



# REGULATORY OVERVIEW: CONSULTING FIRMS

The *Professional Governance Act* – new governing legislation for Engineers and Geoscientists BC and its registrants – will come into force in early 2021. The legislation sets standards for ethical principles, duties and responsibilities, and governance structures, and introduces new regulatory tools, processes, and requirements, including the responsibility for Engineers and Geoscientists BC to regulate firms that engage in the practice of professional engineering or geoscience.

The regulatory model for firms will include all engineering and geoscience entities in the private and public sector that engage in the practice of professional engineering or professional geoscience, including consulting firms.

## KEY STEPS FOR CONSULTING FIRMS

Mandatory firm regulation will begin in **July 2021**. Firms must register with Engineers and Geoscientists BC **before September 30, 2021** to receive a Permit to Practice. A Permit to Practice grants firms the legal authority to engage in the practice of professional engineering or geoscience in BC.

Within 12 months of registering with Engineers and Geoscientists BC, firms will be required to have a representative attend training, and to have documented policies and procedures in place that indicate how they meet quality management, ethics, and continuing education requirements. Collectively, these policies and procedures will form the Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP) for your firm.

## APPLYING FOR YOUR PERMIT TO PRACTICE

Here's how consulting firms can prepare to meet these new requirements.

Date	Key Steps
January – June, 2021	<p><b>Begin preparing application information.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Identify a Responsible Registrant for your firm.</b></li></ol> <p>The Responsible Registrant is an engineering or geoscience professional(s) who will be responsible for ensuring that the firm's practice meets ethical, quality management and continuing education requirements. They will also serve as a point of contact for practice</p>

	<p>reviews, audits and investigations. Firms can opt to identify more than one Responsible Registrant. For example, a large firm with multiple lines of business might designate a different Responsible Registrant for each area of practice it engages in.</p> <p><b>2. Identify a Responsible Officer for your firm.</b></p> <p>The Responsible Officer is the executive lead for your firm. This person does not need to be a registered engineering or geoscience professional but must have the authority to make binding decisions on behalf of the firm.</p> <p><b>3. Build your firm's Roster.</b></p> <p>Identify all staff (including contract staff) who are registered with Engineers and Geoscientists BC, including professional engineers (P.Eng.), professional geoscientists (P.Geo.), licensees (Eng.L., Geo.L.), engineers in training (EIT), and geoscientists in training (GIT). During the application process, you will need to provide their names and Engineers and Geoscientists BC ID numbers.</p> <p><b>4. Confirm your firm's areas of practice.</b></p> <p>Identify all areas of practice for which the firm offers services.</p>
<p><b>July 2 – September 30, 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Complete your application and receive your Permit to Practice.</b></p> <p><b>1. Register your firm with Engineers and Geoscientists BC using our online application system.</b></p> <p>To complete your application, you will need to provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The names and business contact information for your firm's Responsible Officer and Responsible Registrant(s);</li> <li>• If you have identified multiple Responsible Registrants, the areas of practice each individual is responsible for;</li> <li>• Your firm's industry and area(s) of practice;</li> <li>• The addresses of your firm's main office and business locations in BC; and</li> <li>• Your firm's Roster of registrants.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Pay your firm's registration and application fees.</b></p> <p>Your firm's annual registration fee is calculated using the following formula: <math>\sqrt{N} \times \\$500</math>, where N is the number of Engineers and Geoscientists BC registrants on staff.</p> <p>A one-time application fee of \$350.00 is also required.</p>

	<p><b>3. Complete your firm’s declarations.</b></p> <p>The Responsible Registrant(s) and Responsible Officer will be emailed a unique link to review the terms of their respective role and to accept (or decline) the responsibility.</p> <p><b>4. Receive your Permit to Practice.</b></p> <p>Upon completing the steps above, you will receive your firm’s Permit to Practice. This is provided in the form of a permit number.</p>
<p><b>July 2021 – July 2022</b></p>	<p>Complete training and document your firm’s policies and procedures.</p> <p><b>1. Attend a training session.</b></p> <p>Responsible Registrant(s) attend an eight-hour training session (online options will be available). One seat is provided free of charge; additional seats will be available for purchase.</p> <p><i>(Note: training sessions will be available beginning in March 2021; firms can attend training either before or after they apply but must attend within 12 months of applying.)</i></p> <p><b>2. Document your firm’s policies and procedures in a Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP).</b></p> <p>Firms will be required to have a Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP) that address the policies and procedures the firm has in place to meet ethics, quality management, and continuing education requirements. Firms may use existing policies and procedures, develop new policies and procedures from scratch, or use templates made available by Engineers and Geoscientists BC.</p> <p><b>3. Implement your firm’s PPMP.</b></p> <p>Ensure staff are aware of and following the requirements in the PPMP.</p> <p><i>(Note: 12 months after receiving a permit firms are eligible for audit by Engineers and Geoscientists BC.)</i></p>

## MAINTAINING YOUR PERMIT TO PRACTICE

Here’s how consulting firms can maintain their Permit to Practice.

Date	Key Steps
<p><b>July 2022 onward</b></p>	<p><b>1. Keep your firm’s information up to date.</b></p> <p>By March 31 each year, verify your firm’s registration information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The names and business contact information for your firm’s Responsible Officer and Responsible Registrant(s);</li> <li>• If you have identified multiple Responsible Registrants, the areas of practice each individual is responsible for;</li> <li>• Your firm’s industry and area(s) of practice;</li> <li>• The addresses of your firm’s main office and business locations BC; and</li> <li>• Your firm’s Roster of registrants.</li> </ul> <p>You must also update the information above within 30 days of a change.</p> <p><b>2. Pay an annual fee.</b></p> <p>By June 30 each year, pay your annual fee to maintain your Permit to Practice.</p> <p><b>3. Review your PPMP and keep it up to date.</b></p> <p>Ensure your PPMP is maintained and updated on an annual basis.</p> <p><b>4. Comply with regular audits.</b></p> <p>Twelve months after receiving your Permit to Practice, your firm will become eligible for a compliance audit. The purpose of the audit is to assess the firm’s compliance with the <i>Professional Governance Act</i>, regulations, bylaws, guidelines, practice advisories and policies of Engineers and Geoscientists BC including quality management, continuing education and ethics standards.</p> <p>Engineers and Geoscientists BC intends to audit all firms within the first three years of the program. After your initial compliance audit, subsequent audits will be on a three to five year cycle, based on the results of your firm’s initial compliance audit.</p>

## MORE INFORMATION

Have a question about the firm regulation or registering for a Permit to Practice? Email our Practice Advisors at [firms@egbc.ca](mailto:firms@egbc.ca) or visit our [Regulation of Firms page](#).