



www.monroePE's.org

Monroe Professional Engineers Society

A Chapter of the New York State Society of Professional Engineers

657 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14607

Dedicated to Professionalism in Engineering in the Interest of Public Safety and Welfare

2015-16 Officers: President **Chris Devries, PE**, President-elect **David Roberts, PE**, Vice-President **Chris Kamar, PE**, Secretary **Derek Anderson, PE**, Treasurer **Neal Illenberg, PE**, Membership Chair **Chris Devries, PE**

Engineers in Industry - Why Get Licensed?

It is common to find many Professional Engineers (PE's) working for Architectural and Engineering firms. However, as you move into industry, you find significantly fewer licensed engineers. Why is this the case? Mostly this is because of Industrial Exemption Law, which basically indicates that unless engineers are directly involved in public safety (e.g. designing bridges, buildings, etc.) they do not need to be licensed. So if you work in industry, why bother pursuing your engineering license?

Issues with Industrial Exemption

Would you be comfortable going into surgery knowing that the surgeon, while having attended medical school, was not a licensed doctor? Probably not. Why should we feel differently about engineers? The idea that engineers in industry do not affect public safety is short-sighted. Invariably, the products and machinery designed by engineers in industry will eventually have an impact on the public. This is why the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) and the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) both recommend the amendment and/or phasing out of Industrial Exemption Laws.

Benefits of Becoming a Licensed Engineer in Industry

Besides the ethical responsibility of all engineers toward public safety, how do you personally benefit by getting licensed? NSPE lists 5 key reasons to get licensed:

1. **Prestige:** PE's are respected by the public and are seen in the same light as licensed professionals in other fields. PE's are also held in high esteem by their peers within the engineering community, who see the PE as part of an elite group.
2. **Career Development:** Employers are impressed with engineers who have their PE license. Licensure not only enhances your stature, it shows commitment to the profession and demonstrates heightened leadership and management skills. Licensure is also a necessity for rising to increased levels of authority and responsibility.
3. **Authority:** Only PE's can sign and seal engineering drawings; and only PE's can be in responsible charge of a firm in private practice or serve as a fully qualified expert witness. Also, many government agencies and educational institutions are emphasizing licensure among their engineers as well.
4. **Flexibility:** Having a PE license opens up your career options. You can become a specialist, or establish your own business. It also protects you during industry downsizing or outsourcing. The PE license allows you to go as far as your initiative and talent will take you.
5. **Money:** Studies have shown that most PE's earn higher pay throughout their business careers. Having your PE allows expanded opportunities beyond a company structure - as an independent consultant for example.

(Source: <http://www.nspe.org/resources/licensure/why-get-licensed/>)

For information on getting licensed, see www.ncees.org and <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/pels/>.

David C. Roberts, P.E.
President-Elect - MPE's