

THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION'S POSITION

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

The challenge(s)

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 qualified to do so to protect and maintain public safety across Canadian communities.

Where engineering is involved only professional engineers registered in a jurisdiction in Canada should have their evidence given expert weight within a testimony to federal boards and/or review panels, provided they are qualified. This information should be made clear to those participating in these processes. When non-engineers comment on engineering matters, they should be required to declare whether 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.

Engineers in Canada provide unbiased expertise, support data-driven decisions, and provide analytical skills and interdisciplinary approaches to decision-making. Engineers are equipped to talk about engineering and science matters within their area of expertise and have a professional responsibility to present data correctly. Relying on the testimony of someone who is not a licensed engineer when it comes to engineering matters presents a significant risk to public safety, the natural environment, and the economy.

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, this is not necessarily the case for federal boards, review panels, or administrative tribunals. Currently, accountability and transparency are missing from these federal appointments. To increase accountability and transparency in federal decisions, federal appointments to boards, review panels, or tribunals making engineering judgements must include licensed engineers.

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, Canadians expect professional credentials to be recognized by all levels of government to protect their communities, natural environment, safety, welfare, and personal well-being.

Recommendations to the federal government

The federal government should:

- Recognize that individuals making engineering decisions or using engineering titles as part of regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction should be qualified and licensed to do so.

- Clarify the rules and witness guidelines so that only those who are 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.
- As an employer, ensure that staff of regulatory boards or review panels under federal jurisdiction who are using engineering titles or providing engineering advice be qualified and licensed in Canada to do so.

