

Alaska Industrial Exemption

NSPE has been reporting on various changes going through State and National government to change the industrial exemption after the Massachusetts residential gas explosions. We are not aware of any active changes being pursued in Alaska.

The paraphrased industrial exemption in Alaska Statutes (8.48.331) is:

An employee of an utility or business who practices engineering, involved in the operation of the employer's business only and does not offer engineering services to the public; exclusion does not apply to buildings or structures whose primary use is public occupancy.

Therefore, employees of gas utilities, water utilities, oil fields, etc., do not need to be licensed to do work associated with the business. The nationwide discussion is that if their work can impact the public, then should they be licensed?

The AELS Board had a recent discussion about a scenario where engineering work was being done by one entity for poles that serve two different utilities: power and communications. These poles do not directly serve public customers. It was made clear that engineering for poles that are solely for the utilities business are exempt from licensure requirements. If the industrial exemption were to change, poles that serve the public would require engineering to be done by licensed professionals.

ASPE works to protect the public through the licensing of engineers. We would encourage individuals who are working in areas that are exempt from licensing by State Statute to pursue their PE. If additional regulation of engineering is demanded by the public, we believe the three-legged stool of Education, Examination, and Experience combined with Ethics makes a great standard of care. Should we have a discussion of changing our exemptions to require more of the utilities to have a licensed PE responsible for work that is installed in public areas like distribution systems to customers' connections?

Chris Miller, ASPE President

Alaska Professional Design Council

A portion of your dues to the National Society of Professional Engineers comes back to the Alaska Society of Professional Engineers (ASPE) Statewide organization. Some of those funds are used to join the Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) in order to pool our resources to lobby in Juneau and other government agencies. As part of our membership we have two representatives on the board of APDC and get regular updates. Recently we got an update on the dividend and budget negotiations in Juneau. Our lobbyist stated that the coverage in the media is a good representation of the current mood, and he expects more tough choice to happen in a 2nd special session and votes to override any governor line item vetoes.

APDC has also been pushing to improve Fire Marshal review time. We have been successfully talking with the State Fire Marshal and legislators. A special increment of funding has already been provided to the agency to help them farm out reviews to other jurisdictions, and hire a consultant to help them get on top of it. If you have any specific thoughts on Fire Marshal funding, please share with your ASPE board.

You can keep track of APDC activities at their website at

<https://alaskaapdc.com/blog/> or their LinkedIn at [Alaska-professional-design-council](#).

Extraterrestrial Communications: Alaska PEs Over the Moon

Recently, the Matanuska Amateur Radio Association hosted the [MARA Hamfest](#) (Alaska statewide ham radio convention), featuring the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Northwest Division Director, Mike Ritz, W7VO, P.E., as the keynote speaker.

On the last day prior to flying back to the Lower 48, ASPE President-Elect Craig Bledsoe, KL4E, P.E., drove Mike, along with Anchorage East Rotary Exchange Student Adam Szabo from Slovakia, up to the KL6M Moonbounce Dish for a demonstration visit.

While they were on site, Mike Melum, KL6M, P.E., lowered the dish and the motorized feedhorn supporting structure down to ground level so that the feedhorn could be swapped out from a microwave band down to the 220 MHz VHF spectrum for an upcoming propagation test with a European station. As the title indicates, all radio transmissions are bounced off the surface of the moon, averaging some 239,000 miles in each direction, an exceptionally difficult challenge without utilizing computerized signal enhancements.

The huge ten-meter dish itself was seriously damaged earlier this decade by a 115-knot windstorm, which ripped it off of its mounting structure. But Mike persevered and successfully reinstalled it with improved and strengthened bearings almost two years later.

Today, this facility is performing valuable scientific research into the frontiers of extraterrestrial communication in addition to welcoming STEM students and their sponsors into this fascinating career field.



Left and top: The KL6M Moonbounce Dish sustained damage during a 115-knot windstorm. Bottom right: ASPE President-Elect Craig Bledsoe, KL4E, P.E., and exchange student Adam Szabo visit the dish. Mike Melum, KL6M, P.E., lowers the feedhorn in the background.

Credit: Bledsoe (left and top), and Michael Ritz, W7VO, P.E. (bottom right).

Complete the Engineering Team With NICET Certification

In the late 1950s, as the US came to rely more heavily on machines and automation, technically skilled workers who could support the work of engineers were in high demand. In 1961, NSPE rose to the challenge by forming an organization to certify technicians and technologists.



But even though technicians have been an integral part of the engineering team and NSPE since then, that organization—the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies—is not always understood by PEs. A well-attended, NSPE-sponsored webinar on May 29 provided the full picture.

During the webinar, “[Quality and Safety Through a Qualified Engineering Team](#),” NICET Communications Director Chip Hollis detailed the institute’s operations and the technician’s role on the team. NICET was founded to recognize the qualifications of technicians. Its focus, Hollis explained, helps ensure a qualified engineering workforce, certifying both engineering technicians and technologists in areas such as construction materials testing, transportation construction inspection, electrical power, fire protection, and security systems.

Don't Miss This Upcoming Webinar



Stay current with essential professional development opportunities through NSPE webinars. Members receive a special rate on the upcoming live webinar:

On **June 26** at 2 p.m., the webinar [The Saint Joseph Water Crisis – Lessons Learned in the Age of Deteriorating Water Infrastructure](#) will focus on a water crisis in Saint Joseph, Louisiana, which lends many lessons related to the difficulties faced by small and large water systems in rural environments. In this session, David A. Martin, P.E., will present an overview of the state of the town’s water system prior to and after construction, as well as an overview of the new treatment process and applicability to other aquifer systems. Additionally, participants will be presented with the lessons learned during the crisis, including regulatory involvement, use of multiple funding sources, early owner procurement of long lead time equipment, and alternate project delivery.

Don't Miss...

- [Exemptions to Engineering Licensure Laws](#). NSPE has updated this report, with information current as of May 2019. It is free for members.

- [Take Action on Licensure Exemption Bills](#). It's imperative that lawmakers hear from their professional engineering constituents who [support bills](#) in the US House and Senate targeting licensure exemptions in public utility pipeline work.
- [PECON at a Glance](#). Take a look at the lineup of activities and educational sessions taking place at the 2019 Professional Engineers Conference in Kansas City.

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