

PRACTICE ADVICE RESOURCES AT PEO

By José Vera, P.Eng., MEPP

THROUGHOUT THEIR careers, engineers may encounter challenging situations in their practices. Often these challenges are not technical, but rather deal with the professional obligations of engineers.

Whatever difficulties lie ahead, engineers have always been known to rise to the occasion and find the necessary resources to overcome challenges. Accordingly, PEO provides several resources to help engineers understand their professional and ethical obligations. Following are some practice advice resources available to assist practitioners. Clients, employers, other regulators and members of the public might also benefit by familiarizing themselves with these resources.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

PEO's practice guidelines are a key resource for practitioners looking for advice and recommendations on best practices. Specifically, guidelines are developed to aid engineers in performing their engineering role in accordance with the *Professional Engineers Act* (PEA), and subordinate regulations. Practice guidelines provide a general definition of the roles and responsibilities of professional engineers, and are intended to advise practitioners of what is normally expected of a reasonable and prudent engineer practicing in a particular area. Guidelines also explain the role of a professional engineer to the public, especially clients and employers.

For a complete list of the current PEO practice guidelines, please visit www.peo.on.ca/index.php?ci_id=4377&la_id=1.

PRACTICE BULLETINS

PEO's practice bulletins are similar to practice guidelines, but are developed for urgent issues or where a short document shelf-life is expected. Bulletins are also used for interpretations or supplements to the guidelines. Customarily, bulletins are incorporated into guidelines at the earliest opportunity.

For a complete list of the current PEO practice bulletins, please visit www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/2211/la_id/1.htm.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

PEO's performance standards provide benchmarks that help practitioners determine the proper level of service they need to provide. However, professional engineers are expected to rely on their own judgment in deciding how to fulfill the tasks entrusted to them. For this reason, instead of dictating rigid rules, PEO's performance standards describe the required outcome of an engineer's activities and leave the method of accomplishing these goals to the discretion of the engineer.

Performance standards can be found in O. Reg. 260/08, a regulation under the PEA. For a current version of this regulation, please visit www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080260.

CONTACTING PEO STAFF FOR PRACTICE ADVICE

PEO's practice advisory team provides information and guidance to engineers on professional practice issues and their responsibilities under the PEA. If you have a practice question that is not addressed by PEO's guidelines, bulletins or standards, please email PEO's practice advisory team at practice-standards@peo.on.ca. This email address is monitored daily by the practice advisory team. The team is also available to discuss practice issues by phone. Please call 800-339-3716, press 0 for reception, and ask to speak with someone about a practice issue.

MOST COMMON PRACTICE ADVICE QUESTIONS

PEO's practice advisory team tracks information about the most common questions it receives. Approximately 20 per cent of all practice advice questions deal with the engineer's seal. Consequently, engineers are encouraged to read PEO's practice guideline *Use of the Professional Engineer's Seal*, which can be found at www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/22148/la_id/1.htm.

Over 5 per cent of all practice advice questions deal with the Code of Ethics, which includes the duty to report and conflict-of-interest provisions. Engineers are also encouraged to read *Professional Engineering Practice*, which can be found at www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/22127/la_id/1.htm, since it contains best practices for dealing with ethical situations.

Another 5 per cent of all practice questions deal with reviewing the work of another engineer. The PEO practice guideline *Professional Engineers Reviewing Work Prepared by Another Professional Engineer* covers this important area of practice and can be found at www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/22122/la_id/1.htm.

PRACTICE ADVICE PRESENTATIONS AND WEBINARS

To be more proactive, PEO's practice advisory team will be providing a series of webinars covering the most common practice issues. Please visit www.peo.on.ca in the next few months for detailed information about these webinars.

PRACTICE TEAM VISITS

PEO's practice advisory team is available to visit your organization and deliver presentations on practice issues. For more information, send an email to practice-standards@peo.on.ca.

José Vera, P.Eng., MEPP, is PEO's manager, standards and practice.