

Hiring an Engineer



Target Audience



This guide is mainly intended for individuals who wish to hire an engineer for their professional services. Its purpose is to provide information on the practice of engineering.

In Quebec, only members of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (OIQ) may carry out activities reserved for the engineering profession and use the engineer title. Before hiring an engineer, it is important to make sure that this person is actually a member of the OIQ and practices in the field of the required services. You may verify this information by consulting the directory below or by contacting the OIQ.



Directory of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec



514-845-6141 or 800-461-6141



sac@oiq.qc.ca

The *Engineers Act*

The **Engineers Act** defines the activities to be carried out by an OIQ member. These activities are reserved for engineers only when they relate to works under the Act, which can be classified into 5 categories:

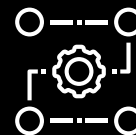
buildings



structures



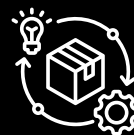
systems



dependencies
of road works



industrial-scale
processes



Do not hesitate to contact the OIQ to:

- ▶ know if the documents you need (plans, specifications, reports, etc.) must be prepared by an Engineer;
- ▶ determine the field of engineering in which the engineer you wish to hire will have to work for your project.

A Few Examples

Here are some examples of projects or mandates for which individuals hire an engineer.

➤ **Note that the examples of services listed in the table are not necessarily reserved for an engineer.**

 <p>Types of Projects</p>	 <p>Types of Documents Generally Provided by Engineers</p>	 <p>Other Information</p>
<p>CARRYING OUT WORKS</p> <p>Examples include taking down a load bearing supporting wall, enlarging or modifying a building, building a retaining wall, developing shoreline embankments, installing a wastewater treatment system for an isolated dwelling, etc.</p>	<p>SIGNED AND SEALED PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS</p> <p>Depending on the type of works, plans and specifications may be required.</p>	<p>Plans and specifications will be more or less detailed depending on their purpose. The purpose is the use that will be made of the plans and specifications.</p> <p>For example, plans that are prepared for the purpose of obtaining a permit are often documents with insufficient details to be used for construction purposes.</p> <p>Plans and specifications that are used to carry out works must be designed specifically for construction purposes. The specifications must include information about the materials that will be used, the technical requirements, etc., and they may be added to the plan.</p>
<p>GIVING ADVICE OR AN OPINION; PERFORMING AN ANALYSIS OR AN EXPERT ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Examples include giving advice on the effects of a crack in a foundation, on the cause of a collapsed floor, on the condition of a rock wall, etc.</p>	<p>SIGNED LETTER OR REPORT</p>	<p>This type of document includes the conclusions and recommendations of the engineer (conclusions of the analyses carried out, recommendations concerning the work to be undertaken, etc.).</p> <p>This type of document is generally not used to carry out works because it does not include plans or specifications.</p>

A Few Examples (continued)

 <p>Types of Projects</p>	 <p>Types of Documents Generally Provided by Engineers</p>	 <p>Other Information</p>
<p>CONSTRUCTION SITE SUPERVISION</p> <p>Examples include supervising the work done by a contractor in accordance to the plans and specifications.</p>	<p>SIGNED SITE SUPERVISION REPORTS, SIGNED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE</p>	<p>Work supervision aims to ensure that the actual quality of the work is consistent with the quality presented in the plans and specifications.</p> <p>Engineers can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ supervision reports, that can include daily statements about events related to the activities taken place on the construction site. Supervision reports describe what the supervising engineer observed, noticed or approved; ▶ A certificate of compliance that confirms that the work performed is in accordance with the plans and specifications; ▶ any other document that may be necessary for a larger-scale project (supervision plan, inspection plan and test plan, etc.).
<p>PERFORMING A PRE-PURCHASE INSPECTION OF A BUILDING FOR A REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION</p>	<p>SIGNED REPORT</p>	<p>This type of service is not considered engineering because it consists of a visual inspection of a building's components (structural elements and mechanical, thermal or electrical systems, etc.) to determine its condition.</p> <p>This type of service is not reserved for engineers. Since it involves only observations, this service does not generally determine the cause of the deterioration, or the method required to repair it. However, at the request of clients, engineers may include their opinion on the causes and possible repairs in their inspection report.</p> <p>The preparation of such an opinion is an activity reserved for engineers when it relates to works per the Engineers Act</p>

Professional Obligations For Engineers



Engineers have a number of professional obligations arising from the Engineers Act, the **Code of Ethics for Professional Engineers** and other regulations governing the profession.

Here are some of these obligations.

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The engineering documents prepared by engineers must be complete and unambiguous.

The purpose of the documents should always be specified.

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Engineers must refrain from expressing opinions or giving contradictory or incomplete advice.

Engineers must inform and advise their clients on the best possible way to make an informed decision.

The opinions and advice given by engineers must be clear and coherent.

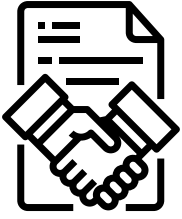
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Before accepting a mandate, engineers must bear in mind the extent of their expertise and aptitudes, as well as the means at their disposal to carry out the mandate (sufficient knowledge).

Note: The Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec does not issue specialist certificates, but each engineer can practice in one or more specific field, depending on their expertise.

Furthermore, engineers must sign the engineering documents that they prepare and also seal them in the case of plans and specifications.

Service Contracts between Engineers and Their Clients



- ▶ Engineers and their clients should have a written contract, as this is a best practice. The contract should include the following at a minimum:
 - ▷ a detailed description of the mandate and services offered, as well as exclusions (for example, the contract should indicate whether the mandate includes partial or full supervision of the work, whether it includes a certificate of compliance, etc.);
 - ▷ a description of the documents that the Engineer must provide as well as their purpose (what is the use of the documents). Engineers must provide the explanations to their clients in order for them to understand the purpose of these documents and the way in which they can be used;
 - ▷ a schedule for carrying out the mandate;
 - ▷ information regarding fees and payment terms.
- ▶ In some cases, an email confirmation of the mandate can be considered as a written contract.
- ▶ The written contract allows the client to ensure that his or her expectations have been clearly understood, to be made aware of the scope of the work that the engineer will have to execute and to validate the deliverables before the work begins.

Engineers' Professional Fees



Here are a few important considerations:

- ▶ Engineers must inform their clients of the approximate cost of their services and the terms and conditions of payment. Their fees must be fair, reasonable and reflect the mandate that their clients have given them. The payment method depends on the type of mandate and services provided by the engineer.
- ▶ Engineers may be entitled to charge additional fees if the client adds requests during the course of the mandate or for unforeseen circumstances. It is therefore important that the contract be precise detailing the services offered and the scope of the mandate.

Common payment methods: fixed price or hourly rate.

- ▶ The fixed price method of payment ensures that the cost of the engineer's services is known at the time of contract award. This requires that the work involved must be well defined. The hourly rate method of payment allows for a greater flexibility than the fixed price method. However, the exact cost of the services at the time of contract award is not known. The hourly rate and the approximate number of hours of the mandate must be specified in the contract.

Professional Liability Insurance

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To ensure protection of the public, engineers must have **Professional Liability Insurance** that provides coverage for liability that they may incur as a result of errors and omissions committed in the practice of their profession.

This document is provided for information purposes only and does not represent a legal opinion. For a legal interpretation, please consult your legal advisors.

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