



Certified Consulting Engineers – A Step Beyond

In 1971, a group of licensed professional consulting engineers in Colorado established a certification program to recognize those engineers who had attained a certain level of experience and qualification. This was the beginning of the Certified Consulting Engineers of Colorado (CCEC). Today, 23 years later, the program continues strong, with over 80 members. It is strictly a voluntary program, the purpose of which is to provide the public with a roster of engineers in private practice who have gone beyond the basic requirements set forth by the State Board of Registration to practice engineering.

The state requirements for licensing are straightforward. The first step is to receive a degree in one of the many fields of engineering from an accredited college or university. Next, after successfully passing the Fundamentals of Engineering exam to become an Engineering Intern (EI), one must be employed as an engineer for four years under the direct supervision of a licensed engineer. At this point, one must now pass an examination to receive a Professional Engineers (PE) license. Colorado is part of the nationwide system of testing and licensing called the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES). This is a non-profit organization composed of engineering and land surveying licensing boards representing all the United States and its territories. A PE license is required to prepare and seal engineering drawings and reports for the general public, which defines the practice of consulting engineering.

Although these state requirements are stringent, and the possession of a PE license legally qualifies a person to practice as a consulting engineer, the founders of CCEC felt that the public would benefit by having available a roster of engineers who have been certified “a step beyond”. In addition to the state PE license, CCEC members have been in private practice with a minimum of eight years of “responsible charge” engineering experience, four of which include administrative duties associated with a consulting engineering firm (contract administration, client relationships, business administration, insurance, legal aspects), and have a minimum of four years of active service as an owner, partner, or principal in a consulting engineering firm. There are also requirements for continuing professional education and ethics courses, involvement in professional engineering organizations, and adherence to a code of professional postulates.

This added level of professionalism to the consulting engineering field helps to protect the public from less than standard work that may be done by engineers who don't have the well rounded experience gained by the years of actual practice required to become certified. There is much more to consulting engineering than the technical knowledge learned in engineering schools. By improving the visibility of Certified Consulting Engineers, it is hoped that the entire profession will be upgraded in the public eye, discrediting the notion that engineers are generic. With the rapid expansion of technology, it is more important than ever to provide the public with a way to identify engineers who adhere to a higher standard of care in providing consulting engineering services, and have the necessary experience to implement that technology appropriately. Engineering often deals with the safety and welfare of the public, and by choosing a Certified Consulting Engineer, clients can have a greater degree of confidence that their projects will be economically and technologically successful.

The CCEC program is administered by an eight-member board of commissioners, currently chaired by Kimberly McGhee of KRM Consultants, Inc. in Vail. Other members of the commission are John Cunningham (vice-chair) of Burke Associates in Grand Junction, Barney Fix (secretary/treasurer) of Merrick & Company in Denver, Scott Beck of Anderson & Hastings in Denver, Les Botham of Leonard Rice Engineers, Inc. in Denver, John Cotten of TST Inc. in Denver, Ronald McLaughlin of McLaughlin Rincon in Denver, and Stuart Monical of MKK Consulting Engineers in Denver. The commission was incorporated in the state of Colorado in 1971 after four years of consideration by the Consulting Engineers Council of Colorado, now called the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). The commission is currently working on a long-range strategic plan, determining ways to increase the membership and increase public awareness, which may involve expanding the program to other states.

The CCE designation is indicated by a special seal that is affixed to engineering drawings, reports and correspondence by the certificant, in addition to the PE seal. Certified Consulting Engineers also place the CCE initials after their name in letters, reports and business cards. A complete roster of Colorado certificants can be found on the CCEC link from the American Council of Engineering Companies website, www.acec-co.org. Applications for certification can also be requested from the website.

Statement of Purpose

To promote the public health, safety and welfare by certification of qualified consulting engineers who have established a high level of professional competence, integrity and performance, and who are dedicated to provide professional services in the best interest of their clients and the general public.