



PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS

Engineering documents that should not be overlooked! (continued)

What are the potential consequences for engineers who prepare or use performance specifications that are unclear, ambiguous or incomplete, or fail to properly inform their clients?

Performance specifications generally serve as references for designing engineers and other stakeholders: They provide an analysis of particular needs and conditions that can be used to establish the design criteria for a structure. To complete this analysis, engineers must perform measurements, layouts, calculations, studies, designs and other technical tasks, which is why performance specifications are considered engineering documents and must be prepared by engineers.

However, before they accept this type of job, engineers must fulfill their ethical obligations by making sure that they:

- have sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge and know enough about the project itself to prepare high-quality, complete and clear specifications;
- provide clear information to their clients about the specific purpose of the specifications and how they may be used.

AND IF THEY DON'T?

Engineers who prepare performance specifications without fulfilling their ethical obligations commit a serious offence that strikes at the very heart of the engineering profession and the professional acts reserved for engineers.

In such cases, and when supported by preponderant proof, the Disciplinary Council may find these engineers guilty and penalize them in one or more of the following ways::

- fine them anywhere from \$2,500 to \$62,500 for each charge;
- revoke their engineer's permit;
- restrict or suspend their right to engage in professional activities;
- strike them temporarily or permanently from the OIQ's roll.

The Council may also order the engineers to pay costs concurrently with other penalties, including costs in connection with their case proceedings, which may include an expert's fees.

OTHER CONSEQUENCES...

Since the disciplinary process is public, guilty decisions rendered by the Disciplinary Council are published on both the OIQ's Web site and legal document sites.

A notice of judgment may also be published in a newspaper distributed in the area where the offending engineers practice or practiced the profession.

It should also be noted that engineers who provide substandard performance specifications may not just be subject to disciplinary consequences, but also professional liability proceedings.

PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION!

Remember that preparing performance specifications is an engineering act in its own right. We urge you to be extremely careful and make sure that you prepare complete and explicit performance specifications based on sufficient knowledge of:

- the field concerned, including theoretical and practical knowledge of that field;
- the structure to be executed;
- the specific elements of the job. ◀



TEXTS YOU SHOULD READ...

For performance specifications that concern fire safety, we recommend that you read the document entitled *Lignes directrices concernant la préparation de devis de performance pour les systèmes de gicleurs automatiques* (in French only). This useful tool will help you prepare performance specifications that comply with standards of good practice and your professional obligations. It will also give you some guidance on your training needs. Finally, you can use it as a reference for your clients to shape their expectations and give them a better grasp of the scope of your work.

... AND REREAD!

We also encourage you to reread your code of ethics, particularly the following provisions:

2.01. In all aspects of his work, the engineer must respect his obligations towards man and take into account the consequences of the performance of his work on the environment and on the life, health and property of every person.

2.04. The engineer shall express his opinion on matters dealing with engineering only if such opinion is based on sufficient knowledge and honest convictions.

3.01.01. Before accepting a mandate, an engineer must bear in mind the extent of his proficiency and aptitudes and also the means at his disposal to carry out the mandate.

3.02.04. An engineer must refrain from expressing or giving contradictory or incomplete opinions or advice, and from presenting or using plans, specifications and other documents which he knows to be ambiguous or which are not sufficiently explicit.

3.03.02. In addition to opinion and counsel, the engineer must furnish his client with any explanations necessary to the understanding and appreciation of the services he is providing him.