

## REGULATION RESPECTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# Even better equipped to comply with it!

**For all professional orders, adopting a regulation pertaining to professional development is a considerable challenge in terms of communication. This challenge is all the more daunting for the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (hereafter "the Ordre") since, contrary to other Québec orders, it chose to apply this regulation without having previously approved training activities or certifying providers.**

"While this gives members greater latitude, this way of doing things requires that they be provided with the best possible information in order to meet their obligation. That is why the Ordre has just revamped its Internet section relating to the Regulation respecting mandatory professional development for engineers (unofficial translation) which aims to explain the Regulation's requirements, notes Luc Vagneux, *cria*, director of professional development.

Now included in the Members section of the Ordre's site, the new section pertaining to the Regulation not only corrects shortcomings uncovered during the first year of use, but it also takes into account comments gathered during a tour of the Ordre's president, Mrs. Maud Cohen, Eng. during the Fall of 2011 and Winter of 2012." Nearly 2,000 members were able to convey their needs with respect to professional development as well as their concerns relating to the application of this new regulation. The engineers' comments provided a better understanding of the type of information they look for and, thus, allowed us to re-align our aim by proposing a more explicit approach.

It bears reminding that because the competencies engineers must acquire in order to practise engineering are constantly and rapidly evolving, the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec found it essential to adopt a regulation governing those professional development activities its members must follow. In force since January 27, 2011, the Regulation respecting mandatory professional development for engineers provides that, unless one has received an exemption, all members of the Ordre — engineers, junior engineers and engineers in training — must accumulate at least 30 hours of professional training during a reference period of two years. The first reference period, which began April 1, 2011, will come to an end on March 31, 2013.

In other words, time is running out for engineers who, as of yet, have not taken any steps towards complying with the Regulation to look into this.

### **MORE AUTONOMY AND... MORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Ordre has opted for a flexible approach which lets engineers be responsible for managing their training activities. As such, it is up to the engineers to:

1. make sure the activities in which they intend to participate are eligible and comply with the Regulation's requirements;
2. declare appropriate information relating to the activities in which they participated to the Ordre;
3. keep all supporting documents proving their participation in activities declared to the Ordre, or their successful completion, as the case may be.

«Les modifications apportées au site Web visent justemodifications to the Web site aim precisely at pinpointing the Ordre's requirements in terms of applying the Regulation», explains Daniel Jolin, *crha*, training agent with the Ordre's Professional development section. "Step by step, engineers will receive guidance throughout the process and be able to verify whether their training activities comply with the Ordre's criteria."

First of all, the activity must meet the Regulation's objectives in that the training must lead to sharing or acquiring knowledge, skills or attitudes that will allow engineers to maintain, update, improve or broaden the competencies related to practising engineering.

In that respect, the following cautionary notice is important: "Engineers must be vigilant with respect to so-called information activities, warns Daniel Jolin. These activities aim to relay messages, news or information on a given subject. Their content is rarely dealt with in detail. For this reason, these activities will not be deemed eligible unless engineers can demonstrate that the content helped them maintain, update, improve or broaden their professional competencies."

Technical sales presentations and meetings held during the normal course of business are excluded outright. "Although the former often include an important amount of technical information, they are not eligible since their main objective is to market goods and services, adds the training agent. As for the latter, even if they do represent an important source of knowledge, they are not eligible because they mostly deal with carrying out a project or operations."

The second criterion completes the first: the activity's content must be related to the engineer's work. The content can deal with technical aspects of the engineer's professional activities as well as other aspects, such as legal issues, management, ethics and communications.

*“Engineers must be vigilant with respect to so-called information activities.”*

“In order to get an overview of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to practise engineering – which, incidentally, constitute eligible content pursuant to the Regulation – members are invited to refer to the competencies presented in the Engineer’s guidelines to competency development”, recommends Daniel Jolin. ([http://gpp.oiq.qc.ca/chapitre/Professional development](http://gpp.oiq.qc.ca/chapitre/Professional%20development))

The last criterion is certainly the most complex: the activity must correlate with the types of activities that are eligible under the Regulation. In order to do so, the Ordre prepared a list of definitions of eligible training activities (courses, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.) and made it available to engineers. «Over time, we found that we could not rely on an activity’s name or title to define it, says Daniel Jolin. Two activities with different titles, for example a course and a seminar, can have the same content and take place in the same way. That is why we improved the site by adding detailed definitions for each activity and, for some of them, by specifying their various iterations (study session for a certification exam, co-development groups, coaching, etc.).»

As a result, engineers can easily determine whether or not an activity is recognized by the Ordre and how many hours they can declare if they take this particular activity. The new version of the Web site will also provide more details as to declaring activities and keeping supporting documents.

“Obviously, we are aware that engineers will need many years to master the Regulation’s subtleties which, while giving engineers great leeway, require them to learn the jargon of professional development in order to comply with the Regulation, acknowledges Daniel Jolin. One thing is for sure: we will do everything we can to make their lives easier. The second part of this Web site is evidence to our determination to support our members throughout the learning process.”