



BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS

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**INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS
FOR CALIFORNIA STRUCTURAL ENGINEER APPLICATION**

It is the applicant's responsibility to compile and submit a correct and complete application package. A partial application packet will not be considered for evaluation and/or examination.

A complete application package must contain the application, application fee, engagement record and reference forms in signed and sealed envelopes from references, sealed college transcripts (if applicable).

CHECK LIST FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE

- Complete and sign the [application](#). Applications must be typed or completed online and printed. Make a copy for your records.
- Submit a check or money order made payable to the "Department of Consumer Affairs."
- Three [Engagement Record and Reference Forms](#) (minimum) enclosed in signed and sealed/stamped envelopes from your references containing **both** Part A and Part B. (You provide the envelopes)
- [Verification of Employment](#) (required only if experience credit for structural plan checking is being requested).
- [Verification of Licensure](#) (required only if verifying completion of NCEES Structural II exam, WA SE III, the Western States Structural exam, or, after April 2011, the 16-hour NCEES SE exam)
- Two self-addressed and stamped postcards. The Board will use these cards to notify you regarding the status of your application.
- Certified copies of court documents for any criminal convictions required to be disclosed in response to Question 9 on the application. **If you are unable to obtain certified copies of the court documents, you must provide the name/location of the court, the case number (if known), and the date of the conviction, along with a description of the criminal conviction, in the Remarks section of the application.**

General – California grants the authority to use the title "Structural Engineer" to licensed civil engineers who successfully complete an examination process. This application is required with evidence of experience and references.

- The name you use on this application must be the same as the name on your civil license. If you wish to change your name on your civil license, please complete, sign and send the [Name Change Affidavit](#) to the Board.

- The address you use on the application will be your address of record. Licensees' names and addresses are public records and are published in both electronic and print media, as well as disclosed upon request to the Board. You may choose to use a home address, a post office box, or a business address. If you wish to change your address of record for your civil license, use the [Online Address Change Form](#).

This information is a summary of some of the important requirements relating to certification to use the title "Structural Engineer." It is not intended to apply to every situation. You are responsible for complying with the current complete requirements in the [Professional Engineers Act](#) and the [Board Rules and Regulations](#).

Eligibility – Each applicant for authority to use the title "Structural Engineer" must:

- Hold a valid and current license as a civil engineer in California.
- Provide evidence showing three years of qualifying, full-time experience "in responsible charge" of structural engineering work. The three years must have been gained after the date of the examination which was passed to obtain initial licensure as a civil engineer. Work experience that was used to qualify for licensing as a civil engineer in California may not be used to qualify for licensing as a structural engineer.
- Pass the required examination(s) as described in the [Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Structural Engineer Examination](#).
- Pay the required fee.

Neither U.S. citizenship nor California residence is required. However, **disclosure of your social security number or individual taxpayer identification number is mandatory.** U.S. citizens who do not have a social security number may contact their local United States Social Security Office at 1-800-722-1213 or <http://www.ssa.gov/online/forms.html>. Non-U.S. citizens without a social security number may request an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the Department of Treasury (Internal Revenue Service) at (215) 516-4846 or <http://www.irs.gov>.

Experience Requirements – Qualifying experience is counted three years from the date of the examination which was passed to obtain initial licensure as a civil engineer. You may count experience up to the date you file your application, however, if you file within 30 days before the final filing date, you may count experience up to the filing final date.

Experience requirements for structural engineering gained out of state – Applicants that have been licensed and practicing in another state may apply prior to 3-years after obtaining their license as a civil engineer in California under certain circumstances. The Board will consider an application submitted sooner than three years after licensure as a Civil Engineer in California by a person who meets any of the following requirements:

- a. Has practiced under the exemption for officers and employees of the government of the United States of America; or:
- b. Has actually practiced in responsible charge in another state (licensure in another state does not allow for responsible charge experience in California); or:
- c. Has practiced in responsible charge in another country.

The Board will accept an applicant under any one of the above conditions provided that the conditions occurred prior to the time that the applicant arrived in California, provided that the applicant has six years of qualifying experience that can be counted toward the application for licensure as a Civil Engineer and at least three additional years of experience in structural engineering work in excess of those six years required for the civil engineering license, and further provided that an applicant who wishes to be considered under any of these provisions so indicates to the Board at the time of filing of his or her application, and files the application at least six months prior to the announced final filing date for the examination for which the applicant is applying.

Qualifying Experience – This consists of professional level employment “in responsible charge” of major projects. It does not include overtime, trainee, or orientation programs, any work done before initial license as a civil engineer, or work done on exempt structures as defined in Section 6737.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

Qualifying experience shall include structural design experience in all areas as follows:

- Use of three of the four common construction materials – Steel, Concrete, Wood and Masonry
- determination of lateral forces – seismic or wind
- selection of framing systems
- selection of foundation systems
- application of code requirements
- multi-story buildings or equivalent multi-level structures

Checking of structural engineering plans and calculations is also considered qualifying experience provided that the work is performed under the immediate supervision of, and certified to, by licensed structural engineer.

For work experience to be accepted as satisfactory each engagement must be separate and distinct – dual credit will not be allowed for overlapping engagements.

Definition of “responsible charge” – The term “responsible charge” means the process of exercising control and direction of professional engineering work, and making engineering decisions which can only be made by a professional engineer. Responsible charge directly relates to the span or degree of control over projects that a professional engineer is required to maintain.

The span of control necessary to be “in responsible charge” is such that the engineer:

- (1) personally makes engineering decisions concerning a project, including consideration of alternatives, or reviews and approves proposed decisions prior to their implementation, whenever such decisions affect the health, safety, or welfare of the public; and
- (2) judges the qualifications of technical specialists and the validity and applicability of their recommendations before such recommendations are incorporated into the work.

When making critical engineering decisions, the engineer must be physically present or be available by telephone or other communication devices within a reasonable period of time. The engineer must be a licensed civil engineer in the state where the work experience took place in order for that engagement to qualify as “responsible charge.”

Examination Dates/Locations – Refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Structural Engineer Examination](#) for information regarding the examination requirements.

Refer to the appropriate [examination schedule](#) for the date of the next exam and the final filing date.

Except as noted below, failure to appear for a scheduled exam will result in cancellation of the application and forfeiture of the application fee. Exams are administered at a few locations across the state, usually in the Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco areas. You will be assigned to the site located nearest to the address on your application. If you wish to take the exam at a specific site, you must submit a written request for the site you prefer with your application.

Special Accommodations – The Board no longer directly handles requests for special accommodations at examinations. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) oversees this procedure. If you have a need for special testing accommodations due to religious beliefs or for reasons falling within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you must contact [NCEES](#) regarding your request. **ALL** requests must be submitted to NCEES by the final filing date of the examination for which you are applying. **NOTE:** You must request special accommodations for each examination administration cycle, even if none of the information has changed since the last request. Information regarding the process for requesting special accommodations is available on the [NCEES](#) website. Do **NOT** contact the Board to request special accommodations; you must contact [NCEES](#).

Cancellation of Application and Forfeiture of Fee – Any of the following actions will result in cancellation of the application and forfeiture of the filing fee:

- Failure to appear for examination as scheduled;
- Failure to respond to a request from the Board for information within 90 days from the date of mailing of such a request.

Personal Reference Alternatives for Structural Engineering Applicants

It has come to the Board’s attention that applicants for authority to use the title “Structural Engineer” in California may have trouble obtaining appropriate references to meet the Board’s requirements. It is the Board’s desire to assist such applicants by providing information on how to obtain references from qualified persons who are licensed as a California licensed Structural Engineer or licensed in a state with which California has or had a comity agreement regarding structural licensing. Structural engineers licensed in a state that is currently licensing new structural engineers by administration of the 16-hour NCEES Lateral/Vertical SE exam are acceptable references for structural licensing in California.

It is also the Board's desire to make it clear that an applicant for the structural engineer license need not have worked for any of the structural engineers who are providing the references.

In order to assist applicants in securing the required references, here are some suggestions, which are offered for consideration. Specifically, the following cases represent situations which may have yielded contacts with appropriately licensed structural engineers who could be used as possible references:

- A structural engineer associated with or employed by a client firm for which the applicant's firm has performed structural engineering work.
- A structural engineer associated with or employed by another engineering firm with which the applicant's firm has engaged in a joint venture on a structural engineering project.
- A structural engineer associated with or employed by a building department to which the applicant has submitted plans and/or calculations for a plan check review.
- One or more California licensed structural engineers who are willing to review an adequate sample of the applicant's work in order to evaluate his/her qualifying experience. (Our website contains a "License Lookup" feature that can list the structural engineers that live in your area).
- The Structural Engineers Association of California (SEAOC) has agreed to provide a panel of licensed structural engineers, at no cost to the applicant, to examine samples of the applicant's work, to conduct an in-depth review and discussion with the applicant concerning those work samples, and based on that review and discussion, to serve as references on behalf of the applicant. SEAOC establishes a review panel from a limited pool of practicing engineers who volunteer as their schedules allow. As such, this review may be a lengthy process. SEAOC strongly urges applicants to request a review at least three months prior to submitting their application to the Board. The applicant must contact SEAOC directly at the below address and telephone number:

1400 K Street, Suite 212
Sacramento CA 95814
916-447-1198
info@seaoc.org