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At the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE), held in Calgary on May 24, a milestone was marked with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Discipline and Enforcement by the engineering regulatory bodies from across Canada.

To protect the public interest in areas relating to the practice of engineering, PEO and the other 11 organizations across Canada have agreed to exchange information about discipline and enforcement activities, to the extent allowed by the legislation of each organization and other relevant statutes. The memorandum formalizes the spirit of cooperation on discipline and enforcement activities that already exists. We will also cooperate in investigative and disciplinary actions against practitioners who are practising professional engineering or using engineering titles without appropriate licensure in other jurisdictions. As well, we have agreed to review our own acts, codes and regulations to identify opportunities for affirming the responsibilities of our members to comply with the rules in other jurisdictions where they practise.

Like Ontario professional engineers, engineers across Canada feel that enforcing the licensing and title requirements of the provincial engineering acts against non-engineers should be the top priority of all the Canadian regulatory bodies. In the write-in comments to CCPE's 2002 *Survey of the Canadian Engineering Profession*, the perception expressed by practitioners across the country is clearly that there is little enforcement going on. This pact, as well as

Getting tough on enforcement

programs like PEO's Enforcement Communications Plan, are intended to address these concerns.

As noted in the January/February 2003 issue of *Engineering Dimensions*, PEO receives approximately 400 inquiries about enforcement each year. All are investigated by PEO. "Cease and desist" letters are written where appropriate and PEO takes approximately four to five cases to prosecution in Ontario Provincial or Superior Court annually. Many cases, such as the recent one where a Peterborough awning and tent rental company was found guilty and fined \$4,000 for practising professional engineering without a PEO Certificate of Authorization, are brought to PEO's attention by its licence holders. In that case, a professional engineer reported that the company in question had provided a drawing bearing his professional engineer's seal to another client, without his approval, and that the drawing had been provided to local building officials as part of an application for a building permit to erect a beer tent for a local service organization.

The new PEO enforcement hotline has been set up to make it easier for professional engineers and the public to report to PEO instances of unlicensed practice or title use. The PEO enforcement hotline telephone number is 416-224-9528 (or 800-339-3716) ext. 444. This service is intended to provide you with quick access to PEO enforcement staff to have your concerns investigated. As well, PEO is issuing two new brochures called *A guide to the enforcement of the Professional Engineers Act*, and *Glossary of Terms Used & Frequently Asked Questions in the Regulation of Professional Engineering*.

In regard to developing strategies relating to enforcement, PEO and the other regulators have agreed to work together to develop joint strategies and solutions to problems of unlicensed practice and misuse of engineering titles.

CCPE will also conduct an annual survey of its constituent members on the general nature and level of their discipline and enforcement activities.

The draft memorandum was reviewed by PEO's enforcement staff, Enforcement Committee and legal counsel. It was approved, with minor changes, by PEO Council in June 2002. The final version was circulated by a Canadian Engineering Qualifications Board (CEQB) task force in late October 2002, and all the regulatory bodies agreed to sign it.

An objective of CCPE's new strategic plan is "to conduct core business activities in support of the constituent members' regulatory activities (admissions, practice, discipline and enforcement)."

Goals relating to discipline and enforcement include: facilitating consistency of discipline and enforcement practices across the country by promoting the sharing of information in these areas by the constituent members; ensuring proper use of the terms "engineer" and "engineering"; and preserving all official marks held on behalf of the constituent members.

With the establishment of the PEO Enforcement Committee, which in 2002 oversaw the implementation of the first phase of the PEO Enforcement Communications Plan, and the changes to the *Professional Engineers Act*, proclaimed into law on February 28, 2003, PEO is actively working to strengthen its enforcement muscle, although sound evidence will continue to be required for success in the courtroom.

The pact signed by all the Canadian engineering licensing bodies at the CCPE AGM addresses the need for consistent discipline among engineering licensing bodies as well as the need to cooperate when joint action is necessary.

PEO and the other organizations across the country are working to raise awareness of the importance of investigating and prosecuting substandard or illegal practice and title use in response to the identified concerns of professional engineers.

Discipline and enforcement activities, along with maintaining high entry and professional practice standards, are vital for the regulation of the profession to protect public safety. ♦