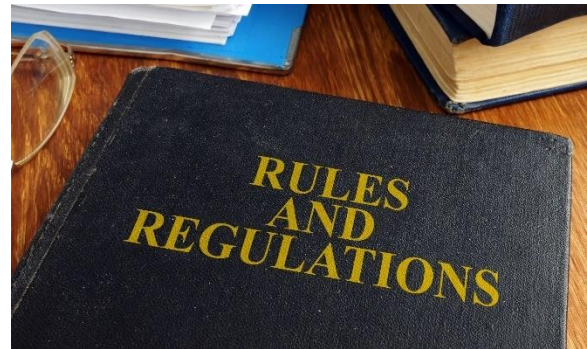
District of Columbia Municipal Regulations



The D.C. Code is high-level and lack details required for regulating licensing of engineers. The D.C. Code delegates agencies such as the Board to manage the implementation of laws and to create additional rules and regulations that complement the laws. The compilation of agency regulations is called the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations* and is normally cited as DCMR. The regulations are enforceable.

Recently proposed and adopted rules are published twice each month in the District of Columbia Register.

The District of Columbia Municipal Regulations is grouped into titles and chapters representing different agencies (departments, divisions, districts, boards, councils, authorities, and commissions). Professional engineering is under Title 17, Chapter 17-15. This is cited as DCMR 17-15, and referred to as “Rules of the Board” in this course.



The organization is as follows:

DCMR

- Title 17: Business, Occupations, and Professionals
 - Chapter 17-15: Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors
 - Section/Rule: 1500 to 1599
 - Paragraph: Various



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Rules of the Board

DCMR 17-15 is known as the “Rules of the Board”. It covers the professional engineering and a few other professions. The following are the contents with sections in **bold** of particular importance for practicing professional engineers.

DCMR 17-15 - Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

Rule 17-1500 - INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 17-1501 - RESERVED

Rule 17-1502 - ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Rule 17-1503 - APPLICATIONS

Rule 17-1504 - APPLICATIONS FROM FOREIGN APPLICANTS AND
 PERSONS WITH DEGREES FROM FOREIGN SCHOOLS

Rule 17-1505 - APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF APPLICATIONS

Rule 17-1506 - RECONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

Rule 17-1507 - FEES

Rule 17-1508 - EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Rule 17-1509 - EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Rule 17-1510 - REFERENCES

Rule 17-1511 - EXAMINATIONS

Rule 17-1512 - CLASSIFICATIONS AND DISCIPLINES OF ENGINEERING AND LAND SURVEYING

Rule 17-1513 - LICENSE EXPIRATION AND RENEWAL

Rule 17-1514 - INACTIVE LICENSURE STATUS

Rule 17-1515 - REINSTATEMENT OF AN EXPIRED LICENSE

Rule 17-1516 - SEALS

Rule 17-1517 - PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Rule 17-1518 - CONDUCT OF ADVERTISING

Rule 17-1519 - COMPLIANCE

Rule 17-1520 - DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS, NOTICE, AND HEARING

Rule 17-1521 - CONDUCT OF HEARINGS

Rule 17-1522 - REINSTATEMENT OF LICENSURE OR CERTIFICATION
 AFTER REVOCATION

Rule 17-1523 - CONFLICT AND BIAS

Rule 17-1524 - PUBLIC INQUIRIES AND COMMENTS

Rule 17-1525 - DECLARATORY ORDERS



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**Rule 17-1526 - CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL
OR REINSTATEMENT OF A LICENSE**

Rule 17-1527 - APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**Rule 17-1528 - CONTINUING EDUCATION: RECORDKEEPING AND AUDIT
REQUIREMENTS**

Rule 17-1599 - DEFINITIONS



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D.C. Board



The agency for professional engineering is the *District of Columbia Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors* (Board). The Board is under the District of Columbia Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP).

The Board has the authority to manage and further regulate professional engineering. The Board can propose modifications to Rules of the Board (DCMR 17-15). The Board regulates individuals and firms for the following professions:

- Professional Engineers
- Professional Land Surveyors

The board website < <https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1617401> > contains a variety of topics.



Board of Professional Engineers

Engineers Week 2025 will be **February 18-25th**. E-Week was founded in 1951 by the National Society Of Professional Engineers dedicated to ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce by increasing understanding of and interest in engineering and technology careers. (NSPE) Following is the link <https://discovere.org/programs/engineers-week/> for a list of the week's activities.

General Information	+
Applicant	+
Licensee	+
Consumer	+
Calendar	+
Contact Us	+



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Practice of Professional Engineering

The following is a copy-paste of the relevant laws and rules that help define the practice of professional engineering:

Laws of the Board

§ 47–2853.131. Scope of practice for engineers.

For the purposes of this part, the term “practice of engineering” means the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences and the methods of engineering analysis and design in the performance of services and creative work including consultation, investigation, expert technical testimony, evaluation, planning, design and design coordination of engineering works and systems, planning the use of land and water, performing engineering surveys and studies, and the review of construction for the purpose of monitoring compliance with drawings and specifications, in connection with any utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, work systems, projects, and industrial or consumer products, or equipment of a control systems, communications, mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, or thermal nature, that may involve safeguarding life, health, or property, and including such other professional services as may be necessary to the planning, progress, and completion of any engineering services.

§ 47–2853.133. Certain representations prohibited.

- (a) Unless licensed pursuant to § 47-2853.132, no person shall:
- (1) Undertake responsible charge for the practice of engineering;
 - (2) Use the title "professional engineer," "registered engineer," "engineer," or "engineering design" or display or use any words, letters, figures, titles, signs, cards, advertisements, or any other symbols or devices indicating or tending to indicate that the person is a licensed engineer or professional engineer; except, that this subparagraph shall not apply to a person who uses the title "professional engineer" or "registered engineer" or otherwise indicates the person is a licensed engineer or professional engineer in accordance with the laws of another jurisdiction in which the person is licensed as a professional engineer and in good standing, so long as the use or indication also indicates the jurisdiction in which the person is licensed; except also, that any person any person may use the title "engineering aide," "engineering assistant," "engineering technician," or "engineering technologist"; or



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(3) Engage directly in the practice of engineering in the District; except, that this paragraph shall not apply to a person acting as a consultant, officer, or employee of the District government or an independent agency of the District of Columbia, or to a graduate of a program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology or another accreditation entity that is acceptable to the Board of Professional Engineers while under the responsible charge of a professional engineer licensed pursuant to § 47-2853.132.

(b) A professional engineer under whose charge an individual is acting pursuant to subsection (a)(3) of this section shall refrain from affixing the professional engineer's signature to any plans or documents not prepared under the professional engineer's direction or control.

Rules of the Board

1500.1

In order to safeguard life, health, and property, and promote the public welfare, the practice of engineering and/or land surveying in the District of Columbia is hereby declared to be subject to regulation in the public interest. It is further declared to be a matter of public interest and concern that the professions of engineering and land surveying merit and receive the confidence of the public and that only qualified persons be permitted to engage in the practice of engineering and land surveying. All provisions of this chapter relating to the practice of engineering and land surveying shall be construed in accordance with this declaration of policy.

1500.2

The adopted rules of procedure shall be consistent with District of Columbia law.

1500.3

Rules of procedure adopted by the Board of Professional Engineering (the Board) shall be binding upon persons licensed as Professional Engineers or Land Surveyors pursuant to the Non-Health Related Occupations and Professions Licensure Act of 1998, effective April 20, 1999, (D.C. Law 12-261; D.C. Official Code § 47-2853.01 et seq.) ("the Act").



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1500.4

17 DCMR Chapter 33 shall supplement this Chapter. In the event of a conflict between 17 DCMR Chapter 33 and this Chapter or the Act, this Chapter and the Act shall control.

1513.1

Licenses are valid for two (2) years and expire on the 31st day of August of each even numbered year. The Board shall follow the following procedure when mailing renewal notices to licensees:

- (a) The Board shall mail, or send via electronic means, a renewal notice to the last known physical address or email address of every person licensed by the Board at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the license cycle.
- (b) Subject to subparagraph (c) of this section, the renewal application and fees must be received by the Board prior to the expiration date of the license.
- (c) A holder of a license who fails to renew before the expiration date may renew the license within sixty (60) days after expiration upon paying the required late fee. Upon renewal, the holder shall be deemed to have possessed a valid license during the period between the expiration of the license and its renewal.

1513.2

If a holder of a license fails to renew the license within sixty (60) days after its expiration, the license shall be deemed to have lapsed on the date of expiration and the holder shall be required to apply for reinstatement of the expired license and pay the required reinstatement fee.

1513.3

The responsibility for the timely renewal of a licensee's license rests solely with the individual licensee.

1514.1

A licensee may apply for inactive status by submitting a completed inactive status application and paying the appropriate inactive status fee.

1514.2



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A person who is on inactive status shall not be required to pay the biennial renewal fee and shall not practice, offer to practice, or attempt to practice as a Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor in the District.

1514.3

A person may remain on inactive status for up to five (5) years.

1514.4

A person on inactive status may reactivate his or her license at any time within five (5) years by notifying the Board and by paying appropriate fees and by meeting all requirements of the Board for license renewal including the demonstration of continuing professional competency as a condition of reinstatement.

1514.5

If a person seeking to return to active status has been on inactive status for five (5) years or more, that person shall be considered a new applicant and shall be required to meet all current requirements for licensure, unless the Board in its discretion determines that the failure to renew within the five (5) year inactive period was due to reasonable cause or excusable neglect.

1514.6

In the event an inactive licensee does not maintain a current license in any jurisdiction for the five (5) years prior to requesting reinstatement, that person will be required to take the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) examination or the Principles and Practice of Land Surveying (PLS) and the District of Columbia specific examination.

1599.1

As used in this chapter, the following terms have the meaning ascribed:

Board - The District of Columbia Board of Professional Engineering.

Department - Unless otherwise defined, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Digital Signature - An electronic authentication process attached to or logically associated with an electronic document utilizing technology that meets the National



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Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards for security and privacy to provide the same degree of assurance and certainty as the traditional "paper and ink" method of signatures.

Director - The Director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Engineering -

(a)Engineer - A person who is qualified to practice engineering by reason of special knowledge and use of the mathematical, physical, and engineering sciences and the principles and methods of engineering analysis and design, acquired by engineering education and engineering experience.

(b)Professional Engineer - A person who has been duly licensed as a professional engineer by the Board. The Board may designate a professional engineer, based on education, experience, and examination, as being licensed in a specific discipline or branch of engineering signifying the area in which the engineer has demonstrated competence.

(c)Engineer Intern - A person who has met the educational requirements, passed the required examination, and has been granted certification as an engineer intern or engineer-in-training by the Board, or a similar authority of another jurisdiction.

(d)Practice of Engineering - Any service or creative work, the adequate performance of which requires engineering education, training, and experience in the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical, and engineering sciences, provided in consultation, investigation, expert technical testimony, evaluation, planning, design and design coordination of engineering works and systems, planning the use of land, air, and water, teaching advanced engineering subjects, performing engineering surveys and studies, and the review of construction for the purpose of monitoring compliance with drawings and specifications, any of which embraces such services or work, either public or private, in connection with any utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, work systems, projects, communication systems, transportation systems, and industrial or consumer products, or equipment of control systems, communications, mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, environmental, or thermal nature, insofar as they involve safeguarding life, health, or property, and including such other



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professional services as may be necessary to the planning, progress, and completion of any engineering services. Said practice includes the doing of such architectural work, as is incidental to the practice of engineering.

(e)Design coordination - The review and coordination of those technical submissions prepared by others, including as appropriate and without limitation, consulting engineers, architects, landscape architects, surveyors or land surveyors, and other professionals working under the direction of the engineer.

(f)Engineering surveys - All survey activities required to support the sound conception, planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of engineered projects, excluding the survey of real property for the establishment of land boundaries, rights-of-way, easements, configuration or contours of the Earth's surface, and the dependent or independent surveys or resurveys of the public land survey system.

(g)Consulting Engineer - A professional engineer whose principal occupation is the independent practice of engineering; whose livelihood is obtained by offering engineering services to the public; who is devoid of public, commercial, and product affiliation that might tend to imply a conflict of interest; and who is cognizant of his or her public and legal responsibilities, and is capable of discharging them.

...

Responsible Charge - Direct control and personal supervision of engineering work or surveying or land surveying.

Rules of Professional Responsibility for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors or Land Surveyors - These Rules.

Seal - A symbol, image, or list of information that may be found in the form of a rubber stamp, embossed seal, computer-generated data, or other form.

Signature - A handwritten message identification containing the name of the person who applied it.

State - Any jurisdiction, territory, or possession of the United States and the District of Columbia.



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Written Examination - An examination administered in any format, including paper-and-pencil or on computer.



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Engineering Disciplines and Competence

An engineers initial area of practice (a.k.a. area of competency, discipline, or branch) is typically identified through NCEES P.E. examination and initial licensure. A licensee can take additional exams to gain qualifications in multiple disciplines. The Board recognizes one or more disciplines for each licensee. Discipline names are not listed on seals.

Licensees should only undertake assignments in subject matter with demonstrated **competence** by **education and experience**. Licensees should not seal documents that are outside their areas of competence.

Engineers are allowed to perform **incidental** architectural services.

Rules of the Board

1512.1

An engineering applicant shall be licensed under one of the following classifications:

- (a) Engineer Intern - by graduation and examination; or
- (b) Professional Engineer - by graduation, experience, and examination after having been licensed as an Engineer Intern, or by reciprocity or endorsement.
- (c) Professional Engineers may be licensed in one or more of the following engineering disciplines;

1. Aeronautical/Aerospace;
2. Agricultural;
3. Architectural;
4. Ceramic;
5. Chemical;
6. Civil;
7. Civil/Structural/Sanitary;
8. Control Systems;
9. Electrical;
10. Environmental;
11. Fire Protection;
12. Industrial;
13. Manufacturing;
14. Mining/Mineral;



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- 15. Marine;
- 16. Mechanical;
- 17. Metallurgical;
- 18. Nuclear;
- 19. Petroleum;
- 20. Sanitary; and
- 21. Structural;

(d) Professional Engineers may be licensed in a discipline not listed in (c) above if an engineering examination for that discipline has been prepared and furnished by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying, and the applicant meets the requirements of the District of Columbia for licensure as an engineer.

1517.5

The licensee shall perform services only in areas of the licensee's **competence** and:

(a) Shall undertake to perform engineering and land surveying assignments only when **qualified** by **education and experience** in the specific technical field of professional engineering or land surveying involved.

(b) May accept an assignment or project requiring **education or experience** outside of the licensee's own field of **competence**, but only to the extent that the services are restricted to those portions or disciplines of the project in which the licensee is **qualified**. All other portions or disciplines of such project shall be performed by associates, consultants, or employees who are licensed and **competent** in those portions or disciplines.

(c) Shall not affix the signature or seal to any engineering or land surveying plan or document dealing with subject matter for which the licensee lacks competence by virtue of **education or experience**, nor to any such plan or document not prepared under the licensee's direct supervisory control.

...

1599.1

...

(d) Practice of Engineering - ... Said practice includes the doing of such architectural work, as is **incidental** to the practice of engineering.



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Responsible Charge

Engineering design work must be prepared under a responsible licensee with **direct supervisory control**. This is referred to as having “**responsible charge**” for the engineering work. The engineer with **responsible charge** signs and seals documents produced under their **responsibility**, and is often referred to as the “engineer of record”, although that term is not used in District of Columbia laws and rules. A typical project has multiple **responsible** engineers, one for each design discipline (civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, etc.).

Responsible charge can also refer to the management of a field of engineering practice within an organization.

Rules of the Board

1516.8

The seal and signature shall be placed on work only when it was under the licensee's complete **direction** and **control**.

1517.5

The licensee shall perform services only in areas of the licensee's competence and:

...

(c) Shall not affix the signature or seal to any engineering or land surveying plan or document dealing with subject matter for which the licensee lacks competence by virtue of education or experience, nor to any such plan or document not prepared under the licensee's **direct supervisory control**.

1. **Direct supervisory control (responsible charge)** requires a licensee or employee to carry out client contacts, provide internal and external financial control, oversee employee training, and exercise **control** and **supervision** over all job requirements to include research, planning, design, field supervision and work product review.

- i. A licensee shall not contract with a non-licensed individual to provide these professional services.
- ii. Research, such as title searches and soil testing, may be contracted to a non-licensed individual, provided that individual is qualified or licensed to provide such service and provided the licensee reviews the work.



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2. The licensee may affix the seal and signature to drawings and documents depicting the work of two or more professionals provided it is designated by a note under the seal the specific subject matter for which each is **responsible**.

1599.1

Responsible Charge - Direct control and **personal supervision** of engineering work or surveying or land surveying.

NSPE

Responsible charge is also defined in a National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) reference document, and copied below for convenience.

NSPE Position Statement No. 10-1778

- Defines “**responsible charge**” as the **direct control** and **personal supervision** of engineering work.
- The professional engineer in **responsible charge** is actively engaged in the engineering process, from conception to completion.
- Engineering decisions must be personally made by the professional engineer or by others over which the professional engineer provides **supervisory direction** and **control authority**.
- Reviewing drawings or documents after their completion without involvement in the design and development process appears not to satisfy the definition of **responsible charge**.

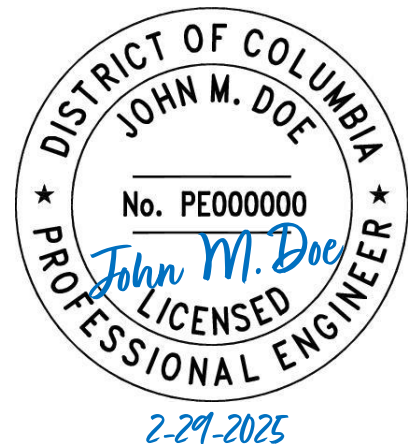


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Sign and Seal Requirements

Sign and seal requirements are found in Rules of the Board DCMR 17-1516. Here are highlights that may differ from requirements in other states:

- Seal diameter not specified
- Sign across or adjacent to seal
- Write date below seal
- Ink color not specified
- Seal each drawing
- Seal first or title page of multipage document sets
- Acceptable forms of signature:
 - Hand signature with rubber ink stamp, embossed/impression/pocket seal, or printed image of seal
 - Digital/electronic signature
 - Digital seal image with digital signature
 - Unique signature
 - Verifiable signature
 - Under sole control of the licensee
 - Linked such that document changes invalidate the signature
 - Indicate software utilized
 - Adobe, Bluebeam, & DocuSign e-signatures appear acceptable



Laws and Rules

The following is a copy-paste of the relevant laws and rules:

Rules of the Board

1516.2

When an applicant is granted licensure, he or she may obtain an engineer's or land surveyor's seal, as appropriate.

1516.3

The seal and signature of the licensee shall be placed on all final engineering specifications, reports, drawings, plans, design information, and calculations or land surveys, reports, plats, drawings, plans, and calculations whenever presented to a



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client or any public agency to certify that the work thereon was done by the licensee or under control of the licensee.

1516.4

All seals shall contain the following information:

- (a) District of Columbia;
- (b) Licensee's name;
- (c) License number;
- (d) The words "Professional Engineer" or "Professional Surveyor", as appropriate; and
- (e) Any other information requested by the Board.

1516.5

Working drawings or documents that are unfinished, in-progress drawings or other documents may or may not have a seal and signature. A working drawing or document must, however, contain a statement to the effect "PRELIMINARY, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION, RECORDING PURPOSES, OR IMPLEMENTATION."

1516.6

The seal and signature shall be placed on all original copy, tracings or other reproducible documents so that the seal and signature will be reproduced when copies are made.

1516.7

When the document contains more than one (1) sheet, the first or title page shall be sealed and signed by all involved in the work or those who controlled the work and are responsible for it. In addition, each drawing shall be sealed and signed by the licensee or licensees responsible for each sheet.

1516.8

The seal and signature shall be placed on work only when it was under the licensee's complete direction and control.

1516.9

Computer-generated seals not signed with a digital signature may be used on final original drawings provided a handwritten signature is placed adjacent to or across the seal and the date is written below the stamp. Drawings, specifications, plans,



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reports, or documents which do not require certification may be transmitted electronically but shall have the generated seal, if any, removed before transmitting and shall have the following inserted in lieu of the signature and date:

"This document originally issued and sealed by (name of licensee),
P.E.#_____/P.L.S.#_____ on (date of sealing). This document should not be
considered a certified document."

1516.10

Drawings, reports, or documents that are signed using a digital signature, as defined in these Rules, shall contain the following:

- (a) An authentication procedure that includes the following elements:
 - 1. A unique signature;
 - 2. Capability to verify the source;
 - 3. Sole control by the person using it; and
 - 4. A link to the document in such a manner that the digital signature is invalidated if any data in the document is changed; and
- (b) A list of the hardware, software, and parameters used to prepare the document(s).



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Professional Conduct and Ethics

The following rules help define professional conduct and ethical requirements.

Rules of the Board

1517.1

In order to safeguard the life, health, property and welfare of the public and to establish and maintain a high standard of integrity, skills, and practice in the professions of engineering and land surveying, the following rules of professional conduct shall be binding upon every person holding a certificate of licensure as a Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor (licensee), and on all business entities authorized to offer or perform engineering or land surveying services in the District of Columbia.

1517.2

All persons licensed under the provisions of this Chapter are charged with having knowledge of the existence of the rules of professional conduct, and shall be deemed to be familiar with their several provisions and to understand them.

1517.3

The licensee shall conduct the practice in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

1517.4

The licensee shall, at all times, recognize the primary obligation to protect the public in the performance of his or her professional duties. If the licensee's engineering or land surveying judgment is overruled under circumstances where the safety, health, and welfare of the public are endangered, the licensee shall inform the employer, the contractor, and the appropriate regulatory agency of the possible consequences of the situation.



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1517.6

The licensee shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner and:

- (a) Shall be objective and truthful in all professional reports, statements, or testimony. The licensee shall include all relevant and pertinent information in such reports, statements, or testimony.
- (b) When serving as an expert or technical witness before any court, commission, or other tribunal, shall express an opinion only when it is founded upon adequate knowledge of the facts in issue, upon a background of technical competence in the subject matter, and upon honest conviction of the accuracy and propriety of the licensee's testimony.
- (c) Shall issue no statements, criticisms, or arguments on engineering or land surveying matters connected with public policy which are inspired or paid for by an interested party, or parties, unless the licensee has prefaced the comment by explicitly identifying the licensee's name, by disclosing the identities of the party or parties on whose behalf the licensee is speaking, and by revealing the existence of any pecuniary interest the licensee may have in the instant matters.
- (d) Shall not attempt to injure, maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects, practice, or employment of another engineer or land surveyor, nor indiscriminately criticize another engineer or land surveyor's work in public. Indiscriminate criticism includes statements without valid basis or cause; statements that are not objective and truthful; or statements that fail to include all relevant and pertinent information. If the licensee believes that another engineer or land surveyor is guilty of misconduct or illegal practice, such information shall be presented to the Board.

1517.7

The licensee shall avoid conflicts of interest and:

- (a) Shall promptly inform the employer or client and any reviewing agency of any business association, interests, or circumstances that could influence judgment or the quality of services.



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(b) Shall not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, or for services pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to, and agreed to, by all interested parties.

(c) Shall not solicit or accept financial or other valuable considerations from material or equipment suppliers for specifying their products.

(d) Shall not solicit or accept gratuities, directly or indirectly, from contractors, their agents, or other parties dealing with the client or employer in connection with work for which the licensee is responsible.

(e) When in public service as a member, advisor, or employee of a governmental body or department, shall not participate in considerations or actions with respect to services provided by the licensee or the licensee's organization in private engineering and land surveying practices.

(f) Shall not solicit or accept an engineering or land surveying contract from a governmental body on which a principal or officer of the licensee's organization serves as a member.

(g) Shall not attempt to supplant another engineer or land surveyor in a particular employment after becoming aware that the other has been selected for the employment.

1517.8

The licensee shall solicit or accept work only based on qualifications and:

(a) Shall not offer, either directly or indirectly, to pay a commission, political contribution, gift, or any other consideration in order to secure work. Notwithstanding the foregoing, licensees are permitted to pay employment agencies fees for services rendered in securing salaried positions.

(b) Shall compete for employment based on professional qualification and competence to perform the work. The licensee shall not solicit or submit proposals for professional services containing a false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, or



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unfair statement or claim regarding the cost, quality, or extent of services to be rendered.

(c) Shall, with regard to fee bidding on public projects for the District of Columbia, comply with the provisions of 27 DCMR Chapter 26, "Construction And Architect-Engineer Contracts" and for federal projects, 40 U.S. Code 541 et seq. (the Brooks Act); and shall not knowingly cooperate in a violation of any provision of 27 DCMR Chapter 26 or of the Brooks Act.

(d) Shall not falsify or permit misrepresentation of academic or professional qualifications and shall only report educational qualifications when a degree or certificate was awarded, unless it is clearly stated that no degree or certificate was awarded. The licensee shall not misrepresent degree of responsibility in or for the subject matter of prior assignments. Brochures or other presentations incident to the solicitation of employment shall not misrepresent pertinent facts concerning employers, employees, associates, joint ventures, or past accomplishments with the intent and purpose of enhancing qualifications and work.

1517.9

The Licensee shall perform services in an ethical and lawful manner and:

(a) Shall not knowingly associate with or permit the use of the licensee's name or firm name in a business venture by any person or firm which the licensee knows, or has reason to believe, is engaging in business or professional practices of a fraudulent or dishonest nature or is not properly licensed.

(b) If the licensee has knowledge or reason to believe that another person or firm may be in violation of any of these provisions or of D.C. Law 12-261, shall present such information to the Board in writing and shall cooperate with the Board in furnishing such further information or assistance as may be required by the Board. The licensee shall timely respond to all inquiries and correspondence from the Board and shall timely claim correspondence from the U. S. Postal Service, or other delivery service, sent to the licensee from the Board.



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1517.10

A Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor who has received a reprimand or civil penalty or whose professional license is revoked, suspended, denied, or surrendered because of disciplinary action by another jurisdiction shall be subject to discipline by the Board if the licensee's action constitutes a violation of D.C. Law 12-261 or the rules adopted by the Board.

1518.1

The Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor shall not make exaggerated, misleading, deceptive, or false statements or claims about professional qualifications, experience, or performance in brochures, correspondence, listings, or other public communications.

1518.2

The prohibitions listed in subsection 1518.1 include, but are not limited to, the use of statements containing a material misrepresentation of fact or omitting a material fact necessary to keep the statement from being misleading; statements intended or likely to create an unjustified expectation; and statements containing a prediction of future success.

1518.3

Consistent with the prohibitions set out in subsection 1518.2, the Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor may advertise for recruitment of personnel.

1518.4

Consistent with the prohibitions set out in subsection 1518.2, the Professional Engineer or Professional Land Surveyor may prepare articles for the lay or technical press. Such articles shall not imply credit to the author for work performed by others.

1519.1

A person must be licensed pursuant to this chapter and the Act to practice or offer to practice engineering or land surveying in the District of Columbia, except as exempted by D.C. Official Code § 47-2886.10.

1519.2

No person shall use the words "engineer," "engineering," "land surveyor," "land surveying" or any modification or derivative thereof in any form indicating or tending



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to indicate that he or she is licensed by the Board unless he or she possesses a valid license as a Professional Engineer or Land Surveyor issued by the Board.

1519.3

Any person presenting or attempting to use the certificate of licensure or the seal of another, or any person who shall give any false or forged evidence of any kind to the Board or any member thereof in obtaining or attempting to obtain a certificate of licensure, or any person who shall falsely impersonate any other licensee of like or different name, or any person who shall attempt to use an expired or revoked or non-existent certificate of licensure, or who shall practice or offer to practice when not qualified, or any person who falsely claims that he/she is licensed under these Rules, or any person who shall violate any of the provisions of these Rules shall be in violation of these Rules.

1519.4

Any individual licensed with this Board to perform land surveying services shall comply with the minimum standards codified for land surveys in the District of Columbia.



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Continuing Education

Per Rules of the Board DCMR 17-1526, the following continuing education is required every 2-year renewal period, where PDH is a professional development hour:

- 20 PDH total
- Minimum 1 PDH on professional ethics
- Board does NOT pre-approve specific courses for engineering
- Board accepts providers approved by another state board
 - SunCam and PDH Academy meet this requirement
- Programs and activities shall contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence in the practice of professional engineering
- No provision for carrying forward excess credits
- Retain PDH records for 4 years
- Renewal date is August 31 of even years

Laws and Rules

Here is a copy-paste of the relevant laws and rules:

Rules of the Board

1526.1

This section shall apply to all applicants for the renewal or reinstatement of a license to practice as a land surveyor or professional engineer, except those applicants seeking first renewal of a license granted by examination.

...

1526.3

An applicant for renewal of a license to practice as a professional engineer shall attest to having completed **no less than twenty (20) hours of acceptable continuing professional education, to include at least one (1) hour on the subject of professional ethics**, during the term of the license.

1526.4

An applicant for reinstatement of an expired license or renewal of an inactive license to practice as a land surveyor shall attest to having completed, no more than two (2) years prior to the date of application, at least six (6) hours of credit in approved continuing education programs for each year the license was expired or inactive, up to a maximum of twenty-four (24) hours, and shall include the following:



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- (a) No less than eight (8) hours of surveying education specific to the District of Columbia; and
- (b) At least one (1) hour on the subject of professional ethics.

1526.5

An applicant for reinstatement of an expired license or renewal of an inactive license to practice as a professional engineer shall attest to having completed ten (10) hours of credit in approved continuing education programs for each year the license was expired or inactive, up to a maximum of forty (40) hours, and shall include no less than one (1) hour on the subject of professional ethics. To be creditable, courses shall not have been completed more than two (2) years prior to the date of application.

1526.6

An applicant under this section shall report the completion of required continuing education credits by submitting with the renewal or reinstatement application the following information with respect to each program:

- (a) The name of the sponsor of the program;
- (b) The name of the program and a description of the subject matter covered;
- (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program; and
- (d) The hours of credit claimed.

1526.7

A continuing education credit shall be valid only if it is part of a program approved by the Board in accordance with § 1527 of this chapter. Licensees are responsible for ensuring that continuing education courses taken to satisfy the Board's renewal or reinstatement requirements are approved by the Board.

1526.8

An applicant for the renewal of a license who fails to complete the continuing education requirements by or before the expiration date may renew the license within sixty (60) days after expiration by completing the outstanding hours and by paying the required late fee. Any hours obtained after licensure expiration and claimed for late renewal shall not be creditable for the next renewal period. Upon



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renewal, the Board shall deem the applicant to have possessed a valid license during the period between the expiration of the license and its renewal.

1526.9

If an applicant for the renewal of a license fails to complete the continuing education requirements within sixty (60) days after the expiration of the applicant's license, the license shall be deemed to have lapsed on the date of expiration, and the applicant shall be required to apply for reinstatement of the expired license pursuant to § 3308 of this title.

1526.10

The Board may grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to complete continuing education requirements was for good cause. For purposes of this subsection, "good cause" includes proof of the following:

- (a) Serious and protracted illness of the applicant, who submits a doctor's statement verifying the illness;
- (b) The death or serious and protracted illness of a member of the applicant's immediate family, which death or illness resulted in the applicant's inability to complete the continuing education requirements within the specified time. For the purposes of this subsection, the term "immediate family" means the applicant's spouse and any parent, brother, sister, or child of the applicant and the spouse of any such parent, brother, sister, or child; or
- (c) Active military service.

1526.11

An extension granted under this section shall not relieve an applicant from complying with the continuing education requirement for the next renewal period.

1527.1

The Board, in its sole discretion, may approve continuing education programs or activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence in the practices of land surveying and professional engineering and which meet the other requirements of this section.



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1527.2

A continuing education program shall be deemed approved by the Board if the offering is approved, provided or sponsored by one of the following:

- (a) National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and any other recognized national or state society of professional engineers;
- (b) District of Columbia Association of Land Surveyors (DCALS) and any other recognized national or state society of land surveyors;
- (c) National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES);
- (d) A licensing board of another jurisdiction that regulates the practice of land surveying or professional engineering;
- (e) Federal or state agencies offering training in land surveying or professional engineering; and
- (f) Accredited colleges and universities offering training in land surveying or professional engineering.

1527.3

The Board may grant up to six (6) hours of continuing education credits for each of the following activities, if consistent with the requirements of § 1527.1:

- (a) Completion of an undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
- (b) Performing the initial development, substantial updating, or the initial teaching of a conference program or an academic course;
- (c) Authoring or editing a published book, a published chapter in a book, or a published article in a professional journal or other nationally recognized publication; or
- (d) Serving on a committee or task force that addresses technical and regulatory issues related to the professional practice of land surveying or professional engineering.

1528.1

A licensee shall be responsible for documenting his or her completion of the required continuing education, and shall bear the burden of providing satisfactory proof of completion and establishing that any program or activity for which credit is claimed merits approval in accordance with § 1527.



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1528.2

A licensee shall retain course documentation for four (4) years after completing a continuing education program or activity for which credit is claimed. Acceptable documentation shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) A certificate of successful completion from the sponsor or provider which includes the following information:
 - (1) The name of the sponsor of the program;
 - (2) The name of the program and a description of the subject matter covered;
 - (3) The dates on which the licensee attended the program; and
 - (4) The hours of credit earned; and
- (b) A copy of the course outline prepared by the course sponsor;
- (c) In the case of courses taken at accredited universities and colleges, proof of satisfactory completion of the course;
- (d) In the case of licensees claiming credit for publication of a technical paper, article, or book, satisfactory proof of its publication; or
- (e) Other comparable proof deemed satisfactory by the Board.

1528.3

The Board may, as it deems appropriate, conduct an audit of active licensees to determine compliance with the continuing education requirements.

1528.4

Upon notification by the Board that a licensee has been selected for an audit, the licensee shall submit proof of his or her compliance with the continuing education requirements in accordance with § 1526 within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice.

1528.5

A licensee who fails to provide proof of continuing education compliance during an audit may be subject to another audit in the subsequent licensure term.

1528.6

If the Board determines that the licensee has not met his or her continuing education requirement in accordance § 1526, the Board may either grant an additional period of time in which the deficiencies can be cured, or impose disciplinary action in accordance with the Act.



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Board Website

License Renewal

Expiration Date: August 31; Renewal Year: Even

The District of Columbia Board of Professional Engineers & Land Surveyors mandates a total of 20 professional development hours (to include one course in Ethics) for Professional Engineers and 12 professional development hours (to include one course in Ethics) for Land Surveyors to renew your license. Note: This requirement applies to all applicants for the renewal except those applicants seeking the first renewal of a license granted by examination. A renewal applicant must submit proof via course certificates or transcripts. To qualify for approval by the Board, a continuing education program must be prepared, offered, administered, or accepted by an entity approved by the Board.



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Helpful References

District of Columbia Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

- Board website: <https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1617401>
- Address Change: <https://aca-prod.accela.com/POL/Login.aspx?tabname=Home>
- Renewal: <https://govservices.dhra.dc.gov/oplarenewallicense>
- Laws of the Board: <https://law.justia.com/codes/district-of-columbia/title-47/chapter-28/subchapter-i-b/part-j/>
- Rules of the Board: <https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/RuleList.aspx?ChapterNum=17-15>