



GUIDE TO THE STANDARD FOR THE USE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

VERSION 2.0
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**ENGINEERS &
GEOSCIENTISTS**
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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PREFACE

This *Guide to the Standard for the Use of Professional Practice Guidelines* (the “Guide”) was developed by Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia to explain the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Professional Registrants related to the use of Engineers and Geoscientists BC’s Professional Practice Guidelines in the course of their Regulated Practice.

This Guide explains that Professional Practice Guidelines establish the expectations and obligations of professional practice in relation to specific professional activities. Professional Registrants are required to stay informed of, knowledgeable about, and meet the intent of the Professional Practice Guidelines relevant to their Regulated Practice. In addition, this Guide explains the differences between Professional Practice Guidelines and other

practice resources, such as other Guides and Practice Advisories.

This current revision was undertaken to provide clarity in guidance to Professional Registrants in accordance with the scheme and requirements of the *Professional Governance Act* and the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws.

This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC’s interpretation of section 7.3.1, Standard for Use of Professional Practice Guidelines, of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants are required to meet that standard by having regard for the information included in this Guide and by exercising their professional judgment when applying that standard in their practice. This is a living document that is to be revised and updated as required in the future, to reflect the developing state of practice.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	TERM
BC	British Columbia
EGBC	Engineers and Geoscientists BC
PPMP	Professional Practice Management Plan

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are specific to this Guide. These words and terms are capitalized throughout the document:

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	The <i>Professional Governance Act</i> , S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.
Bylaws	The Bylaws of Engineers and Geoscientists BC made under the <i>Act</i> .
Engineers and Geoscientists BC	The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia, also operating as Engineers and Geoscientists BC.
Firm	As defined in the <i>Act</i> : “(a) a legal entity or combination of legal entities engaged in providing services in respect of a Regulated Practice, or (b) a ministry or agency of the government that the Lieutenant Governor in Board may prescribe by regulation, but does not include a legal entity or combination of legal entities that may be exempted from this <i>Act</i> by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Board.”
Guide	A guide to a program or regulatory topic, published by Engineers and Geoscientists BC. These include Guides to quality management standards that in accordance with the <i>Act</i> and Bylaws define professional obligations related to specific processes and explain the minimum standards of practice, conduct, and competence expected from Professional Registrants and Firms.
Practice Advisory; Practice Advisories	An advisory, published by Engineers and Geoscientists BC, on time-sensitive, technical, and/or limited-scope issues related to the Regulated Practice.
Professional Practice Guidelines	A guideline, published by Engineers and Geoscientists BC, on specific professional services or activities.
Professional Practice Management Plan	A document developed and maintained by a Firm, which must meet the requirements set out in section 7.7.3 of the Bylaws.
Professional Registrant	A registrant of Engineers and Geoscientists BC who is registered in one of the following categories of registrants: (a) professional engineer; (b) professional geoscientist; (c) professional licensee engineering; (d) professional licensee geoscience; (e) life member prior to 1998; (f) honorary life member.
Regulated Practice	As defined in the <i>Act</i> and the <i>Regulation</i> , the carrying on of a profession by a registrant of a regulatory body, which for the purposes of this Guide means the practice of professional engineering or the practice of professional geoscience.
Regulation	The <i>Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation</i> , OIC 2021/O37.

VERSION HISTORY

VERSION NUMBER	PUBLISHED DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
2.0	June 15, 2023	Updated content to conform with the <i>Professional Governance Act</i> and updated Bylaws; minor editorial corrections.
1.1	May 20, 2021	Minor revisions to align wording with Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws.
1.0	February 17, 2021	Initial version.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

- 1.1.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC is the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering and geoscience professions in British Columbia (BC). To protect the public, Engineers and Geoscientists BC establishes, monitors, and enforces standards for the qualifications and practice of Professional Registrants.
- 1.1.2 Engineers and Geoscientists BC provides practice resources to Professional Registrants to assist them in meeting their professional and ethical obligations under the *Act* and Bylaws. One category of these practice resources is Guides to quality management standards, which explain the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for quality management in professional activities.
- 1.1.3 Throughout this Guide, any reference to Professional Practice Guidelines should be read to include Practice Advisories as a subset of Professional Practice Guidelines.
- 1.1.4 This *Guide to the Standard for the Use of Professional Practice Guidelines* explains the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Professional Registrants related to the use of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Professional Practice Guidelines in the course of their Regulated Practice. This Guide explains that Professional Practice Guidelines establish the expectations and obligations of professional practice in relation to specific professional activities. Professional Practice Guidelines are established by Engineers and Geoscientists BC and all Professional Registrants are required to have regard for them.
- 1.1.5 This Guide was undertaken to provide clarity in guidance to Professional Registrants, in accordance with the scheme and requirements of the *Act* and the current Bylaws, and to assist Professional Registrants in upholding their professional obligations under the *Act* and Bylaws.
- 1.1.6 This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC's interpretation of the standard described in section 7.3.1, Standard for Use of Professional Practice Guidelines, of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants are required to meet that standard by having regard for the information included in this Guide and by exercising their professional judgment when applying that standard in their practice. By following this Guide, Professional Registrants will be meeting the intent of the requirements in the Bylaw and appropriately upholding their professional responsibilities under section 7.3.1. There may be limited circumstances where, in a Professional Registrant's professional judgment, there are sound technical or ethical reasons to depart from the interpretation in this Guide. In those circumstances, Professional Registrants must record the technical or ethical reasons for the

departure and must use their professional judgment to make sure the resulting work still meets the intent of the standards in the Bylaws, as well as the Professional Registrant's broader professional and ethical obligations. The Record of these decisions must be retained according to the requirements of section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- 1.2.1 This document establishes that Professional Registrants are expected to have regard for the requirements of applicable Professional Practice Guidelines in the course of their professional activities. This Guide provides a common approach applicable to all Professional Registrants who engage in areas of Regulated Practice for which Engineers and Geoscientists BC has published Professional Practice Guidelines.
- 1.2.2 This Guide is specific to individual Professional Registrants. For requirements of Registrant Firms, refer to the *Regulation of Firms Permit to Practice Manual* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC, 2021).
- 1.2.3 The specific objectives of this Guide are to:
- describe the purpose of Professional Practice Guidelines;
 - assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining documented quality management procedures to stay informed of and knowledgeable about Professional Practice Guidelines relevant to their area of practice;

- assist Professional Registrants in meeting the intent of Professional Practice Guidelines, applicable standards, policies, and plans;
- describe the processes necessary to ensure that Professional Registrants are upholding their professional responsibilities as established under Professional Practice Guidelines;
- explain the difference between Professional Practice Guidelines, Practice Advisories, and Guides; and
- describe how Professional Registrants can properly depart from a Professional Practice Guideline while still meeting their professional and ethical obligations.

1.3 ROLE OF ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS BC

- 1.3.1 This Guide and the current revision were developed under the direction of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Board and, prior to publication, underwent final legal and editorial reviews. This Guide forms part of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's continuing commitment to establishing and monitoring the quality of professional services that Professional Registrants provide to their clients and to the public.
- 1.3.2 Engineers and Geoscientists BC does not publish Professional Practice Guidelines on every area of Regulated Practice engaged in by Professional Registrants. Where an applicable Professional Practice Guideline exists, it establishes how Professional Registrants can uphold their professional responsibilities while engaged in their area of Regulated Practice.

1.4 SCOPE

1.4.1 Establishing standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Professional Registrants is fundamental to Engineers and Geoscientists BC's purpose as a regulatory body. Engineers and Geoscientists BC establishes Professional Practice Guidelines to set the expectations and obligations of professional practice for Professional Registrants when engaged in specific professional activities. This includes outlining regulatory obligations as well as expectations related to conduct and competence.

1.4.2 This Guide is intended to assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining a documented quality management procedure to meet the required standards of practice, conduct, and competence that complies with the requirements of the *Act* and of the Bylaws by addressing:

- the purpose of Professional Practice Guidelines;
- the processes necessary to ensure that Professional Registrants are upholding their professional responsibilities as established under Professional Practice Guidelines;
- the difference between Professional Practice Guidelines, Practice Advisories, and Guides; and
- how Professional Registrants can properly depart from a Professional Practice Guideline while still meeting their professional and ethical obligations.

1.4.3 These obligations apply to Professional Registrants acting in their professional capacities in all industries when their work involves, among other things:

- ongoing professional engineering and professional geoscience work;
- projects with a defined start and finish;
- products and services requiring the application of professional engineering or professional geoscience;
- professional engineering or professional geoscience deliverables such as reports, drawings, specifications, digital artifacts, or other deliverables;
- implementation or use of professional engineering or professional geoscience work as may be found in a manufacturing facility, technology company, or operations or utilities work;
- construction or installation of professional engineering or professional geoscience work;
- implementation or construction carried out by others;
- implementation or construction being carried out by the Professional Registrant's Firm's own forces;
- professional engineering or professional geoscience work carried out for use internally by the Professional Registrant's Firm; and
- professional engineering or professional geoscience work carried out for others.

1.4.4 Terminology used within an industry may not match terminology used in this Guide. However, the obligations of Professional Registrants in all industries remain the same: to ensure that their work meets the intent of the *Act*, the Bylaws, and the applicable Professional Practice Guidelines. Not all sectors have specific Professional Practice Guidelines establishing the expectations and obligations of professional practice, but many Professional Practice Guidelines apply to Professional Registrants, regardless of the industry in which they practice.

1.4.5 This Guide must be read in conjunction with any Professional Practice Guidelines and Practice Advisories applicable to any specific area of practice or activity.

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Section 22(2) of the *Act*, General duty and responsibilities of regulatory bodies, states that:

“A regulatory body has the following responsibilities:

...

- (f) to establish, monitor, and enforce standards of practice to enhance the quality of practice so that registrants avoid
 - (i) professional misconduct,
 - (ii) conduct unbecoming a registrant, and
 - (iii) incompetent performance of duties undertaken while engaged in the regulated practice;”

...

2.2 Section 57(1) of the *Act*, Standards of conduct and competence, states that:
“Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the board of each regulatory body must make bylaws establishing the following:

- (a) standards of professional and ethical conduct for registrants, which standards may be different for different categories or subcategories of registrants;
- (b) standards of competence for registrants, which standards may be different for different categories or subcategories of registrants or different areas of practices;

(c) aspects of practice that a registrant either may or must not

- (i) delegate to a non-registrant to provide or perform, or
- (ii) authorize a non-registrant to provide or perform under the supervision of a registrant;”

...

2.3 Section 7.3.1 of the Bylaws, Standard for Use of Professional Practice Guidelines, states that:

“(1) EGBC shall publish professional practice guidelines approved by the Board on a public website maintained by EGBC and shall update professional practice guidelines as necessary.

(2) A Professional Registrant must have regard for applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices established by the government or by EGBC, including professional practice guidelines published pursuant to subsection (1), by establishing, maintaining, and following documented procedures in order to do all of the following:

- (a) stay informed of, knowledgeable about, and meet the intent of all applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices established by the government or by EGBC, including professional practice guidelines published pursuant to subsection (1), that are relevant to the Professional Registrant’s Regulated Practice;

- (b) document in writing the reason(s) for a departure from any relevant portion of a professional practice guideline published pursuant to subsection (1).”
- 2.4 The Code of Ethics in Schedule A of the Bylaws requires Professional Registrants to:
- “1. hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace;
- ...
4. have regard for the applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices established by the government or EGBC;
5. maintain competence in relevant specializations, including advances in the regulated practice and relevant science;
- ...
12. undertake work and documentation with due diligence and in accordance with any guidance developed to standardize professional documentation for the applicable profession;”

2.5 This Guide is intended to assist Professional Registrants in understanding the standard of practice and in fulfilling their professional obligations in accordance with section 7.3.1 of the Bylaws. This Guide may be used by Engineers and Geoscientists BC in disciplinary proceedings as evidence of professional standards, and of the conduct expected of a Professional Registrant in particular circumstances, in support of allegations of conduct unbecoming a registrant, incompetence, or professional misconduct.

3.0 STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE

3.1 WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 3.1.1 Each Professional Practice Guideline establishes the expectations and obligations of professional practice that all Professional Registrants are expected to have regard for in relation to a specific professional activity. Professional Practice Guidelines may also assist in interpreting the standards of competence and ethical conduct established by the Bylaws.
- 3.1.2 Engineers and Geoscientists BC chooses Professional Practice Guideline topics with a risk-based analysis, prioritizing Professional Practice Guidelines that address practice activities involving increased risk to the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace. Professional Practice Guidelines are prepared by subject matter experts and address specific professional activities or services. Engineers and Geoscientists BC solicits comments through review and consultation with stakeholders, including Professional Registrants practising in the relevant areas of practice, before publishing Professional Practice Guidelines.
- 3.1.3 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes all Professional Practice Guidelines on its website. From time to time, Professional Practice Guidelines are revised or

updated, so Professional Registrants should be familiar with the current version of Professional Practice Guidelines applicable to their practice.

- 3.1.4 Engineers and Geoscientists BC has the duty to serve and protect the public interest as it relates to the practice of professional engineering and professional geoscience, including regulating the conduct of Professional Registrants. Engineers and Geoscientists BC is responsible for establishing, monitoring, and enforcing the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Professional Registrants. One way that Engineers and Geoscientists BC exercises these responsibilities is by publishing Professional Practice Guidelines.
- 3.1.5 Each Professional Practice Guideline establishes the expectations and obligations of professional practice expected from a Professional Registrant engaged in the activities it addresses.

3.2 REGISTRANT REQUIREMENTS

- 3.2.1 To comply with the Bylaws, Professional Registrants must have established, or have access to through their Firm's Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP), documented quality management procedures related to staying informed of, knowledgeable about, and meeting the intent of all applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices, including Professional Practice Guidelines, and for

- providing written reasons for departing from any portion of a Professional Practice Guideline.
- 3.2.2 A documented quality management procedure is one that has been thought out and reduced to writing in a suitable form. The process may be captured in a written procedure, process flowchart, set of checklists, forms, or other documentation developed to suit the nature of the work undertaken by Professional Registrants.
- 3.2.3 The number of Professional Practice Guidelines that apply to a Professional Registrant or Firm can vary significantly, depending on the professional activities or services they provide. It is incumbent on each Professional Registrant and Firm to periodically review the Professional Practice Guidelines to ensure they are familiar with the current Professional Practice Guidelines that apply to their professional activities or services.

3.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GUIDELINES, PRACTICE ADVISORIES, AND GUIDES

3.3.1 GENERAL

- 3.3.1.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes several different types of documents to help Professional Registrants meet the standards of practice, conduct, and competence. Professional Registrants should be aware of the differences between Professional Practice Guidelines, Practice Advisories, and Guides. Professional Registrants must be familiar with the Professional Practice Guidelines, Practice Advisories, and Guides that relate to their areas of Regulated Practice.

3.3.2 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 3.3.2.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes Professional Practice Guidelines on specific professional services or activities where additional guidance is deemed necessary. Professional Practice Guidelines are written by subject matter experts and reviewed by stakeholders before publication. Engineers and Geoscientists BC's preparation of Professional Practice Guidelines is informed by a risk-based analysis of the professional activity or service that falls under Regulated Practice
- 3.3.2.2 A Professional Practice Guideline establishes the expectations and obligations of professional practice for a Professional Registrant engaged in the specific professional activities it addresses. Professional Registrants have a duty to be knowledgeable about, competent in, and meet the intent of Professional Practice Guidelines relevant to the professional activities or services they provide.

3.3.3 GUIDES

- 3.3.3.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes Guides to inform Professional Registrants about Engineers and Geoscientists BC functions that Professional Registrants may be expected to interact with. Guides describe the purposes, processes, and operations of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's programs.
- 3.3.3.2 Guides are provided as reference material for Professional Registrants. For example, a Professional Registrant can refer to the [*Guide to the Continuing Education Program*](#) (Engineers and Geoscientists BC, 2023) for a complete understanding of the continuing education requirements that Professional Registrants must fulfil.

3.3.3.3 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes Guides to quality management standards that explain professional obligations related to specific processes, as required in the *Act* and Bylaws. As with Professional Practice Guidelines, Guides to quality management standards are written by subject matter experts and reviewed by stakeholders before publication.

3.3.3.4 Each Guide to a quality management standard describes the expectations on how Professional Registrants and Firms can meet the quality management requirements as set out in the Bylaws.

3.3.4 PRACTICE ADVISORIES

3.3.4.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes Practice Advisories to keep Professional Registrants informed of time-sensitive technical and/or limited scope issues related to expectations and obligations of professional practice in the professional activity that the Practice Advisory covers. Practice Advisories may address changes to legislation, regulations, or commonly used standards; public safety or environmental concerns; or a shift in a certain professional practice topic.

3.3.4.2 Practice Advisories are generally narrower in scope than Professional Practice Guidelines and focus on how Professional Registrants can have regard for the expectations and obligations of professional practice related to the topic being discussed. Practice Advisories may be expanded at a future date to become Professional Practice Guidelines or be incorporated into a future revision of an existing Professional Practice Guideline.

3.4 HOW TO DEPART FROM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

3.4.1 Professional Practice Guidelines set the expectations and obligations of professional practice for Professional Registrants in relation to specific professional activities. However, Professional Registrants can exceed the intent of relevant Professional Practice Guidelines. For example, a Professional Registrant involved in the design of retaining walls may use a factor of safety greater than that required by the relevant *Professional Practice Guidelines – Retaining Wall Design* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC, 2020).

3.4.2 Professional Registrants may also depart from a Professional Practice Guideline if it is appropriate to do so for an identified reason. In such circumstances, the Professional Registrant must document the reason for departing from any relevant portion of the Professional Practice Guideline. Professional Registrants should consider supporting this decision through a documented risk assessment. The rationale must be consistent with the Professional Registrant’s obligations under the *Act*, relevant regulations, the Bylaws, and the Code of Ethics. Given the potential risks to the public and the environment that such departures pose, the Professional Registrant should evaluate whether to have the departure reviewed before implementation by an independent Professional Registrant.

4.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation, OIC 2021/037.
Professional Governance Act, S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2023. Guide to the Continuing Education Program. Version 3.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2023 May 31]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Continuing-Education/Continuing-Education/Program-Overview>.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2020. Professional Practice Guidelines – Retaining Wall Design. Version 1.1. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2023 May 31]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Guidelines-Advisories>.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2021. Regulation of Firms Permit to Practice Manual. Version 1.1. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2023 May 31]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Firm-Practice/Firm-Practice>

