



National Council of Structural Engineers Associations

Structural Connection

May 2016

Licensing and Transitioning

Contributed by Susie Jorgensen, Director

The mission of NCSEA is to advance the practice of structural engineering by representing and strengthening its Member Organizations. One way of accomplishing this is through promoting the adoption of uniform professional structural engineering licensure throughout the United States. Our efforts to do this include assisting MOs in advocating structural licensure in each jurisdiction. One of the most important aspects of developing legislation for this purpose is to develop a provision for transitioning (grandfathering) of practicing structural engineers. A transition clause allows qualified licensed structural engineers to continue practicing without conforming to the examinations, education, and/or experience requirements of the revised legislation.

Each state must determine the procedure for the transitioning of practicing structural engineers. It may be as simple as requiring a signed affidavit declaring that the applicant is competent and capable of practicing structural engineering. Practicing engineers should be actively involved in determining what should be required. There are a number of examples for how this can be done; however, it is imperative that the process for developing it be fair, equitable and open. It should not be used to weed out engineers who are perceived to be less competent or otherwise restrict currently licensed engineers. Each licensing board already has a process for dealing with questionable engineering practices.

All of the major structural engineering organizations – National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA), Structural Engineers Institute (SEI) of ASCE, Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB), and Council of American Structural Engineers (CASE) of ACEC – support the development of a transition clause in conjunction with promoting structural engineering licensure. It cannot be said often enough that the licensure of structural engineers is recommended to improve the protection of the public. A transition clause allows those engineers currently practicing structural engineering to continue protecting the public in the design of structures.