



A Proposed Structural Partial Practice Act for the State of Nebraska

IN A NUTSHELL

- ❑ Need for greater public safety in the structural design of significant buildings, bridges and structures
- ❑ Those presently qualified and competent to practice structural engineering as defined will remain qualified to do so
- ❑ Transition period for current professionals to apply for SE licensing
- ❑ Administration changes for NE Board of Engineers & Architects are minimal

PROPOSED STRUCTURAL PRACTICE ACT FOR NEBRASKA

Currently in Nebraska, a professional engineer may practice structural engineering if they pass an 8 hour professional engineering exam and practice in their area of competence. Professional engineers in Nebraska are licensed by discipline of examination. If you have passed the Civil or Structural I exam, then you are a licensed Professional Civil Engineer (PE) and your seal will be designated that way. If you have passed the Architectural Engineering Exam, then you will be licensed as a Professional Architectural Engineer (PE) and your seal will be designated that way. In order to achieve the title of Structural Engineer (SE), a professional engineer must pass the new two day, 16 hour Structural Exam.

On January 1, 2011, the equivalency process expired and in April 2011, the Structural I and Structural II exams were replaced by the new two day, 16-hour Structural Exam.

Currently, the Board does not specifically determine the guidelines as to when a structural engineer is required. However, the NBEA Board Policy P08.07 allows a building code official to request the seal of a Structural Engineer (SE). In that case, the licensee must have a Professional Structural Engineer (SE) license.

SEAON is proposing the enactment of a Partial Practice Act for Structural Engineers that will define types of significant structures that must be designed by a Professional Structural Engineer (SE). The proposed Act will also include a transition period for qualified PE's to attain the SE title without taking another exam and recognizing those engineers experience. The proposed Act will not create a separate SE State Licensing Board but would work with the support of the current NBEA State Board.

Why Is A Structural Practice Act Necessary?

Reasons for clarifying and improving the structural discipline and practice:

- *Structural Examination Revision:* NCEES introduced a new 16-hour structural exam in April of 2011.
- *Discipline/Title Confusion:* Currently, a PE's title is not necessarily consistent with his/her area of expertise.
- *Education Requirements:* Bachelor of Science degree requirements have steadily decreased from 140 - 150 semester hours to as little as 124 hours.
- *Complex Codes:* Structural engineering design and building code requirements have become increasingly complex.
- *Computerization:* Use of advanced software by less competent engineers to design structures.
- *Complex Building Materials:* The use of new and lightweight building materials in construction is becoming more complex.
- *Designing for Extreme Events:* Events such as Tornados, Hurricanes, Blast, Progressive Collapse, etc has become more desirable by owners.
- *Insurance Costs:* Poor design and construction can affect many different insurance policies.

How Will the Current Practice of Structural Engineering Change?

Those presently qualified and competent in the areas defined by the act will continue to be able to practice structural engineering. If not presently licensed as an SE in Nebraska, they will submit application to the NE State Board for review together with an affidavit attesting to their competence and experience.

How Will It Be Implemented?

At the beginning of the calendar year following enactment, those professional engineers not holding a valid SE license in Nebraska and desiring to be transitioned will have twenty four months to make application to the NE Board of Engineers & Architects.

At the close of the transition period, licensing as a SE in Nebraska will follow the requirements established by the State and administered by the Board.

Benefits

- Increased public safety for the structural design of significant buildings and structures.
- Clarify the use of the title Structural Engineer (SE) for the public and Building Code Officials.
- Clearly defines the responsibilities for the practice of Structural Engineering.
- Maintains and improves upon the standards established by the State of Nebraska for the practice of structural engineering and the qualifications of license holders.



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