

Structural Engineering Certification Board – Q & A

Q: Is certification by the SECB the same as licensing by States?

A: No. The SECB certifies an engineer, already licensed, in the practice of Structural Engineering. Certification will not affect anyone's present structural engineering registrations/licenses, nor will it make it easier to obtain licensing in other states at this time. The hope is that, in the future, it may do so.

Q: Will certification make it easier to become licensed in one of the ten states that presently license structural engineers either by practice or title?

A: No. But, it is anticipated that states will recognize the certification process by SECB in the future and allow SECB certification to eliminate much of the verification processes required by State Licensing Boards.

Q: Will certification be granted by "grandfathering"?

A: Yes. One may apply under the Grandfathering Provision through 6/1/2008. Refer to the Application Form for more information.

Q: Do I have to be licensed as a Structural Engineer to be certified by the SECB?

A: No. But a license granted by a legal jurisdiction is required.

Q: I am already a licensed Structural Engineer. Why should I become certified by the SECB?

A: Certification by the SECB is yet another testament as to the level of skill you possess. The certification requirements may exceed the requirements of your State Licensing Board. Also, national certification may be more recognized and required by stakeholders in other states where you work, if those states do not license structural engineers. Receiving certification through the Structural Engineering Certification Board aids in:

Establishing an identity for structural engineering, as a distinct and separate professional practice from civil engineering, in much the same way that neurologists, cardio-vascular surgeons, and other medical specialties have established professional certification programs to identify practice in the various medical practice fields.

Assisting the broader efforts by NCSEA and SEI and NCEES to work with the various states to promote the adoption of uniform structural engineering practice legislation, so that our licenses will be more transportable from state to state in the future and also, so that structural engineering practice is restricted to those who have the appropriate education and experience to practice it competently.

Providing the practicing profession a direct voice in establishing what the appropriate standards of primary education, continuing education, and experience are for structural engineering licensing.

Attempting to re-establish structural engineering as a profession, rather than as a technical avocation, and in so doing enhance the perceived value of our services to our clients.

Q. What is the justification for the application/annual certification fees?

A. Fees are established based on the following considerations:

- i. Administrative staff time and costs
- ii. Direct reimbursement for actual costs incurred by board and committee members who are volunteering their time for the program and the betterment of the profession
- iii. Support the visibility of the program to assure it meets the intended goal and vision of the program
- iv. Unlike licensing programs administered by states, this program is fully self supporting and does not receive subsidies from states or other local/national organizations

Q. Why, if an applicant did apply for certification through grandfathering during the initial year, is there an additional certification fee for all prior years that one was eligible?

A. Certification through the grandfathering provisions is a privilege being provided to the individual. It permits the applicant to be certified and become a charter member without having to go through examinations and other processes that have developed in the time since the applicant was initially practicing. Individuals who have participated through the initial year have supported the program and helped in its success and the betterment of the profession and protection of the public. Those who chose not to participate during the initial year, are obtaining the privilege, but must also contribute to the same level as the original applicants.

Q. What is the appropriate acronym and title to use in acknowledging my certification?

A. Engineers certified in the practice of structural engineering through the SECB are encouraged to use "SECB" following their name and titles (Joe Smith, PE, SECB). The correct terminology to use in describing certification is the following: "Joe Smith, Certified in the Practice of Structural Engineering." No alternate usages are acceptable. The SECB cannot be held liable for the misuse of this terminology.

Q. What will I receive upon being approved for certification?

A. Individuals will receive a plaque, wallet card and a lapel pin upon being approved for certification. Each renewal cycle, a new plate will be sent for the plaque displaying the appropriate expiration date, along with an updated wallet card.

Q. How do I document my PDH's for each renewal cycle and what hours are appropriate to use toward certification?"

A. Please refer to the "Recertification" button on the home page of the website

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