

THE STANDARD

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INFORMATION

- BELS is comprised of nine members. Five professional engineers, two professional land surveyors, and two public members.
- All members are vetted by specific nominating committees. The committees then submit a list of three names to the Governor who makes the appointment.
- Board meetings are held every two months beginning in January and are open to the public.

THE STANDARD

THE STANDARD is a publication of the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Digital Editions are posted on our website.

Staff Contact Information can be found by using the following link: <https://bels.alabama.gov/about/staff/>



NEED A SPEAKER?

We cover the following:

PDH / CEU topics include:

- Enforcement Case Studies
- Ethics
- Law and Rules

If interested please email: rick.huett@bels.alabama.gov

COMMUNITY NEWS



John E. Averrett, P.E.

On June 6, 2024 Governor Ivey re-appointed John E. Averrett, P.E. to the Board. Mr. Averrett is the current Chair of the Board, after holding the positions of Board Vice Chair and Board Secretary.

EXPERTS NEEDED

BELS relies heavily on the expertise of professional engineers and professional land surveyors serving as Board Technical Advisors to assist with the investigative process when questions of competency are raised. If interested please contact Bob Herbert by telephone at 334-242-5089 or email: robert.herbert@bels.alabama.gov.

Office Calendar

July 30, 2024 **Meeting**
Sept 2nd - Holiday - Office Closed
October 8, 2024 **Meeting**
Oct 14th - Holiday - Office Closed
Nov 11th - Holiday - Office Closed
Nov 28th - Holiday - Office Closed
December 10, 2024 **Meeting**

New Staff Member

We're happy to welcome Mike Darden to our staff. Mike will wear multiple hats and his duties will include Investigations and Public Outreach.



COMMUNITY NEWS

ACEC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For those seeking scholarship opportunities for engineering or surveying program scholarships ACEC/Alabama will offer one \$5,000 scholarship to a student attending an ABET accredited engineering or surveying/geomatics program in our State.

Students must be entering their junior, senior, fifth, or master's degree year, in the fall of 2024 to qualify.

In addition, student applicants must be United States citizens pursuing a bachelor's or master's Degree in engineering or in an accredited land-surveying program to qualify. ABET accreditation of engineering programs for scholarship applicants must conform to the particular degree the student is pursuing.

Students may receive only one ACEC Alabama Scholarship during the student's academic career.

For more information, contact: rcasillas@aceca.org.

COAA 2024

Chief Special Investigator Bob Herbert speaking at the 2024 COAA Conference.

The COAA is “Advancing the Proficiency of Code Enforcement Officials by Fostering a Culture of Education and Collaboration.”

Below photo:
Building Officials & Code Enforcement Officials attending the conference.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Board routinely receives questions regarding application and licensure issues. Included are a few of our most Frequently Asked Questions:

If I have met the continuing education of my home state, is that acceptable for meeting Alabama's continuing education requirement? No. You must have 30 PDH's to renew in "active" status.

Sealing of Documents & Stamps - Where do I get a stamp made? Most local office supply companies provide this service.

What does my stamp need to look like? Your individual seal must be circular in form and from 1 5/8 to 2 inches in diameter as prescribed by the Board.

I received my engineering degree outside the United States. Is that acceptable?

Yes. The Board requires that your education be evaluated by National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES). Please contact NCEES at www.ncees.org to request an education evaluation packet. There is no waiver to this requirement.

Certificate of Authorizations - If I practice in my own name; do I still need a CA?

If you practice under your name (i.e. John Doe, PE), you do not need a CA. If you practice as John Doe Engineering, you will need a CA.

My firm is changing the person in charge. What documentation must we submit?

Login to your company My BELS Account and select the CA amendment application. It must be completed within 30 days of the change, and there is no fee to amend your CA.

Experience - How do I verify experience if my supervisor is not licensed?

Engineering Experience – If your supervisor is not a PE but is a graduate engineer, when you complete the work history information in the application indicate they are not licensed. When the verifier completes the form it will ask for their background information. The board will review their background information to determine that when you were working together, if this person had sent in an application to become licensed, would they have been licensed. If so, you would get credit for the experience. **If not, then you would not. They must have met the requirements for licensure prior to the time they are verifying.**

Land Surveying Experience – If your supervisor is not a PLS but is a graduate land surveyor, when you complete the work history information in the application indicate they are not licensed. When the verifier completes the form it will ask for their background information. The board would review their background information to determine that when you were working together if this person had sent in an application to become licensed, would they have been licensed. If so, you would get credit for the experience. If not, then you would not. **They must have met the requirements for licensure prior to the time they are verifying.**

CREDENTIALS ISSUED – FY2023-2024

<u>Credential</u>	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	<u>Total</u>
Engineer Intern	46	60	82		
Surveyor Intern	1	2	1		
Professional Engineer	328	337	284		
Professional Land Surveyor	6	11	7		
Engineering Company	72	65	84		
Land Surveying Company	10	7	10		



FORGED ENGINEERING SEALS

The Board's Staff routinely communicates with other State Boards concerning licensure and enforcement matters. Recently several Boards indicated a rise in the number of complaints they have received regarding forged engineering seals and signatures on engineering documents. A few examples noted were:

An individual applies for a position as a mechanical engineer at a firm. Once employed, the individual is asked to provide his PE number for the company roster. He provides a number that the firm learns is issued to someone else. The individual resigns from the firm before he is terminated.



The child of a licensed engineer continues to use their parents seal and signature to perform work after the licensed parent has died.

An unlicensed individual working for a licensed individual began using the seal and signature of the licensee without their knowledge.

An unlicensed individual created a digital seal that contained a licensed professional engineer's information and began creating engineering documents.

An individual failed the PE exam, but did not want to tell their boss, so they advised him that they had passed and created a digital seal and began sealing engineering work.

An individual goes to the Board office advising that he is having trouble renewing his license. Staff cannot locate his information in the database, and he just so happened he brought a copy of his wall certificate with him. Staff was able to determine the individual had falsified the certificate and had been working as a PE for fifteen years.

A foreign website connected professional service providers to clients which resulted in forged sealed designs being produced and sold to the public.

An individual made up a PE number, obtained a seal and used it until a new PE applicant in his office asked him to complete their PE reference form. The applicant went to the website to confirm his PE # and learned the number belonged to someone else.

Taking the lengths that some individuals will go to steal your professional credentials it is extremely important that you do everything you can to protect them.

ENFORCEMENT STATS

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

FY 2023-2024	Professional Engineers	Professional Land Surveyors	Unlicensed Engineering	Unlicensed Surveying	Total
Quarter 1	8	7	1	1	17
Quarter 2	5	2	5	0	12
Quarter 3	4	1	5	2	12

cbs42.com News Article

A recent news article from (cbs42.com) indicated Jason Quinnelly of Semmes Alabama pled guilty and was sentenced to years of probation for “scamming his customers out of thousands of dollars” The article also mentions that Quinnelly agreed to repay his victims.

In 2023 the Board issued a Cease & Desist Order to Quinnelly and his firm Quinco Incorporated when an investigation revealed that Quinnelly possessed and provided documents bearing the professional seal and signature of a licensed PE (without his knowledge) to unsuspecting customers. The PE had never performed work for Quinnelly and did not know how Quinnelly had obtained his professional engineer seal and signature.

<https://www.cbs42.com/news/crime/troy-man-receives-prison-sentence-after-scamming-victims-out-of-nearly-200000/>

COMPLAINTS RESOLVED

FY 2023-2024	Professional Engineers	Professional Land Surveyors	Unlicensed Engineering	Unlicensed Surveying	Total
Quarter 1	1	3	5	0	9
Quarter 2	2	6	2	1	11
Quarter 3	0	1	5	0	6

ENFORCEMENT NEWS

Steven Prosser and Prosser & Associates - Complaint # 2024-10, 2024-11 & 2024-13

An investigation determined Steven Prosser inadvertently placed his State of Tennessee Professional Engineer Seal and identified his firm “Prosser & Associates” on five storm damage inspection reports for locations in Alabama. The reports contained language that identified Mr. Prosser as a professional engineer, without being issued a license to practice as a professional engineer in the State of Alabama and obtaining a certificate of authorization for engineering for his firm.

Mr. Prosser agreed to pay a \$4,500 civil penalty to the State of Alabama General Fund, to pay \$207 to the Board for the cost of the investigation, to cease and desist offering engineering services until properly credentialed and the consent order and final order would be a public record.

William Griswold - Complaint # 2024-18

An investigation determined William Griswold a previously licensed professional engineer identified himself as a “P.E.” and the “Chief Engineer” on a document associated with engineering work in the State of Alabama.

Mr. Griswold agreed to pay a \$2,000 civil penalty to the State of Alabama General Fund, to pay \$101 to the Board for the cost of the investigation, to cease and desist the offering of engineering services in Alabama until such time as he becomes licensed by the Board, and the consent order and final order would be a public record.

Bryan Russell - Complaint # 2024-20

An investigation determined Bryan Russell a previously licensed professional engineer placed his expired professional engineer seal on a set of civil engineering design plans for a project in Alabama.

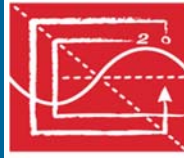
Mr. Russell agreed to pay a \$500 civil penalty to the State of Alabama General Fund, to pay \$65 to the Board for the cost of the investigation, to cease and desist the offering of engineering services in Alabama until such time as he becomes licensed by the Board, and the consent order and final order would be a public record.

Bert Hays, PLS - Complaint # 2024-21

An investigation determined Mr. Hays performed a survey of property that contained violations of the standards of practice for surveying in Alabama and set a new boundary line which led the adjoining property owner to file legal action.

Mr. Hays agreed to pay a \$1,000 fine to the Board, and the Consent Order and Final Order to be a public record.

NCEES COLLEGE LEVEL OUTREACH INITIATIVES



NCEES
*advancing licensure for
engineers and surveyors*

FE and FS Graduation Honor Cords are available to current engineering and surveying students who pass the FE or FS exam prior to graduating from a participating ABET-accredited program. FE and FS honor cords are a great way to share your achievement on graduation day.

Credly digital badges are available to examinees when they pass the FE or FS exam. Badges can be shared through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and are a great way to let others know you passed the exam.

FE Ambassadors serve as on-campus representatives at participating schools with the purpose of engaging fellow engineering students through activities such as engineering society student chapter meetings and events, licensure presentations, on-campus advertising, & social media.

NCEES SEEKS FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERS

NCEES is still seeking licensed fire protection engineers to participate in a professional activities and knowledge study, or PAKS, for the PE Fire Protection exam. The results of this online survey will be used to update the content of the PE exam, which is a process that occurs every six to eight years.

NCEES requires a cross section of licensed professional engineers practicing fire protection engineering—including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia—to complete the survey. If you are a licensed professional engineer, we would appreciate your input. The survey can be completed in about 20–40 minutes.

[Click here for access to the online survey.](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Survey_of_the_Practice_of_Fire_Protection_Engineering_2024)

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Survey_of_the_Practice_of_Fire_Protection_Engineering_2024

The survey will be open until **July 22, 2024**. Please help us spread the word about this important study by sharing this information with any colleagues who are licensed fire protection engineers. NCEES sincerely thanks you for your contribution to ensure the PE Fire Protection exam is reflective of the current practice of P.E.s. For more information, contact NCEES Exam Services Operations Manager Lehmon Dekle, P.E., at ldekle@ncees.org.

NEW FE PRACTICE EXAMS

NCEES STAFF HAS BEEN HARD AT work developing new, interactive FE practice exams that will better align with today's computer-based testing. Each of the seven FE exams will have a corresponding 50-question practice exam. These seven exams are by discipline: Chemical, Civil, Electrical and Computer, Environmental, Industrial and Systems, Mechanical, and Other Disciplines.

The key distinctions of the new FE practice exams are their format, questions, and feedback—all of which will better prepare registrants for the real 110-question, six-hour FE exam. NCEES plans to launch the new practice exams in June 2024.

ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE



Investigator's Mike Darden and Bill Hamil spoke with the Plans Examiner class on Thursday May 16, 2024, at the Alabama Fire College. We appreciate the work these professional examiners do to ensure the safety of our citizens through code compliance.

OUR MISSION

The Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors was established by legislative action in 1935. Its charter is to protect the public by helping to safeguard life, health, and property, and to promote the public welfare by providing for the licensing and regulation of persons in the practices of engineering and land surveying.

This purpose is achieved through the establishment of minimum qualifications for entry into the professions of engineering and land surveying, through the adoption of rules defining and delineating unlawful or unethical conduct, and through discipline for those individuals or entities who violate the applicable laws or rules.

How Are Complaints Resolved?

Once an investigation has been completed the case file is reviewed by an investigative committee of the Board. The members of the investigative committee include the Executive Director, a Board Member assigned on a rotating basis, and an Assistant Attorney General assigned to the Board by the Attorney General’s office. The committee determines if there is sufficient probable cause that a violation of the Code of Alabama or the Rules of the Board has occurred, and if so does it rise to the level of discipline. Once that determination has been made, the committee must determine a recommendation that it will present to the Board for its action.

Typically the recommendations fall into one of three categories, (1) Take no action, (2) Take an informal action (which is confidential) such as a Letter of caution or a Letter of education, or

(3) Formal disciplinary action. If the committee determines formal disciplinary action is appropriate, a proposed settlement agreement is first offered to the respondent. If the respondent agrees to the proposed consent order, the requirements of the consent order are presented to the Board for review without identifying the respondent. The Board will either issue a Final Order accepting the recommendation, or reject it and refer it back to the investigative committee.



Thirty two investigations have been closed in fiscal year 2023-2024. The chart below shows how they were resolved.

FY 2023-2024	Professional	Professional	Unlicensed	Unlicensed	Total
	Engineers	Land Surveyors	Engineering	Surveying	
No Action	3	4	2	-	9
Informal Action	1	1	1	-	3
Formal Action	-	9	11	-	20

Our investigators not only conduct investigations of complaints, but they are also available to answer your questions concerning routine issues that occur and relate to compliance with the Code of Alabama and/or the Board’s Administrative Code. Please feel free to send them an email or give them a call with your questions or concerns.

Their Contact Information:

Chief Special Investigator Bob Herbert: robert.herbert@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-242-5089

Special Investigator Bill Hamil: william.hamill@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-242-5049

Special Investigator Mike Darden: michael.darden@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-353-1057

ASK OUR STAFF



SEND QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ◆ **PE & PLS Applications, Structural Roster Designation Requests, and the ALSS Exam** to Bonnie Kelly at bonnie.kelly@bels.alabama.gov
- ◆ **Public Records Request, Renewals & Reinstatements** to Rick Huett at rick.huett@bels.alabama.gov
- ◆ **Certificates of Authorization - Applications, Amendments, or Renewals, and Engineer Intern and Land Surveyor Intern Applications** to Pam Faison at pamela.faison@bels.alabama.gov
- ◆ **License Verification Requests.** The vast majority of states use the electronic verification system available on the NCEES website. Just login to your MYNCEES account and request the verification. If a paper verification is needed contact Denise Hooper at denise.hooper@bels.alabama.gov or 334-242-5568
- ◆ **Continuing Education, Audits, Possible law or rules violations, requirements of professional engineers and professional land surveyors,** to one of our investigators:
 - ◆ Chief Special Investigator Bob Herbert: robert.herbert@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-242-5089
 - ◆ Special Investigator Bill Hamil: william.hamill@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-242-5049
 - ◆ Special Investigator Mike Darden: michael.darden@bels.alabama.gov, or 334-353-1057