



STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS

**Structural Engineer Licensing and Regulations for High Seismic Zones
Report**

DATE & TIME: January 13, 2021 4:00 p.m.

LOCATION: WebEx Meeting

1) Introductions

The participants introduced themselves.

Ken Fuller, PE, Director, WA
Ric Moore, PLS, Executive Director, CA
Rebecca Powers, Executive Administrator, AK
Sandra Matsushima, Executive Officer, HI
Jason Barbee, Board Administrator, OR
Marjorie Lund, PE, SE – WA Board member
Dave Peden, PE, SE – WA Board member
Chun Lau, PE, SE – WA Pro-Tem Board member
Alireza Asgari, PE, SE – CA Board member
Ron Iwamoto, SE – HI Board member
Shanan Gillespie, Regulatory Manager, WA
Vonna Cramer, Licensing Lead, WA
Sara Neal, Licensing Examiner, AK
Ed Huston, PE, SE – WA

2) NCEES SE exam conversion to CBT

a) How are boards tracking the transition to CBT

A discussion was held regarding the transition to CBT, and that it is format change, but the content should remain as is.

Ms. Powers expressed a concern that currently Alaska has only one testing center and that will be an issue for all of the licensing exams.

b) Are there concerns about seismic design if they change the format of the Depth (afternoon) portion of the exam

There were concerns about the depth portion of the exam, and how it will be tested in the computer-based testing environment. Discussions regarding whether the exam could be CBT for the breadth portion of the exam, and a written depth portion of the exam.

Mr. Huston gave a history of exam development and summary of some of the information available for how the SE Exam will be developed for the CBT version. It is currently decided there will not be a paper & pencil or a tablet portion the test for the Breadth (afternoon portion). This mean that there will not be a “constructed response” portion. Mr. Huston mentioned that he suggested they contact NCARB to get ideas about how their test is given electronically and as far as he knows this was not done. The SE exam has about 600 applicants per year nationally.

A discussion was held regarding the reasons for going to CBT. Some of the reasons included: security of the exam; costs to administer exams (room rentals, proctors, etc.); convenient for examinees; and, more data on exam question/item performance.

3) SE licensing experience requirements, including seismic or significant structures experience and how many years of structural experience required

Ms. Lund asked the participants if seismic or significant structures experience was required for licensure as a SE in their respective states. Washington requires seismic and significant structures experience (+2 years). SE licensure requires a PE license first and 16-hour NCEES exam. Applications are reviewed at staff level unless experience needs board/committee approval.

Mr. Iwamoto and Ms.Matsushima (HI) stated there is no specific seismic/significant structure experience requirements. The experience must be under a licensed structural engineer. SE licensure can be granted with an 8-hour NCEES CE exam, and the 8-hour lateral portion of the NCEES SE exam. Hawaii has a full practice act that all structural design must be sealed by an SE. There is no significant structure provision.

Mr. Barbee (OR) stated that there is no specific seismic experience requirement. The experience must include work on 2 significant structures (+2 years). Five SE references are also needed. SE licensure requires a PE license first and 16-hour NCEES exam, or equivalent. All applications are reviewed by the board.

Ms. Powers and Ms. Neal (AK) stated no specific seismic experience requirement. The experience must include work on 2 significant structures. Two SE references are needed. The experience must be under a licensed structural engineer. SE licensure requires a PE license first and 16-hour NCEES exam. All applications are reviewed by the board.

Mr. Moore and Dr. Asgari (CA) stated no specific seismic experience requirement, however, experience includes three common materials (wood, steel, concrete, etc) . SE licensure in CA is needed when working on schools and/or hospitals. Three references are needed. The experience must be under an individual authorized to practice structural engineering in the same state the experience was gained in. All applications are viewed at the staff level. Board is not involved unless application is denied.

4) Comity applications from states that have used SE exam for initial PE licensure

Ms. Lund and Mr. Fuller (WA) asked the participants how they are handling comity applicants that have the SE exam for initial PE licensure. Washington has been seeing more of these applications. Currently, they are telling applicants that an additional 8-hour PE exam is required.

Mr. Moore (CA) stated he would need to check with staff to see how the applications are reviewed.

Ms. Powers (AK) stated they require a separate 8-hour NCEES PE exam, similar to Washington.

5) Comity applications from states without PE as an initial license

See #4 above.

6) Comity applications from foreign countries without NCEES FE, PE, or SE exams

Mr. Moore (CA), Ms. Powers (AK) and Ms. Matsushima (HI) stated that applicants must meet the criteria for licensure regardless of where they are from. Ms. Powers did state they do have provisions in their regulations for Canadian Professional Engineers (P.Eng).

7) Applications for PE and/or SE licensure where applicant has passed exams prior to gaining experience (decoupling)

No business.

The participants believed the meeting was productive and will hold another one soon. Mr. Moore (CA) asked whether the participants would like him to talk to NCEES WZ leadership to see if a separate SE meeting could be held closer to the Western Zone meeting. It was agreed that would be a great idea, however, the participants still want to hold this smaller regional meeting to discuss SE issues.

Issues to be discussed at next meeting:

- Universal licensure
- Decoupling of experience and exams.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.