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Florida Laws and Rules Biennium Updates

by

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Introduction

This is a course intended to satisfy the one-hour continuing education requirement on Florida Laws and Rules established by the Florida Board of Professional Engineers (FBPE), and as required by Section 471.017 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.), pursuant to Rule 61G15-22.0105 of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

This course is not intended to be a comprehensive review covering significant details of all Florida Laws and Rules governing the practice of engineering. It is understood that readers of this course will already have their Professional Engineer License and, as such, have already passed the original requirements assessing them on FL Laws and Rules required to have a basic understanding. Instead, this course is tailored towards the renewal requirements enforced by the FBPE and focuses on some of the primary updates and changes to Rules adopted by the Board during the 2023–2025 biennium. More specific examples for particular Rules will be reviewed to look at ways the modifications may be applicable to the reader. Note that licensees are responsible for maintaining familiarity with all applicable statutes and rules applicable to their license.

The goal of this specific course is that every reviewer of this document learn some information they did not know previously. The writing of the course was organized with that intent in mind. The approach to achieve this goal is to provide three levels of information:

1. Refresh some foundational concepts related to Florida laws and rules governing engineering practice that can be forgotten over time.
2. Look at a summary of some pertinent Rules that have been modified during the 2023-2025 Biennium.
3. Perform a more detailed evaluation of four specific rule modifications, including discussion of practical implications and application, followed by summary of real-world examples of violations to these rules both from published disciplinary actions on the FBPE website and from hypothetical situations including common engineering situations.



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Background Refresher

It is important to be reminded of why the Rules enforced are in place, how they are structured, and the ways in which they are updated. As Engineers, concepts are often best retained when the ‘why’ of something is understood.

While this can be a very complicated and involved topic, an abbreviated version for the sake of this continuing education course is below, beginning with a summary of the hierarchy of generalized law and rule requirements. While simplified for instructional purposes, this hierarchy reflects the primary sources of regulatory authority affecting engineering practice:

1. Federal Laws can preempt State and Local requirements
 - For Example: Language enforced by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
2. Florida Statutes are laws enacted by Florida Legislature that establish legal authority
 - For Example: The Law under Statute 471 requiring engineering license renewal to be structured a specific way and contain information such as updates on Florida laws and rules.
3. Florida Administrative Code includes regulatory Board-adopted Rules to implement and enforce these laws
 - For Example: Rule 61G15, F.A.C. establishing details on how the license renewal defined in Florida Statute 471 will be evaluated, reported, and approved.
4. Local Codes, Ordinances, and Regulations are specific requirements that can be enforced for particular municipalities or other Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).
 - For Example: City Engineering Standards or Local Building Codes.
5. Adopted Codes and Standards are generally accepted technical standards that may be incorporated by reference in other laws or rules to carry legal weight
 - For Example: National Fire Protection Association (including the National Electrical Code) or American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)

For the sake of this Florida-specific course, only Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code will be elaborated further in this background refresher.



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Florida Statutes

As defined by the Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature:

Statutes, Constitution, & Laws of Florida

- **Florida Statutes**—a permanent collection of state laws organized by subject area into a code made up of titles, chapters, parts, and sections. The Florida Statutes are updated annually by laws that create, amend, transfer, or repeal statutory material.

As indicated, the Florida Statutes are updated annually. The 2025 Florida Statutes, being the latest update at the time of writing this course, are comprised of 1,015 Chapters under 49 different categories of Titles.

Two of the Florida Statute Chapters most relevant to professional engineers are:

- Chapter 455, Business and Professional Regulation: General Provisions
 - o This applies broadly to all Department of Business and Professional Regulation professions, and generally includes:
 - General licensing framework
 - Disciplinary procedures
 - Administrative processes
- Chapter 471, Engineering
 - o This addresses profession-specific law, generally including:
 - Licensure
 - Scope of practice
 - Sealing requirements
 - Disciplinary actions

A term that can be referenced often in some engineering disciplines is House Bill or Senate Bill. It is important to be aware that House Bills and Senate Bills are proposed legislations when they are truly 'Bills'. Very often when the term is used with regard to design or permitting enforcement, it is referencing Bills that have already gone through the process of being introduced, passed by legislature, signed by the Governor, become Session Law, and have been incorporated into the Florida Statutes. These can be commonly referenced in



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the engineering community by their House Bill Number or Senate Bill Number monicker because that is how the change was introduced and is commonly remembered.



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Florida Board of Professional Engineers

The Core Mission of the Florida Board of Professional Engineers is to protect the health and safety of the public by properly regulating the practice of engineering within the State of Florida.

This continuing education course will focus in more detail specifically on the updates to Florida Administrative Code Board Rule 61G15. To prepare for this review, it is relevant to review the structure and formatting used for the F.A.C. rule numbering system.

Using the following example:

61G15-22.001

Each segment will be broken out individually to better define and clarify its purpose.

61G15-22.001

Florida Administrative Codes are separated by dozens of Department Numbers. Department 61 corresponds to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR).

61**G15**-22.001

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation is separated by over 45 different Division Numbers. Division 61G15 corresponds to the Division for Board of Professional Engineers.

61G15-**22**.001

The Division for Board of Professional Engineers is separated by Chapter Numbers. Since Division 61G15 is relevant to all Engineers reviewing this course, it is worth being generally familiar with all Chapter Numbers of this Division and their associated Titles. The table below is taken directly from the Florida Administrative Code and Florida Administrative



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Register Website. From this it can be seen that Chapter 61G15-22 is the Chapter on License Renewal, Continuing Education.



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Chapter No.	Chapter Title
61G15-18	ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE
61G15-19	FOUNDATIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS
61G15-20	APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS, AND EXPERIENCE
61G15-21	EXAMINATIONS
61G15-22	LICENSE RENEWAL, CONTINUING EDUCATION
61G15-23	SEALS
61G15-24	FEES
61G15-26	SUPERVISION STANDARDS
61G15-27	PROCEDURES FOR THE ADOPTION OF ANOTHER'S WORK
61G15-28	ASBESTOS CONSULTANTS
61G15-29	CERTIFICATION
61G15-30	RESPONSIBILITY RULES COMMON TO ALL ENGINEERS
61G15-31	RESPONSIBILITY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS CONCERNING THE DESIGN OF STRUCTURES
61G15-32	RESPONSIBILITY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS CONCERNING THE DESIGN OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS
61G15-33	RESPONSIBILITY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS CONCERNING THE DESIGN OF ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS
61G15-34	MECHANICAL SYSTEMS
61G15-35	RESPONSIBILITY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS PROVIDING THRESHOLD BUILDING INSPECTION
61G15-36	PRODUCT EVALUATION
61G15-37	FLORIDA ENGINEERS MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

61G15-22.001

Completing the example, the Chapter on License Renewal, Continuing Education is separated by *Rule Numbers*. As of the November 26, 2025 FBPE update to 61G15, F.A.C., there are 18 Rule Numbers under the Chapter 22, and Rule 22.001 is specific to Continuing Education Requirements.



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With this review of the framework established, it is appropriate to transition to considering some of the changes that have been adopted and published over the 2023-2025 biennium.



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Summary of Changes

Some of the Primary Updates to Chapter 61G15 of the Florida Administrative Code Since 2023 are referenced in the table below, based on information published by the FBPE on their website. Selected updates posted on the site at the time of writing this course have been taken, tabulated, and first organized by categories of ‘high’, ‘medium’, and ‘low’ impact to professional engineers, and secondly organized by numerical order of the Rule number. The following defines how each Rule’s impact was categorized:

1. High Impact

- Commonly applicable across a broad range of PEs
- Changes compliance requirements or legal risk
- Includes areas historically associated with compliance risk and disciplinary action
- For example, ‘Does this affect my license or seal?’
- **General Categorization:** Most Portions of Chapters 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 30

2. Medium Impact

- Affects some engineers in particular fields or specific workflows
- Clarifies procedures but doesn’t fundamentally change obligations
- For example, ‘Does this affect specific disciplines only?’
- **General Categorization:** Most Portions of Chapters 31, 32, 33, and 34

3. Low Impact

- Wording updates, or board governance updates
- Primarily administrative or procedural in nature (though still enforceable)
- Sometimes Rule modifications pertaining only to the rule’s sunset clause
- For example, “Is this internal to the organization or administrative in nature?”
- **General Categorization:** Most of Chapter 18 and Chapters Updated Pertaining to Sunset Clause



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Note: The impact categorization is provided for instructional purposes only to help organize discussion and does not reflect official designations by the FBPE. All rules carry regulatory authority, and licensees are responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable requirements, regardless of categorization.



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Rule	Title	Update Cycle(s)	Impact
61G15-19.004	Disciplinary Guidelines; Range of Penalties; Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances	05/26/2025	High
61G15-19.0051	Notice of Noncompliance	03/02/2025	High
61G15-20.0010	Application for Licensure as Professional Engineer	06/24/2024, 04/22/2025	High
61G15-20.0017	Application for Retired Status	03/02/2025	High
61G15-20.007	Educational Requirements for Applicants without EAC/ABET Accredited Engineering Degrees	05/26/2025, 08/08/2025	High
61G15-20.008	Educational Requirements for Applicants without ETAC/ABET Accredited Engineering Technology Degrees	05/26/2025, 08/08/2025	High
61G15-22.001	Continuing Education Requirements	11/27/2024	High
61G15-22.006	Demonstrating Compliance; Audits; Investigations	06/11/2024	High
61G15-22.0105	Approval of Continuing Education Courses in Laws and Rules	04/22/2025	High
61G15-22.011	Board Approval of Continuing Education Providers	04/22/2025	High
61G15-22.012	Obligations of Continuing Education Providers	05/27/2024, 05/26/2025	High
61G15-23.004	Procedures for Digitally Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports, or Other Documents	11/27/2024, 04/22/2025	High
61G15-23.005	Procedures for Electronically Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports or Other Documents	05/26/2025, 11/27/2024	High
61G15-24.001	Schedule of Fees	05/27/2024	High
61G15-30.001	Purpose (Responsibility Rules Common to All Engineers)	03/02/2025	High
61G15-30.006	Delegation of Engineering Documents: Obligations of the Delegated Engineer of Record	05/27/2024	High
61G15-31.006	Design of Structural Systems Utilizing Open Web Steel Joists and Joist Girders	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-32.004	Design of Water Based Fire Protection Systems	05/26/2025	Medium
61G15-33.003	Design of Power Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.002	Definitions (Responsibility Rules, Mechanical Systems)	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.003	Design of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Systems	3/2/2025	Medium
61G15-34.004	Design of Process and Fluid Flow Systems	11/26/2025	Medium
61G15-34.005	Design of Heat and Energy Transfer Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.006	Design of Material and Human Transfer Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.007	Design of Plumbing Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.008	Design of Mechanical Machines and Motion Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.009	Design of Instrumentation and Control Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-34.010	Design of Fuel Gas Systems	03/02/2025	Medium
61G15-18.011	Definitions	06/24/2024	Low
61G15-18.012	Other Board Business for Which Compensation Is Allowed	11/26/2025	Low
61G15-19.0071	Citations	Sunset Clause	Low
61G15-19.008	Confidentiality of Investigations	Sunset Clause	Low



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61G15-35.0021	Definitions	Sunset Clause	Low
61G15-35.003	Qualification Program for Special Inspectors of Threshold Buildings and Special Inspectors of Threshold Buildings (Limited)	Sunset Clause	Low



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More Detailed Evaluation of Specific Rule Modifications

Based on the updates indicated above, this course will further evaluate the details of the updates made to three rules identified as impact level of ‘high’ and one rule identified as impact level of ‘low’ to demonstrate the range of Rule update examples per impact levels. The Florida Administrative Code and Florida Administrative Register website contains details of modifications to Rules beyond these, if additional information is desired.

The Rules being further evaluated are:

- 61G15-22.001 – Continuing Education (High)
 - o This applies to broadly to all licensed PEs since noncompliance may affect license renewal and disciplinary standing
- 61G15-23.004 – Digital Signing/Sealing (High)
 - o This is directly tied to legal validity of documents and is a common area of compliance focus and rule enforcement
- 61G15-23.005 – Electronic Signing/Sealing (High)
 - o This is directly tied to legal validity of documents and is a common area of compliance focus and rule enforcement
- 61G15-18.012 – Board Compensation (Low)
 - o This rule primarily affects board operations and does not directly alter engineering practice requirements, but is an example of the removal of ‘Sunset Language’ that impacted many rules this biennium.

Each of these four Rules will be further evaluated to:

1. Briefly summarize the original rule intent (this will be a general summary and paraphrasing of the Rule. It is the readers' responsibility to review and fully understand the Rule).
2. Provide language from the official statement on the Florida Administrative Code & Florida Administrative Register website summarizing certain modifications to the Rule during the 2023-2025 Biennium.
3. Generally describe the relevance of the modification(s) to the reader, including providing a single, key takeaway.



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4. Show the modified version of the Rule to specifically define what was modified, with **added language underlined**, **removed language with strikethrough**, and all sections with modifications **highlighted**.
5. Show the current version of the Rule taken directly from the Florida Administrative Code and Florida Administrative Register Website at the time of writing this document.

Note: The summaries and key takeaways below are provided for general educational purposes and do not replace the full text of the rule. In the event of any inconsistency, the official language of the Florida Administrative Code should govern.

61G15-22.001 – Continuing Education

Summary of Rule Intent:

- This rule governs continuing education requirements required for license renewal.

Summary of Modifications during the 2023-2025 Biennium:

- Publish Date 11/12/2024: The Board proposed an amendment to update, revise, and clarify the Advanced Building Code education course requirement. The proposed rule amendment updates the 61G15-22.001(3)(a) Advanced Building Code education course requirement.

Relevance and Key Takeaway:

- This rule applies to every licensed PE and can result in rejection of license renewal, and even disciplinary action if it is not properly complied with.
- **Key Takeaway:** The reader should be aware that if they are actively licensed and participating in the design of engineering works or system in connection with buildings, structure, or facilities and systems covered by the Florida Building Code, the Advanced Florida Building Code course required for their license renewal may be at least one hour and can count towards the 'area(s) of practice' continuing education requirements.

Modified Version of Rule:

61G15-22.001 Continuing Education Requirements.



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(1) Each licensee shall complete eighteen continuing education hours during each license renewal biennium as a condition of license renewal. Four hours shall relate to the licensee's area(s) of practice; one hour must be related to professional ethics; and one hour shall relate to Chapter 471, F.S., and the rules of the Board. The remaining hours may relate to any topic pertinent to the practice of engineering as defined in Rule 61G15-22.002, F.A.C.

(a) The one (1) hour of professional ethics must be obtained from a professional ethics course approved for credit in any US jurisdiction.

(b) The one (1) hour of laws and rules required by Section 471.017, F.S., must be obtained from courses approved by the Board pursuant to Rule 61G15-22.0105, F.A.C.

(c) Pursuant to Section 471.017(3)(a), F.S., a licensee may earn the required professional ethics and laws and rules hours by serving as a member of the Legislature or as an elected state or local official.

(2) There shall be no carryover of hours permitted from one licensure renewal biennium to the next.

(3) Beginning with the effective date of the Eighth Edition of the Florida Building Code (2023), all licensees actively participating in the design of engineering works or systems in connection with buildings, structures, or facilities and systems covered by the Florida Building Code, as identified within Section 553.73(1)(a), F.S., shall:

(a) Complete at least a one (1) hour Advanced ~~advanced~~ Florida Building Code course ~~course~~ on each new Edition of the Florida Building Code, which can count towards the licensee's area(s) of practice continuing education requirements;

(b) Provide the Board with a copy of a certificate of completion which shows: course number, course hours, Code edition and revision year, and portion of Code or course focus. This course may also count towards the area of practice requirement for continuing education set forth in Rule 61G15-22.001, F.A.C.

Rulemaking Authority 471.008, 471.017(3), 471.0195 FS. Law Implemented 471.017(3), 471.0195 FS. History—New 8-19-80, Formerly 21H-22.01, Amended 5-14-86, Formerly 21H-22.001, Amended 6-22-99, 6-13-00, 2-22-01, 9-16-01, 3-7-13, 9-29-14, 2-18-16, 8-1-18, 12-29-19, 1-30-24.

Current Version of Rule:

61G15-22.001 Continuing Education Requirements.

(1) Each licensee shall complete eighteen continuing education hours during each license renewal biennium as a condition of license renewal. Four hours shall relate to the licensee's area(s) of practice; one hour must be related to professional ethics; and one hour shall relate to Chapter 471, F.S., and the rules of the Board. The remaining hours may relate to any topic pertinent to the practice of engineering as defined in Rule 61G15-22.002, F.A.C.

(a) The one (1) hour of professional ethics must be obtained from a professional ethics course approved for credit in any US jurisdiction.

(b) The one (1) hour of laws and rules required by Section 471.017, F.S., must be obtained from courses approved by the Board pursuant to Rule 61G15-22.0105, F.A.C.

(c) Pursuant to Section 471.017(3)(a), F.S., a licensee may earn the required professional ethics and laws and rules hours by serving as a member of the Legislature or as an elected state or local official.

(2) There shall be no carryover of hours permitted from one licensure renewal biennium to the next.

(3) Beginning with the effective date of the Eighth Edition of the Florida Building Code (2023), all licensees actively participating in the design of engineering works or systems in connection with buildings, structures, or facilities and systems covered by the Florida Building Code, as identified within Section 553.73(1)(a), F.S., shall:

(a) Complete at least a one (1) hour Advanced Florida Building Code course on each new Edition of the Florida Building Code, which can count towards the licensee's area(s) of practice continuing education requirements;

(b) Provide the Board with a copy of a certificate of completion which shows: course number, course hours, Code



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edition and revision year, and portion of Code or course focus. This course may also count towards the area of practice requirement for continuing education set forth in Rule 61G15-22.001, F.A.C.

Rulemaking Authority 471.008, 471.017(3), 471.0195 FS. Law Implemented 471.017(3), 471.0195 FS. History—New 8-19-80, Formerly 21H-22.01, Amended 5-14-86, Formerly 21H-22.001, Amended 6-22-99, 6-13-00, 2-22-01, 9-16-01, 3-7-13, 9-29-14, 2-18-16, 8-1-18, 12-29-19, 1-30-24, 11-12-24.

61G15-23.004 – Digital Signing/Sealing

Summary of Rule Intent:

- Defines requirements for digitally signing and sealing engineering documents using secure digital certificates.

Summary of Modifications during the 2023-2025 Biennium:

- Publish Date 11/12/2024: The Board proposed amendments to update and remove rule language that is now outdated and superseded. The proposed rule amendments updated and removed 61G15-23.004(3)(g) as outdated and superseded rule language.
- Publish Date 04/21/2025: The Board proposed amendments to update and remove rule language regarding the procedures for a digital seal. The proposed rule amendments update the 61G15-23.004(c)1., 2., and 3., and the 61G15-23.004(d)1. and 2., rule language regarding digitally sealing electronically transmitted plans, specifications, reports, or other documents.

Relevance and Key Takeaway:

- Determines whether a document is legally valid and is frequently involved in disciplinary cases.
- ***Key Takeaway:*** Engineers must use compliant digital signature providers, ensure documents cannot be altered after signing, and understand the difference between digital and electronic signatures and where items such as printing are relevant.

Modified Version of Rule:



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61G15-23.004 Procedures for Digitally Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports or Other Documents.

(1) Engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents which must be signed, dated and sealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 471.025, F.S., and Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C., may be signed digitally as provided herein by the professional engineer in responsible charge. As used herein, the terms “certification authority,” and “digital signature” shall have the meanings ascribed to them in Sections 668.003(2) and (3), F.S.

(2) A professional engineer utilizing a digital signature to electronically sign and seal engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents shall have their identity authenticated by a certification authority and shall assure that the digital signature is:

- (a) Unique to the person using it;
- (b) Capable of verification;
- (c) Under the sole control of the person using it; and,

(d) Linked to a document in such a manner that the digital signature and correspondingly the document is invalidated if any data in the document is changed.

(3) The affixing of a digital signature to engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents as provided herein shall constitute the signing and sealing of such items.

(a) A digitally created seal as set forth in Rule 61G15-23.002, F.A.C., may be placed where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(b) The date that the digital signature was placed into the document must appear on the document in accordance with subsection 61G15-23.001(4), F.A.C., and where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(c) The engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents being digitally signed and sealed shall include text to indicate the following and place it where an original signature would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed:

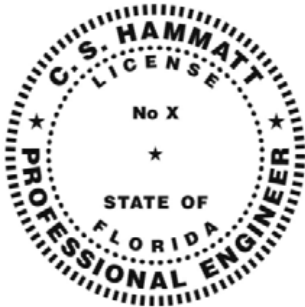
1. The same information required by subsection 61G15-23.002(2), F.A.C., if a digitally created image of the seal is not used; and

2. The item has been digitally signed and sealed; ~~and,~~

~~3. Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and all signatures must be verified on any electronic copies.~~

(d) Formatting of seals and text similar to that depicted below shall be used. While the formatting may be altered, the text must remain identical.

1. When a digitally created seal is used:



This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date adjacent to the seal.

~~Signature. Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the signature must be verified on any electronic copies.~~

2. When a digitally created seal is not used:



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[NAME], State of Florida, Professional Engineer, License No. [NUMBER]

This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date indicated here.

~~Signature Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the signature must be verified on any electronic copies.~~

(e) When engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents contain multiple sheets or pages, the licensee may apply a single digital signature per electronically transmitted item as set out in Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C. A digital signature applied to an item in electronic form shall have the same force and effect as signing all of the individual sheets or pages contained within that item unless otherwise limited as specified in subsection 61G15-30.003(3), F.A.C.

(f) In the case where multiple licensees sign and seal a single item, each licensee shall apply their digital signature and include qualifying language with those items required in paragraph (e) of this rule, thoroughly describing what portions the licensee is taking responsibility for.

~~(g) Beginning on the effective date of this rule amendment, November 2, 2020, and continuing until December 31, 2020, the restriction contained in subparagraph (3)(e)3., above, and the text of required language illustrated in subparagraphs (3)(d)1. and 2., that printed copies of digitally signed and sealed plans or documents are not considered signed and sealed is removed, and printed copies of said plans or documents are deemed validly signed and sealed for any purpose allowed by law. After December 31, 2020, the existing restriction is reinstated. Any licensee seeking to use printed copies of digitally signed and sealed plans or documents must retain an original copy of the signed and sealed plans.~~

~~Rulemaking Authority 471.025(1), 471.033(2), 471.008 FS. Law Implemented 471.025, 668.006 FS. History—New 11-3-15, Amended 2-3-16, 10-26-16, 9-7-17, 6-19-18, 11-2-20, _____, _____.~~

Current Version of Rule:

61G15-23.004 Procedures for Digitally Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports or Other Documents.

(1) Engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents which must be signed, dated and sealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 471.025, F.S., and Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C., may be signed digitally as provided herein by the professional engineer in responsible charge. As used herein, the terms “certification authority,” and “digital signature” shall have the meanings ascribed to them in Sections 668.003(2) and (3), F.S.

(2) A professional engineer utilizing a digital signature to electronically sign and seal engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents shall have their identity authenticated by a certification authority and shall assure that the digital signature is:

- (a) Unique to the person using it;
- (b) Capable of verification;
- (c) Under the sole control of the person using it; and,

(d) Linked to a document in such a manner that the digital signature and correspondingly the document is invalidated if any data in the document is changed.

(3) The affixing of a digital signature to engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents as provided herein shall constitute the signing and sealing of such items.



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(a) A digitally created seal as set forth in Rule 61G15-23.002, F.A.C., may be placed where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(b) The date that the digital signature was placed into the document must appear on the document in accordance with subsection 61G15-23.001(4), F.A.C., and where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(c) The engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents being digitally signed and sealed shall include text to indicate the following and place it where an original signature would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed:

1. The same information required by subsection 61G15-23.002(2), F.A.C., if a digitally created image of the seal is not used; and

2. The item has been digitally signed and sealed.

(d) Formatting of seals and text similar to that depicted below shall be used. While the formatting may be altered, the text must remain identical.

1. When a digitally created seal is used:



This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date adjacent to the seal.

Signature must be verified on any electronic copies.

2. When a digitally created seal is not used:

[NAME], State of Florida, Professional Engineer, License No. [NUMBER]

This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date indicated here.

Signature must be verified on any electronic copies.

(e) When engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents contain multiple sheets or pages, the licensee may apply a single digital signature per electronically transmitted item as set out in Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C. A digital signature applied to an item in electronic form shall have the same force and effect as signing all of the individual sheets or pages contained within that item unless otherwise limited as specified in subsection 61G15-30.003(3), F.A.C.

(f) In the case where multiple licensees sign and seal a single item, each licensee shall apply their digital signature and include qualifying language with those items required in paragraph (e) of this rule, thoroughly describing what portions the licensee is taking responsibility for.

Rulemaking Authority 471.025(1), 471.033(2), 471.008 FS. Law Implemented 471.025, 471.033(1)(j), 668.003, 668.006 FS. History—New 11-3-15, Amended 9-7-17, 6-19-18, 11-2-20, 11-12-24, 4-21-25.



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61G15-23.005 – Electronic Signing/Sealing

Summary of Rule Intent:

- Covers non-digital (electronic) signatures, such as scanned or applied signatures.

Summary of Modifications during the 2023-2025 Biennium:

- Publish Date 11/12/2024: The Board proposed amendments to update and remove rule language that is now outdated and superseded. The proposed rule amendments update and remove 61G15-23.005(4)(e) outdated and superseded rule language.
- Publish Date 05/26/2025: The Board proposed an amendment to remove outdated rule language. The proposed rule amendment removes 61G15-23.005(3)(b) outdated language.

Relevance and Key Takeaway:

- Digital and Electronic signatures are commonly confused
- Misuse of Electronic Signing and Sealing can invalidate documents and may lead to disciplinary action.
- **Key Takeaway:** Engineers must clearly distinguish between digital and electronic signatures and ensure the appropriate method is used, including use of proper authentication methods and required documentation.

Modified Version of Rule:

61G15-23.005 Procedures for Electronically Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports or Other Documents.

(1) Engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents which must be signed, dated and sealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 471.025, F.S., and Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C., may be signed electronically as provided herein by the professional engineer in responsible charge. As used herein, the term “electronic signature” shall have the meanings ascribed to them in Sections 668.003(2), (3) and (4), F.S.

(2) The SHA or Secure Hash Standard authentication code is described in Federal Information Processing Standard Publication 180-4 “Secure Hash Standard,” August 2015, which is hereby adopted and incorporated by reference by the Board and can be obtained from the internet website: <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-05976>.

(3) A professional engineer utilizing an electronic signature to sign and seal engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents shall:

(a) Create a static electronic version, such as PDF, of the engineering document(s) that is to be electronically transmitted;

(b) Compute an SHA-4 authentication code for each electronic engineering document;



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(c) Create a printable “signature report” that contains the licensee’s given name, the licensee’s license number, and a list of the electronic files to be signed and sealed that includes a brief description of each engineering document and the SHA authentication code of each engineering document;

(d) Print and physically sign, date and seal the “signature report” in compliance with Rule 61G15-23.003, F.A.C.; and,

(e) Transmit the signed, dated and sealed “signature report” to the receiving party along with each electronically signed, dated and sealed engineering document either by hardcopy or electronic scan. If scanned and sent electronically, the hardcopy of the signed and sealed report shall be retained by the licensee in accordance with Rule 61G15-30.009, F.A.C. Each engineering document is considered to be electronically signed and sealed if the document’s SHA authentication code matches the SHA authentication code on the physically signed, dated and sealed “signature report.”

(4) The affixing of an electronic signature to engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents as provided herein shall constitute the signing and sealing of such items.

(a) A digitally created seal as set forth in Rule 61G15-23.002, F.A.C., may be placed where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

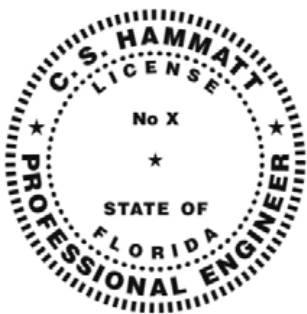
(b) The date that the electronic signature is to be placed into the document must appear on the document in accordance with subsection 61G15-23.001(5), F.A.C., and where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(c) The engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents being electronically signed and sealed shall include text to indicate the following and place it where an original signature would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed:

1. The same information required by subsection 61G15-23.002(2), F.A.C. if a digitally created seal is not used,
2. The item has been electronically signed and sealed using a SHA authentication codes; and,
3. Printed copies of the document are not considered signed and sealed and all SHA authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

(d) Formatting of seals and text similar to that depicted below shall be used. While the formatting may be altered, the text must remain identical.

1. When a digitally created seal is used:



This item has been electronically signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date adjacent to the seal using a *SHA* authentication code.

Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the *SHA* authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

2. When a digitally created seal is not used:



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[NAME], State of Florida, Professional Engineer, License No. [NUMBER]

This item has been electronically signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date indicated here using a *SHA* authentication code.

Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the *SHA* authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

~~(e) Beginning on the effective date of this rule amendment, November 2, 2020, and continuing until December 31, 2020, the restriction contained in subparagraph (4)(c)3., above, and the text of required language illustrated in subparagraphs (4)(d)1. and 2., that printed copies of electronically signed and sealed plans or documents are not considered signed and sealed is removed, and printed copies of said plans or documents are deemed validly signed and sealed for any purpose allowed by law. After December 31, 2020, the existing restriction is reinstated. Any licensee seeking to use printed copies of electronically signed and sealed plans or documents must retain an original copy of the signed and sealed plans.~~

Rulemaking Authority 471.025(1), 471.033(2), 471.008 FS. Law Implemented 471.025, 668.006 FS. History—New 11-3-15, Amended 2-3-16, 10-26-16, 9-7-17, 6-19-18, 11-2-20.

Current Version of Rule:

61G15-23.005 Procedures for Electronically Signing and Sealing Electronically Transmitted Plans, Specifications, Reports or Other Documents.

(1) Engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents which must be signed, dated and sealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 471.025, F.S., and Rule 61G15-23.001, F.A.C., may be signed electronically as provided herein by the professional engineer in responsible charge. As used herein, the term “electronic signature” shall have the meanings ascribed to them in Sections 668.003(2), (3) and (4), F.S.

(2) The SHA or Secure Hash Standard authentication code is described in Federal Information Processing Standard Publication 180-4 “Secure Hash Standard,” August 2015, which is hereby adopted and incorporated by reference by the Board and can be obtained from the internet website: <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-05976>.

(3) A professional engineer utilizing an electronic signature to sign and seal engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents shall:

(a) Create a static electronic version, such as PDF, of the engineering document(s) that is to be electronically transmitted;

(b) Compute an SHA authentication code for each electronic engineering document;

(c) Create a printable “signature report” that contains the licensee’s given name, the licensee’s license number, and a list of the electronic files to be signed and sealed that includes a brief description of each engineering document and the SHA authentication code of each engineering document;

(d) Print and physically sign, date and seal the “signature report” in compliance with Rule 61G15-23.003, F.A.C.; and,



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(e) Transmit the signed, dated and sealed “signature report” to the receiving party along with each electronically signed, dated and sealed engineering document either by hardcopy or electronic scan. If scanned and sent electronically, the hardcopy of the signed and sealed report shall be retained by the licensee in accordance with Rule 61G15-30.009, F.A.C. Each engineering document is considered to be electronically signed and sealed if the document’s SHA authentication code matches the SHA authentication code on the physically signed, dated and sealed “signature report.”

(4) The affixing of an electronic signature to engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents as provided herein shall constitute the signing and sealing of such items.

(a) A digitally created seal as set forth in Rule 61G15-23.002, F.A.C., may be placed where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(b) The date that the electronic signature is to be placed into the document must appear on the document in accordance with subsection 61G15-23.001(5), F.A.C., and where it would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed.

(c) The engineering plans, specifications, reports or other documents being electronically signed and sealed shall include text to indicate the following and place it where an original signature would appear if the item were being physically signed, dated and sealed:

1. The same information required by subsection 61G15-23.002(2), F.A.C. if a digitally created seal is not used,
2. The item has been electronically signed and sealed using a SHA authentication codes; and,
3. Printed copies of the document are not considered signed and sealed and all SHA authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

(d) Formatting of seals and text similar to that depicted below shall be used. While the formatting may be altered, the text must remain identical.

1. When a digitally created seal is used:



This item has been electronically signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date adjacent to the seal using a *SHA* authentication code.

Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the *SHA* authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

2. When a digitally created seal is not used:



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[NAME], State of Florida, Professional Engineer, License No. [NUMBER]

This item has been electronically signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date indicated here using a *SHA* authentication code.

Printed copies of this document are not considered signed and sealed and the *SHA* authentication code must be verified on any electronic copies.

Rulemaking Authority 471.025(1), 471.033(2), 471.008 FS. Law Implemented 471.025, 668.006 FS. History--New 11-3-15, Amended 2-3-16, 10-26-16, 9-7-17, 6-19-18, 11-2-20, 11-12-24, 5-26-25.

61G15-18.012 – Board Compensation

Summary of Modifications during the 2023-2025 Biennium:

- Publish Date 11/26/2025: The Board proposed the Rule amendment to remove the sunset language per 120.536(5), F. S., which went into effect July, 1, 2025 as part of 2025—189, Laws of Florida.

Relevance and Key Takeaway:

- 120.536(5), F.S. states, “Unless otherwise expressly authorized by law, a rule may not include a provision whereby the entire rule, or a provision thereof, automatically expires or is repealed on a specific date or at the end of a specified period.”
- Multiple Rules within 61G15, F.A.C. previously included similar sunset provisions that were removed to comply with statutory requirements.
- *Key Takeaway:* This example is highlighted to make the reader aware of multiple rules that were modified during the biennium this course is reviewing solely to remove Sunset Language due to the Florida Statute update.

Modified Version of Rule:

61G15-18.012 Other Board Business for Which Compensation is Allowed.

The following are considered to be other business involving the Board as required by Section 455.207(4), F.S.:

- (1) All joint Board or Committee meetings required by statutes, Board rule or Board action.
- (2) Meetings of Board members with FEMC staff or contractors of FEMC at FEMC’s or the Board’s request. Any participation or meeting of members noticed or unnoticed will be on file in the Board office.
- (3) Where a Board member has been requested by the Secretary of the Department, the Executive Office of the



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Governor, or the Chair of a Legislative Committee to participate in a meeting or hearing.

(4) Probable Cause Panel Meeting.

(5) All activity of Board members, if authorized by the Board, when grading, proctoring or reviewing examinations.

(6) All participation in Board authorized meetings with professional associations of which the Board is a member or invitee. This would include all meetings of national associations of which the Board is a member as well as Board authorized participation in meetings of national or professional associations or organizations involved in educating, regulating or reviewing the profession over which the Board has statutory authority.

(7) Any and all other activities which are Board approved and which are necessary for Board members to attend in order to further protect the public health, safety and welfare, through the regulation of which the Board has statutory authority.

~~(8) No later than December 31, 2024, the Board shall review and consider amendment, modification, or repeal of this rule if review determines this rule creates barriers to entry for private business competition, is duplicative, outdated, obsolete, overly burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.~~

~~Rulemaking Authority 455.207 FS. Law Implemented 455.207 FS. History—New 11-2-81, Formerly 21H-18.12, 21H-18.012, Amended 11-16-20,~~

Current Version of Rule:

61G15-18.012 Other Board Business for Which Compensation is Allowed.

The following are considered to be other business involving the Board as required by Section 455.207(4), F.S.:

(1) All joint Board or Committee meetings required by statutes, Board rule or Board action.

(2) Meetings of Board members with FEMC staff or contractors of FEMC at FEMC's or the Board's request. Any participation or meeting of members noticed or unnoticed will be on file in the Board office.

(3) Where a Board member has been requested by the Secretary of the Department, the Executive Office of the Governor, or the Chair of a Legislative Committee to participate in a meeting or hearing.

(4) Probable Cause Panel Meeting.

(5) All activity of Board members, if authorized by the Board, when grading, proctoring or reviewing examinations.

(6) All participation in Board authorized meetings with professional associations of which the Board is a member or invitee. This would include all meetings of national associations of which the Board is a member as well as Board authorized participation in meetings of national or professional associations or organizations involved in educating, regulating or reviewing the profession over which the Board has statutory authority.

(7) Any and all other activities which are Board approved and which are necessary for Board members to attend in order to further protect the public health, safety and welfare, through the regulation of which the Board has statutory authority.

Rulemaking Authority 455.207 FS. Law Implemented 455.207 FS. History—New 11-2-81, Formerly 21H-18.12, 21H-18.012, Amended 11-16-20, 11-26-25.



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Common Compliance Pitfalls and Real-World Examples

The Florida Board of Professional Engineers enforces applicable laws and rules with the goal and intent to protect public safety and welfare. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action. Some of the more common causes of disciplinary action enforced when rules are not appropriately upheld include:

- Improper signing, sealing, or dating of engineering documents
- Practicing outside licensee's area of competence
- Failure to meet continuing education requirements

As a professional engineer, it is important to be aware of specific scenarios where other engineers were deemed not to have appropriately upheld the rules, the determination of the shortcomings, and the resulting disciplinary action that ensued to prevent making similar mistakes.

Disciplinary Action

The following examples are summarized from publicly available disciplinary cases and are provided for educational purposes only. They are not exhaustive and do not represent all possible violations or outcomes.

Three Real Examples from the FBPE Website:

1. A Florida PE was Reprimanded/Suspended for violating various Florida Statute Sections and Florida Administrative Code Rules, including Rule 61G15-22.006, renewing a Professional Engineer license without having completed all required continuing education on or before February 28, 2021. The licensee did not respond to the complaint or produce documentation showing completion of continuing education.
 - Ruling: The case was presented to the full Board. The Board both Reprimanded and Suspended the respondent's PE license. Prior to reinstating their license, the respondent must pay an administrative fine of \$1,000 and costs of \$48.75, pass the Board Study Guide, pass an online professional ethics course, complete all required continuing education, and appear before the Board. Final Order was filed May 3, 2023.



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- Practical Lesson: Licensees must ensure all continuing education requirements are completed and properly documented prior to license renewal. Failure to respond to Board inquiries may result in escalated disciplinary action.
2. A Florida PE was charged with violating various Florida Statute Sections and Florida Administrative Code Rules, including Rule 61G15-23.001, not dating signed and sealed engineering documents files for public record. The licensee signed and sealed deficient engineering documents for structural designs for concrete masonry unit screen walls and an aluminum fence in Winter Haven, FL. In addition, the engineering documents were not dated.
- Ruling: The case was presented to the full Board upon a Settlement Stipulation. The Board imposed an administrative fine of \$1,000 and costs of \$5,025.76, an appearance before the Board, structural engineer project reviews at six- and 18-month intervals, and successful completion of the Board's Study Guide and a Board-approved online course in engineering ethics and professionalism. Final Order was issued Aug. 20, 2021.
 - Practical Lesson: Engineering documents must be properly signed, sealed, and dated in accordance with Rule 61G15-23.001. Incomplete or deficient design documents may result in both technical and regulatory violations.
3. A Florida PE was charged with violating various Florida Statute Sections and Florida Administrative Code Rules, including Rule 61G15-23.001(4)(a)1, signing and sealing final engineering documents without placing a title block on each sheet of the drawings. The licensee signed, dated, and sealed engineering design documents for an existing structure. The Electrical Engineering design documents contained material deficiencies. Those deficiencies included, but were not limited to, the drawings containing an electrical riser diagram but no short circuit values and no voltage drop calculations for the feeders and customer-owners service conductors, no receptacle outlets shown on the drawings (which is a violation of NEC 201.63), the drawings show no circuit interrupting devices and fault current capability, and no circuitry for outlets, equipment or devices, no surge protective devices are shown on the drawings, no circuiting for any lighting fixtures, etc.



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- Ruling: This case was presented to the full Board upon a Settlement Stipulation. The Board imposed Administrative Costs of \$2,546.25, a Reprimand, Appearance before the Board, successful completion of the Basic Engineering Professionalism and Ethics course and the Board's Study Guide. Final Order was issued on June 10, 2019.
- Practical Lesson: Engineers are responsible for meeting applicable technical standards for design documents, and that they include sufficient detail to support safe and code-compliant construction.

Hypothetical Scenarios for Consideration

A brief consideration of general principles to be mindful of is also included through the form of hypothetical scenarios and possible or likely outcomes.

1. A Florida PE applies a digital signature to a document that does not meet authentication requirements under Rule 61G15-23.004.
 - This can result in the document being considered improperly sealed, deemed invalid, and may subject the engineer to disciplinary action.
2. An engineer applies a scanned signature to a document without proper controls.
 - The document is altered after signing, creating liability exposure.
3. A PE completes continuing education hours through courses that are not compliant with Florida requirements.
 - During a license audit, the hours are rejected, resulting in a deficiency and potential disciplinary action.

By understanding both the rules and how they are enforced in practice, professional engineers can better protect the public and maintain compliance with regulatory requirement



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