

Status of Structural Engineering Practice Acts Nationally

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Overview

Status of Structural Engineering Practice Acts Nationally

- Historical Background
- Current Status
- Current & Future Activities



Historical Background

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- Professional licensing
 Illinois - 1897 (Architects)
- Professional Engineers
 Wyoming - 1907, Louisiana - 1908
- Structural Engineers
 Illinois - 1915
- 2007: State laws differ and often
 restrain trade



Historical Background (Cont'd)

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- Three National Summits held to address separate licensing for structural engineers:
 - June 2000
 - February 2002
 - November 2004
- Develop a common approach for separate SE licensing
- 30-40 organizations represented



Historical Background (Cont'd)

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During the three Summits:

- Reviewed multiple models
- Identified reasons for separate licensing
- Discussed obstacles likely to be encountered
- Concluded certification is an interim step
- Made final recommendations
- Developed strategies and identified associated issues



Historical Background (Cont'd)

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Activities in support of the three Summits:

- NCSEA announced in September 2004 a certification programs for SE (promoted as an interim step towards SE licensure)
- NCEES announced in 2004 the adoption of their new Model Law Engineer – Structural Engineering (supported by SEI, CASE and NCSEA)



Current Status

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11 jurisdictions have some sort of structural licensure:

- 2 SE Practice Acts
- 4 SE Limited Practice Acts
- 5 SE Title Acts



Current Status (Cont'd)

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States with Practice Acts (HI, IL):

- Buildings, bridges, and other structures must be designed by a SE
- PE cannot do any structural
- SE cannot do Electrical, Civil, Mechanical, or other engineering



Current Status (Cont'd)

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States with Limited Practice Acts (CA, NV, OR, WA):

- Certain types of structures can only be designed by a SE
- Remaining types of structures may be designed by a PE



Current Status (Cont'd)

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States with Title Acts
(AZ, ID, NE, NM, UT):

- Can be licensed as a SE
- However, there is no distinction on the type of structure a PE or SE can design



Current Status (Cont'd)

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Current minimum requirements to earn title of Licensed SE:

- Education: B.S. Degree
- Experience: Four Years
- Examination: Twenty-Four Hours



Current & Future Activities

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SEI & ASCE positions:

- SEI supports separate licensing of structural engineers. SEI will support and encourage activities to achieve this goal in each state and other jurisdictions.
- ASCE is silent on the matter, however work is underway to draft an ASCE Policy Statement regarding additional credentialing for the various institutes.



Current & Future Activities

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- Reasons for SE Licensure:
 - The safety and general welfare of the public are more dependent on the skills and competence of the structural engineer than those of most other professionals, including medical doctors.
 - To avoid structural disasters by ensuring that only qualified persons be authorized to practice structural engineering.
- State Activities:
 - Presently, NE and UT are actively trying to move from a "Title Act" to a "Practice Act".



Grandfathering

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- As with any new engineering licensing level, it is not appropriate to restrict licensed engineers from continuing to provide the services they are currently authorized to provide.
- There would need to be a definite period of time during which currently licensed engineers could apply for licensing based on their current licenses and experience. Therefore, only the licensing of future engineers would be affected.
- Engineers who were licensed by a specific date would be authorized to continue to provide the engineering services permitted under the old practice act licensing law.



SEI-PAC (Prof. Activities Comm.)

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Present Direction of SEI-PAC:

- Assist 2-3 states during 2007 in their endeavor to enact a SE Practice Act.
- Engage the local chapters of NCSEA and SEI/ASCE for leadership roles.
- Draft an ASCE Policy Statement in support of additional credentialing for engineers, beyond the P.E., to be endorsed by SEI and other ASCE Institutes.



Structural Engineering Licensure

For additional information:

- View reports from the last Separate SE Licensing Summit at <http://www.seinstitute.org/committees/bizreportw.cfm>
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