



## Effective enforcement is up to us all

A key part of PEO's mandate is enforcement\*. That is, protecting the public from companies who offer so-called professional engineering services, and those who use the P.Eng. title without all that pesky business of getting their licences first.

I probably can't emphasize this enough, but we take the subject of enforcement here at PEO very seriously, and always have. (That face on the cover says it all, doesn't it?)

In the past, our enforcement activity has often happened quietly, behind the scenes, and we've been criticized for appearing to do too little. All that changed in 2001, when a new communications plan was launched to let members, fellow provincial regulators, other engineering organizations and the public know more about what we're up to on the enforcement front. Since then, activities have been steadily increasing, culminating in the March 2007 launch of a multi-faceted proactive enforcement project.

This project goes way beyond PEO's usual enforcement methods to measure the extent of unreported violations of the licensing and title provisions of the *Professional Engineers Act* (p. 50). One of the more high-profile aspects of the project was the release last fall of *Licence Please!*, a multimedia enforcement presentation that has been getting the word out about illegal engineering practice and title use.

While PEO has stepped up its enforcement efforts, and our communication of those efforts, much relies on members and the public playing their parts: to always be on the lookout for illegal engineering practice and title use, and to report it to PEO. In Michael Mastromatteo's interview (p. 56), Eric Newton, PEO's manager, enforcement and prosecutions, explains that while calls to the enforcement hotline (416-224-9528, ext. 1444; 800-339-3716, ext. 1444) are few, many of them have resulted in important cases coming to the association's attention.

My personal brush with PEO enforcement came last year while gathering air

conditioning quotes in anticipation of a long, hot summer. Mr. X, as we'll call him, arrived at the scheduled hour and handed over his business card. And there it was, in black and white—Eng.! I had my suspicions, looked him up in the PEO database the next day and, sure enough, no licence. I don't think Mr. X was attempting to offer engineering services, just trying to lend more credibility to his HVAC business. Nonetheless, it was my duty to sic on him our resident enforcement rottweiler, Steven Haddock (p. 43).

A consistent criticism of PEO concerns the industrial exception. This often misinterpreted issue sure has the ability to polarize members, with some feeling it "represents a giant loophole," and others feeling it's not as much of an issue to public safety as many think. With "What is

to be made of the industrial exception?" (p. 53), you be the judge.

I'll leave off with a reminder that PEO's Annual General Meeting (not to mention the Order of Honour Awards Gala and Engineering and Public Policy Conference) is coming up soon—May 9-10 in Windsor, in fact. To prepare, you'll want to check out the minutes of last year's meeting (p. 65), audited financial statements (p. 29) and official notice of the meeting and procedures for addressing member submissions (p. 61). See you there!

Jennifer Coombes, Managing Editor

\*Although often used interchangeably, enforcement is not part of our complaints and discipline efforts, which are focused on maintaining high standards among licence holders, while enforcement focuses on preventing those who are unlicensed from practising engineering or using engineering titles.

