

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE -- WHY?

<http://www.nspe.org>

Society's reasons:

- The public needs some minimum level of assurance that they are not put at risk by public works, infrastructure developments, or control/operation thereof that they are exposed to.
- Engineering as a profession, and the **minimum** qualifications of an engineer, must be defined. The title **Engineer** must be restricted to qualified/competent practitioners.

Employer's reasons:

- Laws require all designs to be approved by a professional engineer before the contract can be bid or construction can begin. Any subsequent design changes must also be approved. Therefore, any consultant or other employer that designs system-level projects needs a staff of licensed PEs (at least one for each state and discipline they design in).
- PE licensure is a measure of minimum design/technical competency of an employee, and is an indicator that high ethical standards are being maintained.
- Employee who is a PE provides company with good public image, can speak with authority at public meetings, and can provide expert witness testimony in court.

Self-serving reasons:

- Get a raise and promotion if you pass your PE exam.
- Make yourself more marketable/mobile (important in today's volatile job market).

Licensing Requirements:

- Requirements are generally the same from state to state.
- Must pass 8-hour FE (Fundamentals of Engineering) Exam (highly recommend taking at end of senior year, when general knowledge is greatest).
- Must have 4 yrs of professional experience **after** completing BS in ABET accredited program. An MS degree typically counts as 1 year of experience.
- Must pass 8-hour Principles & Practice Exam. Exams are nationally standardized, with the exception of California and other states that have a more stringent exam. Texas and other states may have reduced requirements. New requirement nationwide: 24-30 Professional Development Hrs (PDHs) for biennial renewal.
- Licensure in other states may be obtained via "comity" after you have passed the PE exam in a state of equal or higher requirements.
- In cases of unethical or incompetent conduct, PE license can be taken away by State Board of Registration, and the engineer legally disbarred from practice.