

WAC 196-33-200 Fundamental canons and guidelines for professional practice and conduct. The specialized and complex knowledge required for on-site wastewater treatment system design makes it imperative that licensees exercise a standard of care that holds paramount the protection of the health, safety, environment, property, and welfare of the public.

(1) Licensees are expected to apply the skill, diligence and judgment required by the professional standard of care, to achieve the goals and objectives agreed with the client or employer, and are expected to promptly inform the client or employer of progress and changes in conditions that may affect the appropriateness or achievability of some or all of the goals and objectives of the client or employer. Licensees are obliged to:

(a) Be honest and fair in their dealings, and to conform to the relevant laws and codes of the jurisdiction in which they practice.

(b) Be able to demonstrate that their final products and work plans adequately consider the primary importance of protecting the safety, health, property, and welfare of the general public.

(c) Approve or seal only documents prepared by them or under their direct supervision.

(d) Inform their clients or employers of the possible consequences, when an overruling or disregarding of the licensee's professional judgment may threaten the safety or health of the public. If in the judgment of the licensee an imminently dangerous situation persists, they shall promptly inform appropriate authorities.

(e) Inform the board in writing, citing specific facts to which the licensee has direct knowledge, if they have knowledge or reason to believe that another person or firm may be in violation of any of the provisions of chapter 18.210 RCW or these rules of professional conduct, and cooperate with the board in furnishing such further information or assistance as may be required.

(2) Licensees shall be competent in the technology, and knowledgeable of the codes, regulations, and guidelines applicable to the services they perform.

(3) Licensees shall be qualified by education and/or experience in the technical area of on-site wastewater treatment system design applicable to services performed and the technologies utilized.

(4) Licensees may accept primary contractual responsibility requiring education and/or experience outside their own area of competence, provided their services are restricted to those phases of the project in which they are qualified.

(5) Licensees shall not affix their signatures or seals to any plan or document dealing with subject matter in which they lack competence by virtue of education and/or experience.

(6) Licensees shall act in professional matters for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.

(7) Licensees shall be objective and truthful in professional documents, reports, statements, or testimony. They shall include all relevant and pertinent information in such reports, statements or testimony. They shall not knowingly falsify, misrepresent or conceal a material fact in offering or providing services to a client or employer.

(8) Licensees shall avoid all known or potential conflicts of interest with their employers or clients and shall promptly inform their employers or clients of any business association, interest, or circumstances, which could influence their judgment, or the quality of their services.

(9) Licensees shall only accept compensation from one party for services on a project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to and agreed to, by all interested parties.

(10) Licensees shall not solicit or, accept gratuities, directly or indirectly, from contractors, their agents, or other parties dealing with their clients or employers in connection with work for which they are responsible.

(11) Licensees shall advise their employers or clients when, as a result of their studies, they believe a project will not achieve the goals established with the client.

(12) Licensees shall not use confidential information coming to them in the course of their assignments as a means of making personal profit if such action is adverse to the interests of their clients, employers or the public.

(13) Licensees employed full-time shall not accept professional employment outside of their regular work or interest without the knowledge and consent of their employers.

(14) Licensees shall offer their professional services in a truthful, objective, and professional manner that results in public trust in the integrity of the on-site design profession.

(15) Licensees shall not request, propose or accept professional commissions on a contingent basis under circumstances in which their professional judgments may be compromised.

(16) Licensees shall not offer or accept money, goods or other favors as inducement to receive favorable consideration for a professional assignment or as an inducement to approve, authorize or influence the granting of a professional assignment. This shall not preclude the securing of salaried positions through employment agencies.

(17) Licensees shall negotiate contracts for professional services fairly and on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications for the type of professional service required.

(18) Licensees shall not falsify or permit misrepresentation of their academic or professional qualifications or experience.

(19) Licensees shall not advertise professional services in a way that is false or misleading as to the qualification, experience, or capability of the licensee.

(20) Public statements by licensees regarding the practice of on-site wastewater treatment systems design shall be objective and truthful.

(21) Licensees should endeavor to extend the public knowledge of on-site wastewater treatment system design and shall not participate in the dissemination of untrue, unfair, or exaggerated statements regarding the profession.

(22) Professional reports, statements, or testimony made to the public or public entities shall include all relevant and pertinent information to support conclusions or opinions expressed.

(23) Licensees when serving as an expert witness shall express an on-site design opinion only when it is founded upon adequate knowledge of the facts, upon a background of technical competence, and upon honest conviction.

(24) Licensees shall issue no statements, criticisms, or arguments regarding on-site design matters, which are inspired or paid for by interested parties, unless they indicate on whose behalf the statements, are made.

(25) Licensees shall continue their professional development throughout their careers, and shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those individuals under their supervision.

(26) Licensees shall respond to any legal request for information by the board and/or appear before the board in the time frame established by the board or their staff designee.

(27) In addition to the requirements of RCW 18.210.020 and this chapter, the following acts are contrary to the standard of practice for individuals authorized to practice under this chapter and constitute unprofessional conduct in the practice of on-site wastewater treatment system designing:

(a) Duplicating, copying, removing or attempting to remove materials from the custody and control of the board that are exempt from inspection or copying under chapter 42.17 RCW when such duplication, copying or removal was not expressly authorized by the board.

(b) Failure to notify a client or employer that a project could not be completed or was not completed.

(c) Failure to respond to client inquiries under conditions which endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the public or the client or the client's property.

(d) Failure to respond to inquiries from other on-site practitioners or governmental agencies regarding differences in your respective work products, under conditions which endanger the public health, safety, or welfare or the health, safety, or welfare of the client or the client's property.

(e) Any act, statement or behavior that harasses, intimidates or retaliates against anyone who has provided information, assistance or testimony in connection with any board inquiry, investigation, hearing or other proceeding.

(f) Disorderly, discriminatory or abusive behavior or statements which are significantly disruptive to the normal activities of a place of business or public view, where such behavior would give anyone witnessing the act a reasonable belief to be concerned for their safety or well-being.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.43.035, 18.210.050, and 18.210.060. WSR 23-22-038, § 196-33-200, filed 10/23/23, effective 11/23/23. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.43.035 and chapter 18.210 RCW. WSR 07-10-127, § 196-33-200, filed 5/2/07, effective 6/2/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.210.050, 18.210.060. WSR 01-11-102, § 196-33-200, filed 5/21/01, effective 6/21/01.]