

TENNESSEE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING EXAMINERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How long does it take the Board to process an application?

Once an application is complete, it is sent to the Board members for review. The review process may take up to four (4) weeks.

How can I find out the status of my application?

Architect, Landscape Architect and Interior Design applicants may contact [Joyce Shrum](#). Engineer Intern applicants may contact [Cindy Toombs](#). Engineer applicants may contact [Wanda Phillips](#). You may also call the Board office at 615-741-3221 or 800-256-5758.

Do I need to complete the entire application if I have a national council record?

Yes. All portions of the Tennessee application must be completed, including the experience section. Your experience listing does not need to be as detailed as what may appear in your council record.

I have a non-NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board) accredited architectural degree. What is the procedure to have my education evaluated?

Applicants with non-NAAB accredited foreign architectural degrees must request an evaluation by Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA), which is administered by the NAAB. For further information regarding the evaluation process, contact EESA at the address below:

National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-638-3372
Website: www.eesa-naab.org
E-mail: eesa@naab.org

Applicants with non-NAAB accredited domestic architectural degrees (including Canadian Architectural Certification Board [CACB] accredited and certified degrees) will be evaluated by a professor of architecture on contract with the Board. The cost for such evaluations is \$40 per hour; an invoice for this service will be sent to applicants requiring an evaluation following receipt of the evaluation.

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I have a non-ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accredited engineering degree. What is the procedure to have my education evaluated?

Applicants with non-ABET accredited foreign engineering degrees (with the exception of degrees accredited by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board awarded in or after 1979) must request an evaluation by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Credentials Evaluations. For further information regarding the evaluation process, contact NCEES Credentials Evaluations at the address below:

10305 NW 41st Street, Suite 223
Miami, FL 33178
Phone: 800-464-7650
Website: www.ncees.org/credentialsevaluations

Applicants with non-ABET accredited domestic engineering degrees will be evaluated by a former engineering professor on contract with the Board. The cost for such evaluations is \$40 per hour; an invoice for this service will be sent to applicants requiring an evaluation following receipt of the evaluation.

I have a non-CIDA (Council for Interior Design Accreditation, formerly FIDER) accredited interior design degree. What is the procedure to have my education evaluated?

Applicants with non-CIDA accredited interior design degrees will be evaluated by a professor of interior design on contract with the Board. The cost for such evaluations is \$40 per hour; an invoice for this service will be sent to applicants requiring an evaluation following receipt of the evaluation.

How do I apply to sit for the Architect Registration Exam (ARE) before completing the Intern Development Program (IDP)?

Interns wishing to sit for the ARE before completing IDP must file an exam application with the Tennessee Board and request that the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) transmit a record summary to the Board office confirming that they have enrolled in IDP. Applicants applying for early ARE eligibility must also submit a transcript. Your transcript must be submitted directly to the Board office from each institution attended. Upon completion of IDP, a complete NCARB record must be transmitted to the Board and references must be submitted before registration may be granted.

How are exam results reported to candidates?

Exam results are mailed to candidates; they are not released over the phone or posted on the website.

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COMPLAINT QUESTIONS

How do I file a complaint?

Complaints may be submitted on the [Board's complaint form](#) or in a written format that includes a description of the alleged violation and supporting documents. Complaints may be filed anonymously, although this is discouraged because it impedes the investigation. If you choose to file anonymously, we will still need the documentation that supports the allegation.

What happens when I file a complaint?

When the Board receives your complaint, it will be initially reviewed to determine if there is a possibility of imminent danger to the health, safety and welfare to the public. If there is, then the complaint will be forwarded directly to the Board's legal counsel. If not, a copy of the complaint will then be sent to the respondent asking for his or her response within 14 business days. The complaint and the response will be forwarded to the Board's legal counsel for review. If additional information is necessary an investigation will be initiated. The Board's legal counsel will present the findings to the Board, which has the sole authority to determine the appropriate action. You will be notified of the Board's decision.

Can the Board help me recover money or property?

The Board cannot recover or order the refund of any money or property to which you may be entitled. You should consult with your own attorney about a lawsuit in these matters. In some cases, the Board may revoke or suspend the license of the person against whom you are complaining (the respondent).

Is disciplinary action available to the public?

Yes. Formal disciplinary actions are posted on the Board website and published in the Board's newsletter.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION QUESTIONS

How many continuing education hours are required?

- New registrants seeking renewal for the first time after initial registration must obtain 12 hours of continuing professional education during the two (2) years immediately following initial registration, seven (7) of which must address health, safety and welfare issues and technical competency.
- Registrants seeking renewal for each two-year period thereafter must obtain 24 hours of continuing professional education, 13 of which must address health, safety and welfare issues and technical competency. Carryover hours, not exceeding 12 hours, from the preceding renewal period may be included.

How does the Board define health, safety and welfare?

The Board has adopted policies defining “health, safety and welfare” for each profession. These policies are available on the [policies](#) page of the website.

What is a Professional Development Hour (PDH)?

A PDH is defined as a contact (clock) hour consisting of not less than 50 minutes of instruction or presentation. Registrants will not receive credit for activities less than one (1) PDH in duration. One (1) Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is equal to 10 PDHs.

Does the Board pre-approve continuing education courses or providers?

No. It is the registrant’s responsibility to determine which activities meet the criteria of the [continuing education rules](#).

Do I need to send copies of my continuing education records with my renewal?

No. Please do not send continuing education documentation unless we notify you that you have been selected for audit.

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FIRM DISCLOSURE QUESTIONS

Who is required to file a firm disclosure?

Tennessee does not license firms. However, any corporation, partnership or firm offering architectural, engineering or landscape architectural services to the public must file a [firm disclosure form](#) with the Board listing the names and addresses of all principals and officers, as well as the principals and officers duly registered to practice architecture, engineering or landscape architecture in Tennessee who are in responsible charge of such practice in this state.

How does the Board define “principal”?

A “principal” is considered to be an individual who has the authority to make independent design decisions. A principal is not required to be an officer in the firm.

How often should I update my firm disclosure?

Advise the Board, in writing, within 60 days of any address change. Submit a new [firm disclosure](#) if reporting any other changes such as a firm/company name change, changes in registration status of principals or officers, changes in principals or officers who are designated to be in responsible charge, etc.

Do I need to submit a fee with the firm disclosure?

No.

Does my firm need to obtain a Certificate of Authority/Authorization?

For information on Certificates of Authority, please contact the [Department of State, Division of Business Services](#), or call 615-741-2286. Certificates of Authority should not be submitted to the Board.

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MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Does Tennessee charge a fee for providing verifications of examination/registration to other states?

No.

How can I obtain a mailing list of registrants?

[Downloadable mailing lists](#) are available at no cost. These lists include the name, mailing address, registration number, and registration expiration date. Customized lists are available for \$50.00 per profession; please contact the Board office for more information.

Where can I obtain a seal?

Seals may be obtained at most local office supply companies. The Board does not supply seals.

How do I obtain a duplicate wall certificate?

To replace a professional wall certificate (architects, engineers, landscape architects, and registered interior designers) send a written request to the Board accompanied by a fee of \$25.00. The cost for a duplicate engineer intern certificate is \$15.00.

Can you refer me to a registered design professional in my area?

Since the Board regulates the design professions, we may not refer business to registrants. Aside from the Yellow Pages, you could contact one of Tennessee's professional societies:

American Institute of Architects (AIA) Tennessee
P.O. Box 60128
Nashville, TN 37206
Phone: 615-255-3860
E-mail: connie@aiatn.org
Web: www.aiatn.org

Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers (TSPE)
800 Fort Negley Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: 615-242-2486
E-mail: ctoler@tnec.org
Web: www.tnspe.org

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American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), Tennessee Chapter
P.O. Box 681101
Franklin, TN 37068
Phone: 615-500-8193
E-mail: hollie@tnasla.org
Web: www.tnasla.org

Tennessee Interior Design Coalition (TIDC)
4205 Hillsboro Road, Suite 317
Nashville, TN 37215
Phone: 615-269-5312
E-mail: info@tidc.org
Web: www.tidc.org

You may also use the Department's [license roster search](#) to locate registrants in a particular city or zip code.

How do I change my address?

Please visit our [address change](#) page.

What is the professional privilege tax, and when is it due?

Please visit our [professional privilege tax](#) page.

How do I subscribe to the Board's newsletter?

If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, [click here](#).

When and where does the Board meet?

For information on meeting dates and locations, please visit the [calendar page](#). For meeting agendas and minutes [click here](#).

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

When is a registered design professional required?

See the "[Requirements for Building Design](#)"

Does the Board issue a temporary license?

No.

Does the Board allow the use of electronic seals and signatures?

Yes. Rule 0120-2-.08(8) allows the use of rubber-stamp, embossed, self-adhesive or electronically generated seals. The registrant may also affix an electronically generated signature and date of signature to documents, provided that the registrant uses a secure method.

Does a set of plans sealed and signed by an architect, engineer or landscape architect registered in a state other than Tennessee meet the requirements for submittal in Tennessee?

No. Only design professionals holding active Tennessee registration may submit plans and specifications for review to building departments and local planning and engineering offices.

May a Tennessee registrant affix his seal and signature to plans and specifications prepared by an out-of-state design professional for submittal in Tennessee?

No. A Tennessee registrant may only apply his professional seal, signature and date of signature to those plans and specifications that were prepared by him or under his responsible charge.

Where can I find out which building, fire and handicapped codes are in effect in Tennessee?

The State Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for adopting the minimum statewide building, fire and handicapped codes. Any questions relating to codes and plans review for occupancies subject to their review should be directed to that office. They can be contacted at 615-741-7190, or you may visit [their website](#).

May any person provide inspection or review of buildings or sites to determine if the project construction phase conforms to the architectural and engineering construction documents?

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Yes. However, the Board recommends that a registrant of the Board provide construction administration or review of construction. Administration of construction contracts is defined as periodic site visits, change orders, shop drawing reviews, and reports to owners of any observed substantial deviation from the contract documents. Building officials who inspect for conformance with building codes are in no way restricted from performing their duties.

What is the Board's position on the use of prototypical plans?

The substantial portion of any project sealed by an architect, engineer or landscape architect should be developed under his or her responsibility. The use of pre-drawn detail items or detail units by a registrant who has reviewed and accepted same, as long as the health, safety and welfare of the public are protected, is allowed.

For additional questions and answers regarding professional practice, refer to the [Reference Manual for Building Officials and Design Professionals](#).

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REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT QUESTIONS

For information on registration requirements, click on "Registration Requirements" under the appropriate profession in the "Licensee/Applicant Resources" section of the home page.

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REGISTRATION STATUS QUESTIONS

For information on changing your registration status, visit the [Registration Status Changes](#) page.

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RENEWAL QUESTIONS

When does my registration come up for renewal?

Tennessee licenses are renewed every two years. New licenses come up for renewal two years from the original month of licensure. You may utilize the [online license roster search](#) to find your registration expiration date.

I will be renewing my registration after the expiration date because I am completing my continuing education hours during the six-month "grace period." Can I still practice my profession during the grace period?

No. If you are using the six-month grace period to complete the required continuing education hours, you cannot practice or offer to practice your profession during this period. Your registration is expired and will not be renewed until the education requirement is met. Registrants not renewing within six months of the registration expiration date must reapply for registration.

Are inactive and retired registrants still required to renew their registrations?

Yes. Registrants on inactive or retired status are still required to renew their registrations every two years. While inactive registrants are exempt from the professional privilege tax and the continuing education requirement, they are still required to pay the \$140 biennial renewal fee and submit a properly completed renewal of registration form. Retired registrants do not have to pay the renewal fee or report continuing education, but they must still submit a properly completed renewal form.

Can I renew online?

Yes. To access the online renewal system, [click here](#). For online renewal instructions, [click here](#).