



NEW REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRMS IN BC

On February 5, 2021, the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) came into force – new governing legislation for Engineers and Geoscientists BC and its registrants. The PGA introduces new regulatory tools, processes, and requirements for Engineers and Geoscientists BC, including the responsibility to regulate firms.

All firms that engage in the practice of professional engineering or geoscience as part of their operations (including firms that only provide advice or services internally) will be required to register with Engineers and Geoscientists BC for a Permit to Practice beginning July 2, 2021.

A Permit to Practice grants firms the legal authority to engage in the practice of professional engineering or geoscience in BC.

BACKGROUND

Engineers and Geoscientists BC has worked actively, through consultation with government and registrants, to develop a regulatory program that ensures legislative requirements can be met without undue administrative burden on firms, while supporting our shared goal of strengthening public safety and protecting the environment.

These new requirements will bring Engineers and Geoscientists BC in line with other regulatory bodies across Canada that uphold responsibilities and requirements for engineering and geoscience firms. It will enhance public protection by introducing established standards of practice for all firms engaging in professional engineering and geoscience – standards that will be enforced through regular audits to ensure compliance.

REGULATORY COVERAGE

All firms that engage in the practice of professional engineering or geoscience as part of their operations (including firms that only provide advice or services internally) will be required to register with Engineers and Geoscientists BC for a Permit to Practice. This includes advice or services provided internally by an Engineers and Geoscientists BC professional registrant to another employee or other individual acting on the firm's behalf.

Regulation applies to:

- Corporations;
- Partnerships;
- Incorporated and unincorporated sole practitioners;
- Municipalities; and
- Specific government ministries or agencies named in regulation.

If the business activity of a firm does not require the practice of professional engineering or geoscience, then the firm may not need to be registered. Engineers and Geoscientists BC has resources available on its website for firms to assess their requirement for a permit and to submit an Applicability Review if required.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

Engineers and Geoscientists BC has developed a regulatory model for firms based on three pillars: ethics, continuing education, and quality management. This model is designed to create an established standard of practice for all firms and to codify and enforce the level of professional and ethical practice that many firms already meet.

In order to receive and maintain their Permit to Practice, firms must complete the following four steps.

1. REGISTER

Firms must register with Engineers and Geoscientists BC **between July 2 and September 30, 2021** to receive a Permit to Practice.

To register, firms must:

- Provide basic business contact information;
- Provide a list of BC registrants employed by or on contract with the firm;
- Designate a Responsible Registrant and Responsible Officer, roles that are accountable for ensuring the firm meets its obligations under the PGA and the Bylaws; and
- Pay application and permit fees.

Once the firm's application is complete, its Permit to Practice will be issued.

2. COMPLETE TRAINING AND PPMP

Within 12 months of receiving their Permit to Practice, firms must:

- Complete training (self-paced online courses, total training time approximately 8 hours; firms may also complete training before applying); and
- Complete their Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP), which documents the policies the firm has in place to meet ethics, quality management, and continuing education

requirements. Firms may use existing policies and procedures, develop new policies and procedures from scratch, or use templates provided by Engineers and Geoscientists BC.

3. PARTICIPATE IN AUDITS

Firms will be audited on a 3 – 5 year cycle to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. Audits will assess the firm's compliance with the Professional Governance Act, regulations, bylaws, guidelines, practice advisories and policies of Engineers and Geoscientists BC including quality management, continuing education and ethics standards.

Firms will be eligible for their initial audit 12 months after receiving their permit.

4. MAINTAIN THEIR PERMIT

To maintain their Permit to Practice, firms must:

- Verify their firm's business and contact information by March 31 each year;
- Pay annual fees by June 30 each year;
- Ensure their PPMP is maintained and updated; and
- Participate in regular audits (3-5 year cycle) and re-training (5 year cycle).

RESOURCES

Engineers and Geoscientists BC is providing support, resources and training to assist firms with registering and ensuring they are compliant with these new regulatory requirements.

Visit egbc.ca/firms for a complete list of resources and training opportunities.