

THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION'S POSITION

- Providing expert engineering testimony to panels and boards under federal jurisdiction is the practise of engineering; therefore, those providing engineering testimony must be appropriately qualified and must be licensed as a professional engineer.
- Those providing engineering advice and making engineering decisions should be appropriately qualified and licensed to do so to ensure public safety and welfare.
- Those making engineering decisions or using engineering titles as part of regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction should be appropriately qualified and licensed to do so.

The issue

Important decisions impacting public safety and welfare are made on engineering matters as part of the function of many regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction. Engineers Canada believes that individuals providing federal testimony related to engineering matters should be appropriately qualified to do so to protect and maintain public safety across Canadian communities.

Only professional engineers in Canada should have their evidence given expert weight within a testimony to federal boards and/or review panels, provided they are appropriately qualified. This information should be made clear to those participating in these current processes. When non-engineers comment on engineering matters, they should be required to declare whether or not they are licensed, as relying on the testimony of someone who is not a licensed engineer when it comes to engineering matters may present a significant risk to public safety.

While there are clear processes in place for courts to follow to confirm the qualifications and credentials of a professional being asked to serve as an expert witness, there is less guidance available on the need to confirm the qualifications and credentials of those individuals presenting to federal boards, review panels, or tribunals.

How Engineers Canada has contributed

Engineers Canada continues to call on the federal government to recognize the important role that engineers play in protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Canadians and communities. The provincial and territorial engineering regulators are responsible for ensuring that those who are qualified are held to the highest professional standards within the practice of engineering.

Although engineering is regulated at the provincial and territorial level, Canadian citizens expect professional credentials to be recognized by all levels of government to protect their communities, the natural environment, safety, and personal well-being.

Recommendations to the federal government

The federal government must recognize that individuals making engineering decisions or using engineering titles as part of regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction should be appropriately qualified and licensed to do so.

The federal government, as an employer, must ensure that staff of regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction who are using engineering titles or providing engineering advice should be appropriately qualified and licensed to do so.

The federal government must clarify the rules and witness guidelines so that only those who are appropriately qualified and licensed should be permitted to provide expert testimony on engineering matters to regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction. Only qualified and licensed engineers should have their evidence given expert weight. This should be made clear to those participating in these processes.