



GUIDE TO THE STANDARD FOR DOCUMENTED INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGNS

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**ENGINEERS &
GEOSCIENTISTS**
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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PREFACE

This *Guide to the Standard for Documented Independent Review of Structural Designs* (the “Guide”) was developed by Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia to explain the standards of practice, conduct, and competence related to Independent Reviews of Structural Designs expected of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms.

This current revision was undertaken to incorporate Registrant Firm requirements, describe the Risk Assessment requirements related to Independent Reviews of Structural Designs, and add reference to the *Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a).

This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC’s interpretation of Section 7.3.5 of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms are required to meet this standard by having regard for the information provided in this Guide. Professional Registrants are required to exercise their professional judgment when applying this standard in their practice. Registrant Firms are required to have documented policies and procedures in their Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP) to meet this standard. This Guide is a living document that is to be revised and updated as required to reflect the developing state of practice.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	TERM
AHJ	Authority Having Jurisdiction
BC	British Columbia
EGBC	Engineers and Geoscientists BC
PPMP	Professional Practice Management Plan

DEFINED TERMS

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> .
Check (and derivatives)	A documented process to confirm the professional engineering or professional geoscience work is complete, meets all input requirements, and is suitable for its intended use or purpose. This encompasses all of the various Checks that occur or ought to occur throughout the development, presentation, production, and performance of any Regulated Practice work in any sector.
Consequence	An outcome of an event or sequence of events that culminates in: 1. harm, injury, illness, or death to one or more persons; or 2. damage to the environment.
Document(s)	Includes any physical or electronic Record, including but not limited to a report, certificate, memo, specification, drawing, map, or plan, that conveys a design, direction, estimate, calculation, opinion, interpretation, observation, model, or simulation that relates to the Regulated Practice.
Documentation	See the definition for “Record.”
Engineers and Geoscientists BC	The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia, operating as Engineers and Geoscientists BC.
Firm	As defined in the <i>Act</i> : “(a) a government registrant; (b) a legal entity or a combination of legal entities that is engaged in a regulated practice, whether the practice occurs solely within the firm or in the provision of services to a person or entity outside the firm, unless the legal entity or combination of legal entities is exempted from this Act by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council;”.
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 Registrant Firms.
Hazard	A set of conditions or an operational situation that might lead to a Consequence.

TERM	DEFINITION
Independent Review	A documented evaluation of the Structural Design concept, details, and Documentation based on a qualitative examination of the substantially complete Structural Design Documents before they are issued for construction or implementation, and the evaluation is performed in accordance with the Bylaws and this Guide by an appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant who was not involved in preparing the design. There are two types of Independent Review: • Type 1 Independent Review is an Independent Review carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant who was not involved in preparing the design but may be employed at the same Registrant Firm as the Professional of Record who is responsible for the design. • Type 2 Independent Review is an Independent Review carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant who was not involved in preparing the design and is not employed at the same Registrant Firm as the Professional of Record who is responsible for the design.
Independent Reviewer	The Professional Registrant who is responsible for conducting and completing an Independent Review.
Permit to Practice	A certificate bearing a Permit to Practice number that is issued to a Registrant Firm by Engineers and Geoscientists BC and confirms the Registrant Firm is entitled to engage in the Reserved Practice in BC, subject to any suspensions, limitations, conditions, or restrictions on the Registrant Firm's registration.
Professional of Record	The Professional Registrant who is professionally responsible for activities, work, or Documents related to the Regulated Practice.
Professional Practice Management Plan	A Document developed and maintained by a Registrant 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.
Record (Documentation)	Any Document that is evidence of Regulated Practice activities, events, or transactions, or is evidence that a Professional Registrant has met their professional and contractual obligations.
Registrant	As defined in the <i>Act</i>: “(a) a professional engineer, (b) a professional geoscientist, (c) a firm that is registered with the regulatory body under this Act, if firms may be registered in respect of that regulatory body, or (d) an individual or firm, as applicable, that is registered with the regulatory body as another category or subcategory of registrant in accordance with the bylaws of the regulatory body”.
Registrant Firm	A Firm that is registered with Engineers and Geoscientists BC as a Registrant and is a holder of a Permit to Practice.
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.

TERM	DEFINITION
Regulation	The <i>Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation</i> , OIC 2021/037.
Reserved Practice	As defined in the <i>Act</i> and the <i>Regulation</i> , a Regulated Practice for which the right to practice is reserved for registrants of a regulatory body.
Residual Risk	The Risk remaining after mitigation measures that are proposed and/or implemented have been accounted for.
Risk	A combination of two factors: 1. the severity of the anticipated Consequence resulting from a Hazard; and 2. the likelihood of a Hazard occurring and leading to a Consequence.
Risk Assessment	A documented process involving: 1. identifying Hazards (Hazard identification); 2. evaluating the identified Hazards based on the severity of potential Consequences and the likelihood of those Consequences (Risk analysis); and 3. comparing the Risk level determined in the Risk analysis with Risk-tolerance criteria to determine whether the Risks can be avoided, mitigated, transferred, or accepted (Risk treatment).
Structural Design	A design of a Structure.
Structure	A series of connected, interrelated elements that form a system that provides adequate rigidity and can resist a series of external load effects applied to it, including its own weight. Structures can be temporary or permanent, and include but are not limited to buildings, retaining walls, signage, support towers, bridges, dams, and tunnels. Structures can consist of individual components or integrated systems within a larger structural, mechanical, or electrical framework.

VERSION HISTORY

VERSION NUMBER	PUBLISHED DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
4.0	September 1, 2026	Incorporated content and guidance specific to Registrant Firms from the retired <i>Regulation of Firms Permit to Practice Manual</i> ; clarified the Risk Assessment requirements related to Independent Reviews of Structural Designs; referenced the <i>Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments</i> ; minor editorial corrections.
3.0	June 15, 2023	Updated content to conform with the <i>Act</i> and updated Bylaws; added additional guidance for determining the appropriate type of Independent Review of structural components, and for addressing issues identified in an Independent Review; minor editorial corrections.
2.0	February 17, 2021	Updated the content and terminology to conform with the <i>Act</i> and updated Bylaws; changed the main title to <i>Guide to the Standard for Documented Independent Review of Structural Designs</i> ; changed the document category from “quality management guidelines” to “quality management guides.”
1.4	January 9, 2018	Updated the format to align with new Engineers and Geoscientists BC brand; minor editorial corrections.
1.3	March 31, 2016	Minor editorial corrections
1.2	October 7, 2013	Minor editorial corrections.
1.1	February 25, 2013	Minor editorial corrections.
1.0	May 2012	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 interest, Engineers and Geoscientists BC establishes, monitors, and enforces standards for the qualifications and practice of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms.
- 1.1.2 Engineers and Geoscientists BC provides practice resources to Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms 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 This Guide explains the standards of practice, conduct, and competence expected of Professional Registrants who are involved in Structural Designs or involved in Independent Reviews of Structural Designs. It explains how Professional Registrants should uphold their professional obligations while involved in Structural Designs or conducting Independent Reviews of Structural Designs.
- 1.1.4 This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC's interpretation of the

standard described in Section 7.3.5 of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms are required to meet the standard by having regard for the information included in this Guide. Professional Registrants are required to exercise their professional judgment when applying the standard in their practice. 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 should record the technical or ethical reasons for the departure and use their professional judgment to make sure the resulting work still meets the intent of the standards in the Bylaws. Any opinion, analysis, or other Document containing technical or ethical reasons for the departure is inherently related to the Regulated Practice and therefore constitutes a Record which must be maintained. When departing from the interpretation in this Guide, Professional Registrants remain responsible for exercising their professional judgment to conduct their practice in a manner that meets the intent of the standards in the Bylaws.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- 1.2.1 This Guide provides a common approach applicable to all Professional Registrants who are involved in Structural Designs or

- Independent Reviews of Structural Designs as part of their professional activities or work.
- 1.2.2 For Professional Registrants, this Guide is intended to:
- describe the minimum standards for an Independent Review;
 - assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining documented quality management processes and procedures for initiating, conducting, and retaining Records of Independent Reviews;
 - describe the qualities and processes necessary to ensure Independent Reviews are useful, reliable, and protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including protecting the environment and health and safety in the workplace;
 - explain the difference between Checking and an Independent Review;
 - explain the difference between the types of Independent Reviews and when each may be appropriate;
 - provide guidance on the qualifications required for Professional Registrants who are conducting Independent Reviews;
 - provide guidance on how Professional Registrants should identify and address issues during the course of Independent Reviews; and
 - provide guidance on how to meet the quality management requirements under the *Act* and Bylaws when engaged in designing or reviewing the Structural Design.
- 1.2.3 For Registrant Firms, this Guide details the

requirements governing how Professional Registrants should proceed when they are the Professionals of Record doing Structural Design and when they are the Independent Reviewer. The principal obligation of the Registrant Firm is to establish and maintain documented policies and procedures detailing their approach to Independent Reviews of Structural Designs. The Registrant Firm must also ensure Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm follow these policies and procedures so Independent Reviews of Structural Designs are carried out appropriately.

1.3 ROLE OF ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS BC

1.3.1 This Guide was 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 Registrants provide to their clients and to the public.

1.3.2 The timely and proper completion of Independent Reviews are critical for Professional Registrants in fulfilling their professional obligations, including holding paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public. The appropriate type of Independent Reviews (i.e., Type 1 or Type 2) varies, depending on the nature and extent of the Risk posed by the design for a specific Structure. This Guide explains the requirements for professional practice in broad terms based on the

minimum standard of practice, conduct, and competence expected of Professional Registrants.

1.4 SCOPE

1.4.1 Proper and appropriate Independent Reviews of Structural Designs are fundamental to upholding the *Act* and Bylaws, including the Code of Ethics in Schedule A of the Bylaws, which require all Professional Registrants hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment and the promotion of health and safety within the workplace.

1.4.2 As required by the Bylaws, Professional Registrants carrying out Structural Designs must meet the requirement of having an Independent Review of any Structural Design they prepare carried out by another appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant before the Documents are issued for construction or implementation. Section 7.3.5 of the Bylaws provides the standard of professional and ethical conduct for Professional Registrants engaged in this area of Regulated Practice.

1.4.3 This Guide is intended to assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining a documented quality management procedure for Independent Reviews of Structural Designs that complies with the requirements of the *Act* and of the Bylaws by addressing:

- the process of an Independent Review;
- the purpose of an Independent Review;

- the required extent of an Independent Review;
- what should be Independently Reviewed;
- when an Independent Review should occur;
- what an Independent Review includes;
- how Checking differs from an Independent Review;
- the Documents required for an Independent Review;
- responsibility for ensuring an Independent Review occurs;
- qualifications required to carry out an Independent Review;
- how to identify and address issues in the course of an Independent Review; and
- the appropriate preparation and retention of Records of an Independent Review.

1.4.4 This Guide is intended to assist Registrant Firms in ensuring:

- documented policies and procedures are contained within their PPMP for their Professional Registrants to follow in order to meet the intent of this Guide;
- the applicable sections of their PPMP are communicated to and followed by all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm; and
- reasonable steps are taken to assist Professional Registrants in meeting their obligations as set out in the Bylaws and in this Guide.

1.4.5 Independent Review of Structural Design obligations apply to Professional

	Registrants acting in their professional capacity in all industries where Structural Design is being carried out, and to all forms of professional engineering or professional geoscience activities or work that include Structural Design, including: • ongoing or time-limited Structural Design work; • temporary or permanent Structures, including those related to construction or implementation; • products, services, and operations requiring the Structural Design; • independently supported Structures designed or constructed in BC, including but not limited to buildings, retaining walls, signage, support towers, bridges, dams, and tunnels; • Structures consisting of individual components or integrated systems within a larger structural, mechanical, or electrical framework; • Structures, including cranes, designed for use as part of a facility, vehicle, vessel, mode of transportation, or mobile equipment; • construction or implementation performed by the Professional Registrant, the Registrant Firm, or others based on the Structural Design of the Professional Registrant or the Registrant Firm; or • Structural Design carried out for internal or external use.	not specifically exempted receives an Independent Review that meets the intent of the <i>Act</i>, the Bylaws, and this Guide. 1.4.7 Engineers and Geoscientists BC considers vehicles, vessels, modes of transportation, and mobile equipment to be distinct from Structures. For example, even though the design of a multi-deck ship involves principles and techniques of structural engineering, Engineers and Geoscientists BC would not consider such a design to fall under the requirements of this Guide. Such designs would fall under the requirements of Section 7.3.6 of the Bylaws. 1.4.8 However, Professional Registrants should be aware such designs may include Structures that require Independent Review. For example, Engineers and Geoscientists BC considers the design of cranes, whether fixed, mobile, or mounted to a vehicle or vessel, to be Structural Designs requiring an Independent Review. 1.4.9 This Guide must be read in conjunction with the other requirements of the Bylaws, the <u>Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments</u> (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a), and the <u>Guide to the Standard for Documented Checks of Engineering and Geoscience Work</u> (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026b).
1.4.6	Terminology used within an industry may not match the terminology used in this Guide. However, the obligations of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms in all industries remain the same: to ensure any Structural Design	

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Section 57(1) of the *Act*, Standards of conduct and competence, states:
- “(1) 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;
- ...”
- 2.2 Section 7.3.5 of the Bylaws, Standard for Independent Review(s) of Structural Designs, states:
- “(1) All Structural Designs require documented independent review(s) prior to Documents being issued for construction or implementation.
- (2) Despite subsection (1), EGBC may identify classes of Structures that do not require documented independent review(s) of Structural Designs.
- (3) A Professional of Record must do all of the following:
- (a) complete a documented risk assessment pursuant to
- section 7.3.9 of the Bylaws [Standard for Documented Risk Assessment] after conceptual design and before detailed design of a Structural Design to determine the following:
- (i) the appropriate frequency for the required documented independent review(s) of the Structural Design;
 - (ii) whether the required documented independent review(s) of the Structural Design must be conducted by
 - (A) an appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant who has not been previously involved in the Structural Design and is employed by the same Firm employing the Professional of Record, or
 - (B) an appropriately qualified and experienced Professional Registrant who has not been previously involved in the Structural Design and is employed by a Firm other than the Firm employing the Professional of Record;

- (b) record their rationale for the determinations made pursuant to subsections (a)(i) and (ii);
 - (c) document actions taken or not taken, along with the rationale for that decision, as a result of the independent review(s), including any actions taken or not taken as a result of information received pursuant to subsection (7)(d);
 - (d) communicate the actions and rationale documented pursuant to subsection (c) to the Professional Registrant tasked with completing the documented independent review in an appropriately timely manner;
 - (e) obtain a copy of the documented record of the independent review from the Professional Registrant tasked with completing the independent review;
 - (f) provide a copy of the documented record of the independent review to the authority having jurisdiction, if requested;
 - (g) retain and preserve the documentation related to the independent review for a period of 10 years in accordance with section 7.3.2(3) of the Bylaws [*Standard for Retention and Preservation of Complete Project Documentation*].
- (4) Despite subsection (3)(b), EGBC may identify classes of Structures for which required documented independent reviews must be conducted by an appropriately experienced Professional Registrant who has not been previously involved in the Structural Design and is employed by a Firm other than the Firm employing the Professional of Record.
 - (5) Documented independent review(s) of Structural Designs must not replace the regular, documented checks required pursuant to section 7.3.4 of the Bylaws [*Standards for Documented Checks*].
 - (6) If applicable pursuant to subsection (1) and not exempted pursuant to subsection (2), a Professional Registrant must establish, maintain, and follow documented procedures for documented independent review(s) of Structural Designs.
 - (7) A Professional Registrant tasked with completing a documented independent review of a Structural Design must
 - (a) have appropriate experience in the type and scale of the Structural Design subject to the documented independent review,
 - (b) determine the extent of the documented independent review based on the progressive findings of the documented independent review and record the rationale for this determination,

- (c) evaluate any related Documents to determine if they are complete, consistent, and in general compliance with applicable codes, standards, and other requirements,
 - (d) communicate any issues found during the independent review(s) to the Professional of Record in an appropriately timely manner,
 - (e) complete a documented record of the documented independent review that meets the intent of the documented independent review sign off form issued by EGBC, and
 - (i) provide this documented record to
 - (A) the Professional of Record, and
 - (B) the authority having jurisdiction, if requested, and
 - (ii) retain and preserve this documented record for a period of 10 years in accordance with section 7.3.2(3) of the Bylaws [*Standard for the Retention and Preservation of Complete Project Documentation*],
 - (f) examine representative samples of the structural assumptions, continuity of gravity and lateral load paths, stability, and detailing, and
 - (g) perform numerical calculations on a sample of gravity and lateral force resisting elements necessary to satisfy any concerns of the Professional Registrant tasked with completing the documented independent review, as appropriate.
- (8) While a documented independent review of each instance of repetitive designs of individual structural components is not required,
 - (a) the maintenance of design quality must be confirmed through
 - (i) an initial documented independent review, and
 - (ii) documented independent reviews at intervals as informed by a documented risk assessment pursuant to section 7.3.9 of the Bylaws [*Standard for Documented Risk Assessments*], and,
 - (b) [Repealed 2026-05-15]
 - (c) the documented record produced through
 - (i) the initial documented independent review, and
 - (ii) documented independent reviews at intervals must be retained and preserved for a minimum of 10 years after the last use of the repetitive design and made available to any person using the Structural Design, in accordance with section 7.3.2(3) of the Bylaws [*Standard for Retention and Preservation of Complete Project Documentation*].

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| <p>(9) If applicable pursuant to subsection (1), and not exempted pursuant to subsection (2), a Registrant Firm must do all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) establish and maintain documented policies and procedures for Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm to follow in relation to independent review of structural designs and the obligations of Professional Registrants pursuant to this section of the Bylaws, which may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) checklists, or (ii) signoff forms; (b) take reasonable steps to ensure that a Professional Registrant conducting a documented independent review pursuant to this section of the Bylaws has sufficient and acceptable knowledge, training, and experience to conduct the documented independent review; (c) ensure that the Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm adhere to the documented policies and procedures of the Registrant Firm established pursuant to subsection (a); (d) take reasonable steps to facilitate the Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the | <p>Registrant Firm in adhering to the obligations of Professional Registrants pursuant to subsections (1) to (8);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (e) establish and maintain documented policies and procedures for the Registrant Firm to follow in order to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) obtain copies of documented records of independent review from the Professional Registrant tasked with completing the independent review, (ii) provide the documented record of the independent review to the authority having jurisdiction, if requested, and (iii) retain and preserve the documentation related to the independent review for a period of 10 years in accordance with section 7.3.2(3) of the Bylaws <i>[Standard for Retention and Preservation of Complete Project Documentation]."</i> |
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2.3

This Guide is intended to assist Registrants in understanding the standard of practice and in fulfilling their professional obligations in accordance with Section 7.3.5 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 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 IS INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

- 3.1.1 An Independent Review is a documented evaluation of the concept, details, and Documentation based on a qualitative examination of the substantially complete Structural Design Documents. An Independent Review must be conducted by an experienced Professional Registrant who has not been involved in preparing the Structural Design and must occur before any Documents are issued for construction or implementation.
- 3.1.2 Independent Reviews are not the same as, and cannot be replaced by, Checks of engineering and geoscience work. For information about Checking, refer to the [Guide to the Standard for Documented Checks of Engineering and Geoscience Work](#) (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026b).
- 3.1.3 Independent Reviews are mandatory for all Structures as outlined in [Section 3.4](#) of this Guide regardless of whether mitigation measures are utilized to reduce the overall assessed Risk level to a Residual Risk level.

3.2 PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

- 3.2.1 Professional Registrants who undertake Structural Design have a professional

obligation to complete their work in a manner that minimizes Risk to the public and the environment. Section 7.3.5 of the Bylaws recognizes that virtually all Structures present Risk to the public. As a result, an Independent Review of any Structural Design is required.

- 3.2.2 The Independent Review process is intended to produce a professional assessment of the adequacy of the concept, design approach, execution, and Documentation of the Structural Design. It evaluates the associated Documents to determine whether the structural systems appear complete, consistent, and in general compliance with applicable codes, standards, and other requirements. The Independent Review may be part of, but is not intended to replace, the regular Checks of Regulated Practice required by the Bylaws.

- 3.2.3 To comply with the Bylaws, Professional Registrants must have established, or have access to through the Registrant Firm's PPMP, documented quality management procedures that include having Structural Designs Independently Reviewed by another qualified Professional Registrant before the design Documents are issued for construction or implementation.

- 3.2.4 A documented quality management procedure may be captured in a written procedure, process flowchart, set of checklists, forms to record Independent Reviews, or other Documentation

developed to suit the nature of the work undertaken by Professional Registrants.

3.3 WHAT TYPE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW IS REQUIRED

3.3.1 Section 7.3.5(3) of the Bylaws requires, after completing the conceptual Structural Design but before commencing the detailed design, a Professional of Record complete a documented Risk Assessment as per Section 7.3.9 of the Bylaws that informs the appropriate type of review (i.e., Type 1 or Type 2) and the appropriate frequency of documented Independent Review to be conducted. If mitigation measures are proposed and/or implemented that result in a Residual Risk level lower than the assessed Risk level, the Residual Risk level can be used to inform the type and frequency of Independent Reviews.

3.3.2 All Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms involved in Structural Designs must establish documented procedures for conducting these Risk Assessments and retain the Documents generated from these Risk Assessments as outlined in Section 7.3.9 of the Bylaws and expanded upon within the *Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a). Risk Assessments are required, and consideration must be given to revisiting them at intervals. (See Section 3.5 of the *Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments*.) If a Risk Assessment is revisited and results in a change, Independent Review requirements may be impacted.

3.3.3 In addition to the documented Risk Assessment considerations outlined in Section 3.4 of the *Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a), the Professional of Record must also consider:

- whether the specific type of Structure has been designated by Engineers and Geoscientists BC (e.g., in relevant professional practice guidelines), the government, relevant statutes, or an authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) as requiring a certain type of independent structural review; and
- whether a substantially similar Structural Design by the same Professional of Record was subject to a Type 2 Independent Review within a reasonable amount of time.

3.3.4 Professionals of Record for Structural Designs must document the considerations addressed, the implementation and adequacy of any mitigation measures used to determine a Residual Risk level, and how they support the type of Independent Review they have recommended (Type 1 or Type 2).

3.3.5 A key consideration in determining the appropriate type of Independent Review is whether the Risk Assessment determines that the Residual Risk is significant enough that it requires a Type 2 Independent Review. If the Risk Assessment does not require a Type 2 Independent Review, a Type 1 Independent Review must be conducted. For sole practitioners, a Type 2 Independent Review is inherently required.

3.3.6 A Type 1 Independent Review is generally appropriate where the Professional of Record and Registrant Firm have experience

3.3.7 A Type 2 Independent Review is generally appropriate where the Professional of Record and Registrant Firm do not have experience with the type and scale of the Structure, there are irregular or uncommon aspects of the Structural Design, or the Structural Design involves design problems without well-defined solutions.

3.3.8 Regardless of the type of Independent Review, the Independent Reviewer must not have been previously involved in the Structural Design that is the subject of the Independent Review.

3.3.3.9 Professional Registrants employed by the same Registrant Firm are more likely to share previous experiences, precedent projects, approaches to problems, and Registrant Firm policies and procedures. Introducing an external Independent Reviewer (i.e., proceeding with a Type 2 review) is intended to provide a perspective that has fewer of these commonalities with the Professional of Record. It is recommended a Type 2 Independent Review be conducted periodically, even if not required, so the Professional of Record can gain new perspectives.

- What are the Consequences of errors or incompleteness in the Structural Design?
- How complex is the Structure and the Structural Design?
- Is the Structural Design innovative or does it deviate from the previous practice?

3.3.11 Independent Reviewers must be satisfied they have examined the Structural Design in sufficient detail to make informed judgments as to the adequacy of the design for its intended purpose. Independent Reviewers are required to re-evaluate and extend reviews when their evaluations suggest there might be problems with the design.

3.4 WHAT SHOULD BE INDEPENDENTLY REVIEWED

3.4.1 GENERAL

3.4.1.1 If a design is prepared for a Structure to be built or erected in BC, it must undergo an Independent Review that is compliant with the Bylaws before Documents are issued for construction or implementation.

3.4.1.2 Individual components and systems of components, whether proprietary or bespoke, also require Independent Review.

3.4.1.3 Specific Independent Review requirements may vary depending on the complexity and Risk associated with a Structural Design. Professional Registrants should refer to the applicable professional practice guidelines published by Engineers and Geoscientists BC for detailed guidance.

3.4.2 STRUCTURES NOT REQUIRING INDEPENDENT REVIEW

3.4.2.1 Conventional one- and two-family dwellings that fall entirely within the prescriptive requirements of Part 9 of the *BC Building Code*, the *Vancouver Building By-law*, or the *National Building Code of Canada* do not require an Independent Review. For more information, refer to the [*Guidelines for Professional Structural Engineering Services for Part 9 Buildings in British Columbia*](#) (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2014).

3.4.2.2 Retaining walls that are less than 3.0 metres in wall height do not require Independent Review unless the documented Risk Assessment indicates the design is high Risk. For more information, refer to the [*Professional Practice Guidelines – Retaining Wall Design*](#) (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2024a) and [*Professional Practice Guidelines – Professional Services in the Forest Sector – Forest Roads*](#) (Engineers and Geoscientists BC and Forest Professionals BC 2024b).

3.4.3 STRUCTURES REQUIRING PERIODIC INDEPENDENT REVIEW

3.4.3.1 Repetitive Design

3.4.3.1.1 The Bylaws exempt “each instance of repetitive designs of individual structural components” from Independent Review. However, to confirm the maintenance of design quality, the Bylaws require an “initial” documented Independent Review of a typical component design with Independent Reviews at “intervals.”

3.4.3.1.2 For repetitive designs, Registrants must create a documented process to identify what constitutes a repetitive design, as

well as the intervals at which Independent Reviews of the repetitive design will be conducted. The appropriate intervals of Independent Review of a repetitive design will be informed by the documented Risk Assessment which, as per Bylaw 7.3.9, must be performed at an appropriate frequency to ensure the Risk level is current. The Registrant must retain the Documents describing this process and the Documents for each Independent Review.

3.4.3.1.3 The appropriate scope and intervals of Independent Reviews of repetitive designs are a matter of professional judgment, but should include, at minimum, any changes since the last Independent Review and the potential impact of those changes on the existing (unchanged) aspects of the design.

3.4.3.2 Manufactured Structural Components

3.4.3.2.1 Many Structural Designs incorporate structural components designed by other Professional Registrants. This may be the case for components supplied by component manufacturers or contractors (e.g., open web steel joists, pre-cast concrete beams, wood trusses). Periodic Independent Reviews of these repetitive structural component designs are required and are the responsibility of the Professional Registrant responsible for the component design.

3.4.3.2.2 Independent Reviews of the primary structural system must consider the incorporation of these components, including their interactions with, dependencies on, and impacts to the primary structural system. The Professional of Record for the primary structural system is responsible for incorporating these components into the primary structural system and confirming that these

components are in general conformance with applicable codes, standards, and the design concept of the primary structural system. The Professional of Record should also consider coordinating with the components manufacturers or contractors to confirm appropriate Independent Review requirements for those components have been met.

3.5 WHEN SHOULD INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN OCCUR

- 3.5.1 To avoid surprises and unnecessary rework, Independent Reviews may be performed in stages as portions of a design are completed. The appropriate frequency for the staged review(s) should be determined in the documented Risk Assessment conducted after conceptual design and before detailed design, and agreed upon by the Professional of Record and the Independent Reviewer. There is no requirement to have a separate Independent Reviewer for each stage; the same Independent Reviewer can review all stages of the Structural Design.
- 3.5.2 The Professional of Record should consider scheduling the Independent Review of the concept and approach before starting the detailed design to minimize possible rework. However, the final Independent Review must be completed after Checking and before Documents are issued for construction or implementation.
- 3.5.3 Where a Structural Design relates to a building permit application, the Independent Review must be completed prior to submission of the building permit

application. Line 2.5 “Independent review of structural designs” of the building code-mandated letters of assurance signifies the completion of Independent Review at the time of permit application.

- 3.5.4 Construction or implementation must not proceed on any portion of the Structure until an Independent Review of that portion has been completed.

3.6 WHAT DO INDEPENDENT REVIEWS OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN INCLUDE

- 3.6.1 The considerations for Independent Review of a Structural Design may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Determine the extent of Independent Review required and record the rationale for this determination.
 - Review the design criteria, loads (including loads imposed by components designed by others and loads from adjacent Structures), and performance requirements.
 - Review statutory and regulatory requirements.
 - Review geotechnical requirements and material properties.
 - Review the concept and integrity of the gravity and lateral load resisting system.
 - Examine representative samples of the structural assumptions, continuity of load paths for both gravity and lateral loads, stability, and detailing.
 - Review the structural plans and supporting Documents to determine whether they are sufficient to

identify the essential components of the structural system, and provide sufficient information to guide the construction or implementation of the Structure.

- Where applicable, review the integration of components into the primary structural system.
- Evaluate Documents related to the Structural Design to determine if they are complete, consistent, coordinated, and in general compliance with the appropriate codes, standards, and other requirements.
- Perform calculations on a representative sample of structural elements to determine whether the analysis, design, and detailing generally comply with the appropriate codes, standards, and other requirements.

3.6.2 The Independent Reviewer should discuss any concerns with the Professional of Record. It is the responsibility of the Professional of Record to adequately resolve concerns noted in the Independent Review.

3.6.3 The Independent Reviewer must provide a formal Record of the Independent Review to the Professional of Record highlighting any concerns (see [Appendix A: Checklist and Signoff for an Independent Review of Structural Designs](#)). If significant concerns are noted, the Professional of Record must revise the Structural Design and resubmit the revised Structural Design for an Independent Review, preferably by the same Independent Reviewer.

3.7 HOW DOES CHECKING COMPARE WITH AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

3.7.1 Documented Checks do not satisfy the requirements of an Independent Review. Documented Checking identifies deficiencies but may be limited to evaluations of individual components by different individuals, some of whom may have been involved in the detailed design of other portions of the project. Conversely, an Independent Review does not satisfy the requirements of a documented Check as it does not include detailed evaluation of all components.

3.7.2 While a Check by others and Independent Reviews are distinct activities, if a Professional Registrant is suitably experienced and independent, the two activities can be completed by the same individual.

3.7.3 The extent of numerical Checking and level of detail examined in an Independent Review will vary depending on the experience of the Independent Reviewer, the complexity and Risk associated with a given Structure, and the extent of concerns that develop as the Independent Review proceeds.

3.8 WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

3.8.1 Independent Reviews may occur in stages as portions of the Structural Design are completed. However, the final Independent Review should be based on

	the substantially complete Documents that are to be issued for construction or implementation.	other requirements referenced in the design, and
3.8.2	The Professional of Record should provide all Documents necessary for the Independent Reviewer to form a professional opinion on whether the Structural Design is done in an accurate, appropriate, and complete manner.	the design loads from use and occupancy, snow, rain, wind, superimposed dead loads, mechanical and electrical equipment, and architectural features such as cladding, window-washing equipment, and landscaping, and
3.8.3	Documents the Professional of Record should provide to the Independent Reviewer include: - structural plans and supporting Documents, plus plans and supporting Documents of other disciplines that may be necessary to review the Structural Design, or that the Independent Reviewer requests; - structural specifications, plus specifications of other disciplines that may be necessary to review the Structure, or that the Independent Reviewer requests; - if not incorporated in the drawings and specifications, a summary sheet documenting: - the structural system and design approach in sufficient detail to identify the lateral and vertical load resisting systems, including any special or unconventional aspects, - site-specific design data, including climatic and seismic criteria, - project-specific design data such as seismic parameters, soil-bearing capacity, lateral soil pressure, and pile capacity, - design assumptions and the applicable codes, standards, and	- any special loading conditions or performance criteria; - Structural Design notes and calculations when requested by the Independent Reviewer; and - all geotechnical reports and any follow-up Documentation exchanged between the Professional of Record and the geotechnical engineer.
3.9 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OCCURS		
3.9.1	Professionals of Record must ensure Independent Reviews of Structural Designs have been completed before final Documents are issued for construction or implementation. The Independent Reviewer's responsibility is limited to completing the Independent Review in accordance with the standard established in the Bylaws and this Guide. Independent Reviews of Structural Designs do not relieve Professionals of Record of their professional responsibilities for Structural Designs.	
3.9.2	Registrant Firms must ensure their Professional Registrants are adhering to the Registrant Firm's policies and	

procedures for Independent Reviews, and must take reasonable steps to facilitate their Professional Registrants adhering to the Bylaw requirements related to Independent Reviews. If a Registrant Firm is engaged in Structural Design work, its policies and procedures should address how Professional Registrants should approach the process as a Professional of Record and as an Independent Reviewer.

3.10 WHO IS QUALIFIED TO CARRY OUT AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF A STRUCTURAL DESIGN

- 3.10.1 The Independent Reviewer must be a Professional Registrant with appropriate qualifications and experience involving the type of Structure subject to the documented Independent Review. The level of experience required for a specific Structure will depend on the Risk and complexity of the Structure. The Independent Reviewer's experience must be sufficient to critique concepts and identify deficiencies in Structures with complexity equal to or greater than the Structure being reviewed. When asked to conduct an Independent Review, a Professional Registrant must use their judgment to determine if they have sufficient knowledge and experience.
- 3.10.2 Professionals of Record and prospective Independent Reviewers should consider the nature of the Structure and the depth of the prospective Independent Reviewer's experience with similar Structures when determining an appropriate amount of years of experience for the Independent Reviewer. An Independent Reviewer should

have extensive enough experience to allow them to act as a Professional of Record on similar or more complex Structures.

- 3.10.3 It is the responsibility of the Professional of Record to identify an appropriate Independent Reviewer based on the documented Risk Assessment carried out upon completion of the conceptual design.
- 3.10.4 The requirement for independence is intended to provide an unbiased review that critically evaluates the design concept and approach to the Structural Design selected by the Professional of Record.
- 3.10.5 To maintain independence, the Independent Reviewer must not have been involved in preparing the Structural Design. The Independent Reviewer may, however, be a member of the same Registrant Firm if a documented Risk Assessment determines that a Type 1 Independent Review is appropriate. Even if a Type 1 Independent Review is deemed appropriate, the Professional of Record may choose to utilize a Type 2 Independent Review, where the Independent Reviewer is employed at a different Registrant Firm.

3.11 HOW SHOULD ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW BE ADDRESSED

- 3.11.1 The Independent Reviewer is required to communicate, in writing, the issues found during the Independent Review to the Professional of Record. The Professional of Record is required to adequately resolve concerns noted in the Independent Review, document which actions were taken or

	not taken as a result of the Independent Review, and document the rationale for the decisions. Where appropriate, the Independent Reviewer may provide considerations and suggestions to improve the Structural Design, but should not provide detailed or prescriptive solutions.	
3.11.2	The Professional of Record has the ultimate responsibility for the Structural Design and therefore is responsible for making the decision regarding if and how to address the Independent Reviewer's concerns, comments, and questions. The best practice is for the Professional of Record and Independent Reviewer to have an open channel of communication to discuss and resolve concerns found during the Independent Review. Where there is a fundamental difference of professional opinion between the Professional of Record and the Independent Reviewer, and the concerns cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the Professional of Record may consider obtaining a second Independent Review for, at a minimum, the portion(s) of the Structural Design in question. In these circumstances, the Professional of Record must bring the first Independent Reviewer's opinion to the attention of the second Independent Reviewer.	3. the Professional of Record does not agree with the concern and is not open to obtaining a second Independent Review. 3.11.4 In these situations, the Independent Reviewer should refer to Principle 9 of the Code of Ethics, which requires Professional Registrants to report to Engineers and Geoscientists BC and other applicable regulatory authorities if they reasonably believe the practice of another Registrant: • could pose a Risk of significant consequences; or • is illegal or unethical. 3.11.5 The Independent Reviewer should also refer to Section 58 of the <i>Act</i> which outlines the statutory duty to report.
		3.12 WHAT RECORDS OF AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW SHOULD BE CREATED AND RETAINED 3.12.1 The Independent Reviewer and the Registrant Firm each have separate responsibilities to ensure the documented Record of the Independent Review is retained for a minimum of 10 years. The Independent Reviewer must document the results of the Independent Review and confirm the results have been communicated to the Professional of Record. The Independent Reviewer must retain Documentation, such as calculations, check prints, computer scripts, and Records of communications concerning the Independent Review. Records of Independent Reviews must be authenticated. Refer to Appendix A: Checklist and Signoff for an Independent
3.11.3	An Independent Reviewer's duty to report may be engaged when:	
	1. the fundamental difference in opinion is such that the Independent Reviewer believes there is significant Risk to the public or to the environment if no action is taken; 2. the concern has been brought to the attention of the Professional of Record; and	

- Review of Structural Designs for an example of a suitable Record and signoff. The Independent Reviewer must provide this Record to the AHJ upon request.
- 3.12.2 The Professional of Record and the Registrant Firm each have separate responsibilities to retain Records of the documented Risk Assessment that determined the appropriate frequency of the Independent Review, and whether a Type 1 or a Type 2 Independent Review was appropriate. The Professional of Record is also required to keep Records of the actions taken or not taken as a result of Independent Reviews. The Professional of Record must provide the Record of Independent Review to the AHJ upon request.
- 3.12.3 All Records of Independent Reviews must be retained appropriately. For further guidance about retaining project Documentation, see the *Guide to the Standard for Retention of Project Documentation* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026d).

4.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

4.1 LEGISLATION

BC Building Code

City of Vancouver Building By-law

Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation, OIC 2021/037.

National Building Code of Canada

Professional Governance Act, S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.

4.2 CITED WORKS

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2026a. Quality Management Guides – Guide to the Standard for Documented Risk Assessments. Version 1.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists [accessed: 2026 August 18]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Quality-Management-Guides>.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2026b. Quality Management Guides – Guide to the Standard for Documented Checks of Engineering and Geoscience Work. Version 4.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2026 August 18]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Quality-Management-Guides>.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2026c. Quality Management Guides – Guide to the Standard for Documented Independent Review of High-Risk Professional Activities or Work. Version 3.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2026 August 18]. <https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Quality-Management-Guides>.

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5.0 APPENDIX

Appendix A: Checklist and Signoff for an Independent Review of Structural Designs.....	A-1
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APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST AND SIGNOFF FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGNS

CHECKLIST AND SIGNOFF FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGNS

[Print clearly and legibly]

RE:

Name of project or work

Address of project or work

Type of Independent Review (check one): Type 1 ☐
Type 2 ☐

Professional of Record

P.Eng. or P.L.Eng. name

Firm name

Permit to Practice number

Address of Firm

ITEM	REVIEWED	REMARKS
	INITIALS	
1. Design code loadings and serviceability limits		
2. Material specifications and geotechnical recommendations		
3. Concept and integrity of the gravity load resisting system		
4. Concept and integrity of the lateral load resisting system (e.g., wind, seismic)		
5. Drawing completeness and continuity of load paths		
6. Design Check of representative structural elements		
7. Review of representative structural details		
8. Concerns discussed with the Professional of Record		
9. For global, repetitive, or iterative Structural Design, recommendation for intervals of Independent Review		

INDEPENDENT REVIEWER

P.Eng. or P.L.Eng. name

Firm name

Permit to Practice number

Address of Firm

Date: (yy/mm/dd)

Signature

CHECKLIST AND SIGNOFF FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGNS

[Print clearly and legibly]

TO: Professional of Record

DATE: _____

P.Eng. or P.L.Eng name

Firm name

Permit to Practice number

Address

RE: _____
Project name

Address of project

The undersigned hereby records that an Independent Review of the activity or work, based on the attached list of the structural plans and supporting Documents prepared by the Professional of Record for the structural components, has been completed by this Independent Reviewer.

I am a member of the Firm _____
(Name of Firm)

With the Permit to Practice number: _____
(Permit to Practice number)

and I sign this letter on behalf of the Firm.

I certify that I am a Professional Registrant as defined below.

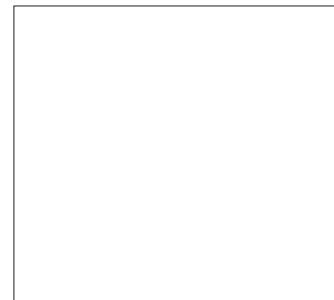
DATE: _____

Name

Signed

Address

Telephone



(Affix PROFESSIONAL SEAL here)

NOTES:

1. The above letter must be signed by a Professional Registrant (defined as a professional engineer or a professional licensee engineering, licensed to practice by Engineers and Geoscientists BC) qualified to conduct an Independent Review on the Structural Design being reviewed.
2. This template for Independent Review of Structural Designs is endorsed by Engineers and Geoscientists BC. The Independent Reviewer remains professionally responsible for the conclusions in the completed letter.

