



THE STATE  
of ALASKA  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development

BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR ARCHITECTS  
ENGINEERS, AND LAND SURVEYORS

P.O. Box 110806  
Juneau, AK 99811-0806  
Main: 907.465.1676  
Fax: 907.465.2974

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State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Design & Engineering Services  
PO Box 112500  
Juneau, AK 99811-2500

Attn: Kenneth J. Fisher, PE Division Director & Chief Engineer

Mr. Fisher:

Thank you for coming to our August 2018 meeting to discuss the stamping of standard detail drawings by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). The Board agrees with the last line of the letter by Jeffrey P. Stark of the Department of Law that DOT&PF may use standard details. The Board does not agree with the contention that they can be signed as final drawings, particularly within DOT&PF's current framework for managing standard details.

Standard details are intended to be used in multiple projects with little or no change, and the appropriateness of their inclusion into a particular project is the responsibility of the engineer of record for that project. It is the responsibility of the registrant that initially designed the detail to include limitations of the detail's application, however, if that registrant is not directly involved with a particular project, sealing the drawing is in violation of 12 AAC 36.185 (a)(3), (4) and (7) which state:

*(3) seal only final drawings, surveys, reports, and required construction documents for which the registrant is qualified to seal and for which the registrant claims responsibility;*

*(4) not knowingly allow the use of his or her seal by another person on a document that the registrant has neither prepared nor reviewed personally;*

*(7) not sign or seal drawings, documents, or other professional work for which the registrant does not have direct professional knowledge and direct supervisory control.*

During discussions at the past several AELS meetings, it is the Board's understanding that registrants designing standard details for DOT&PF typically do not have direct professional knowledge of the particular project in which their detail is being incorporated. The Board maintains that DOT&PF's current practice of having the standard detail stamped by the registrant, forces the registrant to take responsibility for the detail's application in future

projects of which he or she has no knowledge. It is the responsibility of the engineer of record for a particular project to ensure the detail is appropriate for the project. If the detail's use doesn't perfectly match the conditions placed on that detail, it is the engineer of record's responsibility to revise the detail to meet the conditions. Additionally, as these details are currently sealed, , when the engineer of record for a project "reseals" the drawing, he or she takes responsibility for that detail and its use on the project, whether there is a stamp on that detail, or not.

Even if we were to accept that these drawings are final, the drawing with a stamp would only be good until a new code is issued. At that time somebody, whether the original engineer or a new one, would have to review the detail and verify that it still meets code. They should make changes, if necessary, and put a new stamp on the detail and date it (per 12 AAC 36.185 (d)), so that everyone knows at what time it was approved. The reviewer, if not the original engineer, cannot extend the life of the detail on behalf of the previous engineer by filling in a line in a revision block. If the reviewer is the original engineer, they have to put a new date on the stamp whenever they do such a review. A stamp originally put on a detail in 1982 cannot still be valid in 2018, unless no new codes have been issued in the interim.

We have also heard that there are concerns with a number of the details and their use is problematic to the engineers who are being given these details. The engineers have to create their own details because of code violations in the existing details. They can do this because they have the expertise to identify shortcomings in or variations from the standard detail. They understand that their license is at risk, if they specify a detail that is not adequate for the purpose.

Finally, to verify the applicability of a detail and put a stamp on it, the engineer must have a valid license. Issuing a drawing stamped by an engineer whose license has been retired or has lapsed is practicing engineering without a license. That is not acceptable.

You had requested an Attorney General's opinion on this issue. Robert Auth, the Department of Law attorney who works with the Board of Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors, has reviewed this letter and agrees with the Board's interpretation of the Statutes and Regulations.

The Board recommends DOT&PF remove stamps from standard details and establish a process for reviewing standard details on a regular basis to ensure they are compliant with codes.

Respectfully,

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, AND LAND SURVEYORS**



**Colin Maynard, PE, SE, F.NSPE**  
**Chair**

cc: Robert Auth, Department of Law