

Statement on Professional Regulation and Practice of Engineering and Applied Science Technologists

The Challenge

The current regulatory framework in most provinces neither explicitly permits nor regulates the opportunity for engineering and applied science technologists to offer independent services within their competencies, and within the law as a self-regulating profession.

The Background

Canada's associations of technology professionals call on governments to revise existing legislation governing engineering and related fields, to enable technology professionals to contribute fully, legally, and within their competencies.

More than 400,000 technologists in engineering and applied science provide critical service in the growth, stability, and development of our infrastructure, the resource sector, and environmental sustainability. Their services impact public health and safety, property, the environment, and the economy in a substantial way. Technologists often work as an integral part of a team which may include engineers, architects, foresters, and others. A substantial proportion provides services independently, and many doing this work, and often claiming to be technologists, are completely unregulated and lacking in professional certification / registration.

Throughout Canada, the principle of "self-regulation" of the professions is well established as the means by which Canadians are assured that services are provided by qualified and accountable professionals. Technology professionals registered with their provincial associations have achieved wide recognition for their professionalism and are gradually being recognized in one form or another for their ability to practice independently within the scope of their competencies and appropriate to the protection of public health and safety.

Engineering and applied science technology professionals are regulated in Canada through provincial associations, the majority of which are statutory self-regulating bodies whose mandate it is to serve and protect the public interest and environment through certification, registration, and regulation of those who volunteer to be regulated. It is important to note currently, technology practitioners are not required to register with a professional regulatory association; thus competency, oversight, and quality assurance functions cannot be fully achieved.

The very notion contradicts the concept of regulation in the public interest, if engineering work of such a nature is allowed to go unregulated. What is needed? It is essential for public safety that a unified definition of technologist practice is created by all provinces, as is the ability to limit technology practice within that scope to qualified registrants only.

Legally, technologists can currently offer their services independently and assume full professional responsibility for their services where not restricted in law.

In the broad field of “engineering work”, which includes “professional engineering” and “engineering technology”, there are certain scopes of work restricted to professional engineers and limited license holders. The engineering work undertaken by qualified engineering and applied science technologists should be similarly described and restricted, albeit not as an exclusive scope of practice but as one in which professional engineers are also able to work.

Canada will succeed in a global economy when all qualified Canadians are enabled, rather than restricted from offering their skills and knowledge to the public in the fullest extent of their competencies.

Canada’s technical education through polytechnic institutions and colleges has equipped technologists with remarkable abilities to contribute. Canada’s regulatory system must ensure that only those so well skilled and well-regulated are permitted to perform the engineering work for which they were intended by successive Canadian and provincial governments.

The Request

Technology Professionals Canada calls on the governments of all the provinces, in whose jurisdiction falls the regulation of professions and the regulation of engineering, to recognize and regulate the scope of engineering work undertaken by technology professionals; and define and ultimately authorize the practice of the profession in legislation, by means of exemption to the scopes of practice of the professional engineer. This action will, ensure the quality of professional services by technologists and the recognition of the education and certification / registration of these professionals.



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