

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY GUIDELINES

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REVISED NOVEMBER 2004



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EXAMINERS  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING®

# **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY GUIDELINES**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	v
Section 1 – NCEES <i>Model Law</i> .....	1
Section 2 – NCEES <i>Model Rules</i> .....	1
Section 3 – Criteria for Activities .....	4
Section 4 – Model Renewal Form for CPC Activities.....	8
Section 5 – Uniform Instructions for Renewal Form .....	10
Section 6 – Audit Processes .....	11
Appendix A – Renewal Form .....	12
Appendix B – Instructions for Completing Application for Renewal of Licensure .....	14
Appendix C – Qualification Requirements for CPC Course Sponsors .....	17
Appendix D – Sample Letter of Reply for CPC Sponsor Inquiry Contact.....	19
Appendix E – Sample Letter of Reply for Licensee Inquiry .....	20

## FOREWORD

This manual has been prepared by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) to provide guidelines for the jurisdictions and territories that have or are planning to have continuing professional competency (CPC) requirements for relicensing. A number of jurisdictions already require CPC for professional licensure, and a number of other jurisdictions have or are requesting enabling legislation to permit or require mandatory CPC within the near future. The official position of the NCEES concerning CPC is provided as follows in the NCEES *Manual of Policy and Position Statements* in the position statement called Continuing Professional Competency:

NCEES commends and endorses the efforts of the professional and technical societies, engineering and surveying schools, and industry in the areas of continuing education and competency for engineers and surveyors.

NCEES endorses the continued professional competency guidelines contained in its *Model Rules* for evaluation of a licensee's efforts to maintain or improve competence to continue to practice engineering and surveying.

NCEES endorses comity among licensure jurisdictions and encourages the careful evaluation of any additional requirements for licensure that would tend to interfere with comity licensing between jurisdictions.

Applicants for licensure by comity or endorsement should not be denied licensure because their jurisdiction of licensure does not have a continuing professional competency or similarly named requirement.

This manual was developed to assist jurisdictions in preparing rules, requirements, forms, and instructions that will establish generally accepted standards to facilitate the earning and reporting of CPC credits when relicensing. Since engineers, and surveyors to a lesser extent, are often licensed in multiple jurisdictions, the need to avoid many variations of requirements is apparent. In addition, this manual is designed to assist jurisdictions in their dealings with licensees and suppliers of CPC activities. It is intended to assist in their understanding of requirements, criteria, and processes.

This manual was prepared within the NCEES by its Committee on Uniform Procedures and Legislative Guidelines (UPLG) with assistance from the Committee on Member Board Administrators. In addition, acknowledgement and credit is due to those jurisdictions that have pioneered the early adoption of CPC for surveyors and engineers. Much of their work has been incorporated into this manual or has influenced its direction.

*These guidelines were updated in November 2004 to reflect changes to various Council documents. The only substantive revision was deleting "land" from all references to "surveyors" or "surveying" and changing "PLS" to "PS" in accordance with Model Law.*

*Comments, corrections, suggestions, or requests for additional information may be addressed to:*

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## **SECTION 1 – NCEES MODEL LAW**

The NCEES *Model Law* authorizes continuing professional competency (CPC) in Section 120.60, Board Powers. Paragraph E states: “The board shall have the power and authority to require a demonstration of continuing professional competency of engineers and surveyors as a condition of renewal or relicensure.”

This paragraph empowers a board to require CPC for relicensing and enables the board to specify CPC requirements that its licensees must meet. This wording does not mandate but rather permits CPC for relicensing when a board so elects. It is also highly desirable to encourage this or similar wording in the law so that the board can specify the requirements in its administrative rules. As outlined in the Foreword, comity and uniformity of requirements for CPC among jurisdictions are very desirable. This wording of a jurisdiction’s law would permit its board to effect those provisions.

## **SECTION 2 – NCEES MODEL RULES**

For each jurisdiction that adopts mandatory CPC for relicensing, the administrative rule provides the fundamental framework of the requirements its licensees must meet. As increasing numbers of jurisdictions implement CPC, the importance of uniformity of the administrative rule among the jurisdictions becomes more urgent. If each jurisdiction requires a different variation of the rule, then multiple-jurisdiction licensees must keep track of what opportunities are acceptable in each jurisdiction and maintain separate logs of activities. When this is coupled with the various periods of renewal among the jurisdictions (such as annual or biennial, various months in which renewal is effected, and even various months depending upon the licensee’s last name), then the requirement of keeping up with what is accepted by each jurisdiction could become a difficult and burdensome chore for multijurisdictional licensees.

*In order to overcome these difficulties, the NCEES recommends careful consideration of the administrative rule for CPC that may be adopted and urges all jurisdictions to remain as consistent with the NCEES Model Rules as is possible.*

### **Model Rules, Section 240.30 Continuing Professional Competency**

The continuing professional competency guidelines are set forth below for the purpose of providing consistency in those jurisdictions that adopt mandatory requirements or for those jurisdictions that wish to encourage voluntary usage. The purpose of the continuing professional competency requirement is to demonstrate a continuing level of competency of professional engineers and/or professional surveyors.

#### **A. Introduction**

Every licensee shall meet the continuing professional competency requirements of these regulations for professional development as a condition for licensure renewal.

#### **B. Definitions**

Terms used in this section are defined as follows:

1. Professional Development Hour (PDH) – A contact hour (nominal) of instruction or presentation. The common denominator for other units of credit.
2. Continuing Education Unit (CEU) – Unit of credit customarily used for continuing education courses. One continuing education unit equals 10 hours of class in approved continuing education course.
3. College/Unit Semester/Quarter Hour – Credit for course in ABET-approved programs or other related college course approved in accordance with article (E) of this section.

4. Course/Activity – Any qualifying course or activity with a clear purpose and objective which will maintain, improve, or expand the skills and knowledge relevant to the licensee’s field of practice.
5. Dual Licensee – A person who is licensed as both an engineer and a surveyor.

C. Requirements

Every licensee is required to obtain 15 (30 if biennial) PDH units during the renewal period year. If a licensee exceeds the annual requirement in any renewal period, a maximum of 15 PDH units may be carried forward into the subsequent renewal period. PDH units may be earned as follows:

1. Successful completion of college courses.
2. Successful completion of continuing education courses.
3. Successful completion of correspondence, televised, videotaped, and other short courses/tutorials.
4. Presenting or attending qualifying seminars, in-house courses, workshops, or professional or technical presentations made at meetings, conventions, or conferences.
5. Teaching or instructing in (1) through (4) above.
6. Authoring published papers, articles, books, or accepted licensing examination items.
7. Active participation in professional or technical societies.
8. Patents.

D. Units

The conversion of other units of credit to PDH units is as follows:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. 1 College or unit semester hour  | 45 PDH |
| 2. 1 College or unit quarter hour   | 30 PDH |
| 3. 1 Continuing Education Unit  | 10 PDH |
| 4. 1 Hour of professional development<br>in course work, seminars, or professional<br>or technical presentations made at meetings,<br>conventions, or conferences | 1 PDH  |
| 5. For teaching apply multiple of 2*  |        |
| 6. Each published paper, article, or book   | 10 PDH |
| 7. Active participation in professional and<br>technical society. (Each organization.)  | 2 PDH  |
| 8. Each patent.   | 10 PDH |

*\* Teaching credit is valid for teaching a course or seminar for the first time only. Teaching credit does not apply to full-time faculty.*

E. Determination of Credit

The board of licensure has final authority with respect to approval of courses, credit, PDH value for courses, and other methods of earning credit.

1. Credit for college or community college approved courses will be based upon course credit established by the college.
2. Credit for qualifying seminars and workshops will be based on one PDH unit for each hour of attendance. Attendance at qualifying programs presented at professional and/or technical society meetings will earn PDH units for the actual time of each program.
3. Credit determination for activities D6 and D8 is the responsibility of the licensee (subject to review as required by the board).

4. Credit for activity D7, active participation in professional and technical societies (limited to 2 PDH per organization), requires that a licensee serve as an officer and/or actively participate in a committee of the organization. PDH credits are not earned until the end of each year of service is completed.

F. Recordkeeping

The licensee is responsible for maintaining records to be used to support credits claimed. Records required include, but are not limited to (1) a log showing the type of activity claimed, sponsoring organization, location, duration, instructor's or speaker's name, and PDH credits earned; and (2) attendance verification records in the form of completion certificates or other documents supporting evidence of attendance.

G. Exemptions

A licensee may be exempt from the professional development educational requirements for one of the following reasons:

1. New licensees by way of examination or comity shall be exempt for their first renewal period.
2. A licensee serving on temporary active duty in the armed forces of the United States for a period of time exceeding one hundred twenty (120) consecutive days in a year shall be exempt from obtaining the professional development hours required during that year.
3. Licensees experiencing physical disability, illness, or other extenuating circumstances as reviewed and approved by the board may be exempt. Supporting documentation must be furnished to the board.
4. Licensees who list their occupation as "Retired" on the board-approved renewal form and who further certify that they are no longer receiving any remuneration from providing professional engineering or surveying services shall be exempt from the professional development hours required. In the event such a person elects to return to active practice of professional engineering or surveying, professional development hours must be earned before returning to active practice for each year exempted, not to exceed the annual requirement for two years.

H. Reinstatement

A licensee may bring an inactive license to active status by obtaining all delinquent PDH units. However, if the total number required to become current exceeds 30, then 30 shall be the maximum number required.

I. Comity/Out-of-Jurisdiction Resident

The CPC requirements for <jurisdiction> will be satisfied when a non-resident certifies to be licensed in and having met the mandatory CPC requirements of any jurisdiction approved and listed by <jurisdiction>.

J. Dual Licensees

The number of PDH units required shall remain 15, at least 1/3 of which shall be obtained in each profession.

K. Forms

All renewal applications will require the completion of a continuing education form specified by the board outlining PDH credit claimed. The licensee must supply sufficient detail on the form to permit audit verification, must certify and sign the continuing education form, and submit the form with the renewal application and fee.

### SECTION 3 – CRITERIA FOR ACTIVITIES

The law and the rule adopted in jurisdictions having CPC requirements are the definitive documents which govern what licensees must do to meet periodic relicensing or requirements. These documents, however, are succinctly written and do not cover rationale or give examples that explain and illustrate in-depth what is expected of the licensee. Additional information is given to licensees on the renewal form and in instructions that accompany the form. A model renewal form and renewal instructions are shown in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

This section supplements these sources of information and gives a more complete understanding of the intent of the rule. This information may be useful to licensing boards considering the adoption of rules, forms, or instructions; to licensees who are attempting to meet the requirements; to suppliers or sponsors of CPC activities; and to employers of licensees who may consider becoming sponsors of qualifying “in-house” CPC activities.

#### **Credit Criteria for All Qualifying CPC Activities**

The primary purpose of licensing for professional engineers and professional surveyors is to protect the public from unqualified or unethical practitioners. The requirement for CPC is also intended to protect the public by reinforcing the need for lifelong learning in order to stay current with changing technology, equipment, procedures, processes, tools, and established standards. The rule specifying qualifying CPC activities was designed to give flexibility in selecting among a broad range of subjects that are intended to strengthen or maintain competency in technical, managerial (business), or ethical fields.

Licensees are encouraged to select meaningful CPC activities which will be of benefit in the pursuit of their chosen fields. The *Model Rules* provides a definition of course/activity as follows:

“Any qualifying course or activity with a clear purpose and objective which will maintain, improve, or expand the skills and knowledge relevant to the licensee’s field of practice.”

In the remainder of this section, all references to CPC activities or credits assume that such activities or credits are *qualifying* as described above. Examples of typical qualifying and non-qualifying activities are listed later in this section.

#### **Professional Development Hour(s)**

The term “professional development hour” or “professional development hours” (both abbreviated PDH) is defined as a contact hour (nominal) of instruction or presentation. It is the common denominator for the other units of credit. Experience in jurisdictions having CPC reveals that a number of erroneous interpretations concerning this definition of a PDH can occur. For example, consider a one-day seminar that begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. with a one-hour break for lunch.

The *Model Rules* intends that the *maximum* PDH units that can be earned for this seminar is eight. But the question invariably arises, What about a morning and afternoon break of 20 minutes each? The general understanding is that short-term breaks are permissible as long as a minimum of 50 minutes of presentation/participation per hour is undertaken. If there are no breaks, or breaks of less than 10 minutes per hour are included, *no additional time may be claimed*. Seminar presenters may attempt to take the number of elapsed minutes (such as 8 hours times 60 minutes) and then divide by 50 to arrive at the PDH units for which the seminar is advertised. This would result in over nine PDH in an eight-hour period, which is not permitted. *The general rule is that PDH units cannot exceed the actual contact clock hours.*

The *Model Rules* is silent about how to handle fractions of hours. It is recommended that PDH units be rounded and reported to the nearest half hour and that no activity of under a half hour be accepted as qualifying for PDH credit. For example, a qualifying activity of 50 minutes would be reported as one PDH, and an activity of 40 minutes would be reported as a half PDH.

### **PDH Credit Requirements**

The rule specifies that every licensee is required to obtain 15 PDH (30 PDH if biennial) during the renewal period. If a licensee exceeds the annual requirement in any renewal period, a maximum of 15 PDH units may be carried forward into the next renewal period. The question arises, Can a licensee who earns, for example, 55 PDH in a two-year biennial period carry forward 25 into the next biennial period? The answer is no. The intent of the rule is to permit a carryover of only 15 PDH into the subsequent renewal period *regardless* of whether the next renewal period is one year or two years.

### **Continuing Education Unit**

The continuing education unit (CEU) is a nationally recognized and uniform unit of measure for continuing education and training. Since one CEU is awarded for each 10 contact hours of instruction, it logically follows that one CEU is equivalent to 10 PDH. For the purpose of CPC activity for professional engineers and professional surveyors, the CEU must further meet the requirements as defined below for course/activity.

When a sponsor of CPC qualifying activities fully follows the requirements of the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) in awarding CEUs, all requirements for PDH will be met. However, boards and licensees should be aware that some organizations may advertise CEU credit without having met all the requirements of the IACET. In addition, it is reported that on occasion, some organizations report one CEU of credit for each contact hour of instruction. If this is known to be the case, action should be taken to prevent over-reporting of PDH units earned.

### **College/Unit Semester/Quarter Hour Credit for ABET-approved courses**

The allowance for college/university qualifying courses is as follows:

- One college/university qualifying semester hour .....45 PDH
- One college/university qualifying quarter hour .....30 PDH

To qualify for this credit, a course must be offered regularly and *testing with a passing grade* required. One semester hour generally consists of 15 class meetings of 50 or 55 minutes duration. It is assumed that generally twice as much study time is required as class contact time, thus equating to 45 PDH. Similarly, a quarter-hour qualifying course meets 10 times, and thus 30 PDH are allowed. Monitoring courses does not require testing, and thus only the actual class contact hours are allowed.

It should be noted that these college/university courses require accreditation by the ABET, Inc., (the accreditation board for engineering and technology) or other appropriate accreditation for non-technical courses.

On occasion, educational institutions may offer a one-day seminar and award fractional quarter-hour credit (such as half of a quarter hour). These courses *do not* qualify on the quarter-hour basis since they are not part of the regular curriculum of the educational institution, do not require testing, and have no provision for additional out-of-class study requirements. For courses such as this, only actual contact time should be allowed for PDH credit.

### **Other Courses and CPC Activities**

Other *qualifying* courses, seminars, corporate-sponsored educational activities, programs, and activities as specified in the *Model Rules*, Section 240.30 D, provide one PDH of credit for each contact hour. It is not intended that these courses/activities be undertaken in private, such as a videotaped program in one's home, but rather be conducted in a group. A correspondence course should require the participant to show evidence of achievement and completion and/or a final graded test.

### **Teaching Credits**

Teaching of qualifying courses, seminars, or tutorials earns PDH credits for the instructor at twice that of the students. However, it is not intended that repetitive teaching of the same course will earn any credit. PDH credit does not apply for teaching if the licensee is a full-time faculty member.

### **Credit for a Published Paper, Article, or Book**

The author must have his/her work actually published before credit can be claimed. A published paper must be a serious effort to qualify. For example a "news" article in a technical or professional or technical bulletin is not considered a published paper. It is recognized that often many more hours are spent in being an author of a publication; however, the PDH credit is established at a fixed 10 PDH.

### **Active Participation in Professional and Technical Societies**

This item in the rule is intended to encourage licensees to participate fully in appropriate technical and professional societies. Contact with one's peers at such meetings is considered one way of staying abreast of current topics, issues, technical developments, ethical situations, and learning opportunities. This is considered a vital part of CPC, and thus two PDH of credit can be earned *per organization* if the licensee is an officer or committee member who actively participates within the organization or committee. (Credit of four PDH in one organization cannot be claimed if a licensee is both an officer and a committee member.) The technical and professional societies include engineering and surveying societies such as AIChE, ASCE, ASME, IEEE, NSPE, NSPS, but do not include civic or trade organizations.

Section 240.30 E2 in the *Model Rules* states, "Credit for qualifying seminars and workshops will be based on one PDH unit for each hour of attendance. Attendance at qualifying programs presented at professional and/or technical society meetings will earn PDH units for the actual time of each program."

This provision applies to all licensees, not just to officers or committee members. Programs must be educational in nature, relevant to the practice of engineering or surveying, and meet all requirements of qualification. Programs at technical or professional societies might be presented on topics that do not qualify or by speakers or presenters who are not well prepared. Such programs should not be claimed for PDH credit.

### **Patents**

Credit for 10 PDH can be claimed after a patent is issued and the inventor submits details to the board. The invention must be related to engineering or surveying professions.

## **Examples of Qualifying and Nonqualifying Activities**

In order to clarify further the definition of qualifying and non-qualifying activities, the following examples are given:

### **Typical Qualifying Activities**

- Completing or attending courses, seminars, instruction, in-house programs, or training of an engineering or surveying content which relate to the licensee's field of practice
- Attending technical or professional society meetings when an engineering/surveying topic is presented as a principal part of the program
- Teaching a course for the first time or teaching a course previously taught if substantial time was spent in updating material
- Attending satellite down-link video courses where attendance is verified and program material meets the requirements
- Completing computer software instructional courses which relate to the improvement of one's business or profession
- Completing language courses which relate to the improvement of one's business or profession
- Completing management or ethics courses which relate to the improvement of one's business or profession
- Completing correspondence courses on an engineering/surveying topic where lessons are prepared and returned for correction and/or grading and where testing at the end of the course is required

### **Typical Nonqualifying Activities**

- Regular employment
- Real estate licensing courses
- Personal, estate, or financial planning
- Self-study
- Personal self-improvement
- Service club meetings or activities
- Equipment demonstrations or trade show displays
- Topics not relevant to engineering or surveying professions
- Enrollment without attendance at courses, seminars, etc.
- Repetitive attendance or teaching of the same course
- Attending committee meetings or general business meetings of any organization
- Conversational language courses for personal use

### **The Determination of Qualifying Activities**

The question most asked by licensees is, How do I know what is acceptable to the board? Many are looking for assurance that efforts spent will qualify for PDH credit. But with the broad range of opportunities for earning PDH credits, most boards have elected to widely distribute information on the requirement of what is and is not acceptable and leave it up to the licensee to ensure that the activity qualifies. This permits the widest range of opportunity to earn PDH credit.

Some jurisdictions pre-approve courses for surveyors, but pre-approval for engineers may not be practicable. One jurisdiction approves sponsors of CPC activities and has developed forms that specify conditions that must be met. The sponsor must submit information on an application form and sign an agreement to the requirement by authorized officials. A sample of the form is shown in Appendix C.

## Dual Licensees

The requirement of 15 PDH per year (or 30 per biennial) is the *same* for single or dual licensees. In other words, a dual licensee is not required to obtain more than 15 PDH (30 if biennial) because of the dual licensure. However, the rule specifies that a minimum of one third of the required PDH must be earned in *each* profession.

## Recordkeeping

As stated in the *Model Rules*, the requirement to maintain adequate records is the responsibility of the licensee. Licensing boards may conduct audits of licensees for verification purposes.

The *Model Rules* states that records required include, but are not limited to:

1. “a log showing the type of activity claimed, sponsoring organization, location, duration, instructor’s or speaker’s name, and PDH credits earned.” This is intended to require specific information on each CPC activity where PDH credit is claimed. For example, simply stating “attending educational activities at ABC Company” is not acceptable. Specific information on *each* activity is required. The log permits the proper completion of the CPC activities form at the time of renewal. (See related information in Section 4.)
2. “attendance verification records in the form of completion certificates or other documents supporting evidence of attendance.” The question arises, Does each activity require attendance verification? The recommended answer is that a good-faith effort should result in most activities having attendance verification. Certainly, those that are of a longer duration (such as over an hour) should have verification. On occasion, it is recognized that short activities, such as a meeting of a technical or professional society, might include a 30-minute speaker and verification was not provided in the meeting. This should be an unlikely exception. The general rule is that the licensee must have sufficient verification for credits claimed.

## SECTION 4 – MODEL RENEWAL FORM FOR CPC ACTIVITIES

For license renewals, each jurisdiction has its own time schedule, forms, and processes that are followed. Those jurisdictions that require CPC activities for relicensing generally require that information supporting the CPC activities claimed for PDH credit must also be submitted. Since each jurisdiction has its own renewal process and forms, the standardization of all parts of forms is not practicable. It is desirable, however, for the part of the form relating to CPC activities and credits to be as similar as possible to facilitate the licensing of engineers and surveyors who are licensed in multiple jurisdictions. The model renewal form is shown in Appendix A.

The model renewal form is divided into three parts: (1) General Information – information concerning the licensee, employment, fees, and PDH information; (2) Certification – affirmation of all information, exceptions (if any) that are claimed, and signature; and (3) Summary Log of Professional Development Hours Earned – a listing of PDH activities and a description of the activity along with PDH claimed. Each section is discussed below.

### Part I – General Information

Part I is divided further into two parts—one which the licensee completes providing general information and the other which is for official use only. The general information on the licensee is typically what

licensing boards might need in the renewal process. No attempt has been made to research all jurisdictions on their processes and needs.

Part I also contains space for the official use of boards. Again, this should be modified to suit the needs of each particular board.

## **Part II – Certification**

The first part of the certification is to affirm that all PDH credits listed on the form (Part III) are true and correct. It also provides for non-resident licensees to certify that they are licensed in another jurisdiction and have met the mandatory CPC requirements of that jurisdiction. It is anticipated that boards will list in their instruction sheet annually the jurisdictions which are acceptable. Licensees meeting this requirement in another jurisdiction may not be required to complete Part III of the form, the detailed listing of activities.

The *Model Rules* provides for a number of exemptions from CPC requirements, and space is provided for checking the exemption claimed. The claim of being retired can be abused, and thus it is very important to clearly present definitions of “retired” in the instruction to the form.

## **Part III – Summary of PDH Activities**

*This detailed listing of activities is the document that could most simplify and enable licensees in multiple jurisdictions to relicense without undue burden.* It will require, however, each jurisdiction having mandatory CPC to use this part of the form as designed or at least to accept this log in lieu of its version for out-of-jurisdiction licensees.

Part III of the relicensing application pertains to CPC requirements only. It begins with five brief sentences that remind licensees of requirements or give further instructions. The remainder is a log of PDH credits earned.

The form is intended to give boards enough information to show that the licensee understands and is meeting the intent of the rule. The first column is for specific dates to be listed, not general time periods such as “All of 1996.” The second column asks for the sponsoring organization and where the activity took place. Again, specific information is needed on each activity where PDH credit is claimed. It is recommended that general statements, such as “Various seminars within ABC Company,” be considered inadequate. Column three provides for a description of the activity, such as the subject or title of the program, name of the presenter, and title of the presenter. The last two columns provide for a breakdown of PDH credits between engineering and surveying activities. Dual licensees would use both of these last columns in order to demonstrate that at least one third of the required PDH credits are earned in each profession. Of course, boards licensing only one discipline would use just one column.

The bottom of Part III of the form provides for listing the period of time over which the CPC credits were earned. This is necessary if a board elects to give an optional period in which credits can be counted in the current or subsequent year. For example, if a license expires on December 31, a board might mail renewal material about the end of September. October, November, and December could be designated months in which PDH credits could be claimed in the current year or next year (but not both). If this is not done, most licensees will hold their renewals until the end of the year in case additional PDH credits are earned. From the workload standpoint of the board, it may be preferable to receive renewals over a period of several months rather than at one time. This does provide a source of confusion to licensees and must be carefully explained in the instructions.

## SECTION 5 – UNIFORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR RENEWAL FORM

The instructions that accompany the renewal form are a vital part of the process, particularly for the jurisdictions that are initiating CPC. It is often heard, “They just won’t read the instructions,” and this is often the case. However, when licensees are dealing with a new and mandatory process concerning employability, they are more likely to read the instructions.

A jurisdiction’s/territory’s laws and rules are the authoritative requirements concerning CPC. The instruction sheet, however, permits a board to elaborate with more detailed instructions, to list examples of how to fill out the form, and to provide examples of which CPC activities are and are not acceptable. There are two other areas which are particularly troublesome—the qualifying for exemptions and the handling of PDH credits for multijurisdiction licensees.

The *Model Rules* provides exemptions from CPC requirements for those in their first renewal period; for those on temporary active duty in the armed forces of the United States for a period exceeding 120 consecutive days; for disability, illness, or other extenuating circumstances; and for retirees. For disability, illness, etc., exemption is normally permitted for one year only. The general rule “If you can work, you can earn PDH credits” is recommended. For a retiree, the *Model Rules* specifies that the licensee must certify that he/she is no longer receiving any remuneration from providing professional engineering or surveying services. Part II of the renewal form has been specifically designed for the purpose of clearly identifying these exceptions and for the required certification to be signed.

The handling of PDH credits for multijurisdiction licensees can be confusing and difficult if jurisdictions do not follow the *Model Rules*.

Again the rule is: “**Comity/Out-of-Jurisdiction Resident.** The CPC requirements for <jurisdiction> will be satisfied when a non-resident certifies to be licensed in and having met the mandatory CPC requirements of any jurisdiction approved and listed by <jurisdiction>.”

The purpose of this wording is to avoid having licensees in multiple jurisdictions keep up with the various rules, forms, and instructions when each license is renewed. However, it is recognized that a jurisdiction may not follow the NCEES *Model Rules* and may establish CPC requirements so different that other jurisdictions may elect not to accept its CPC requirements. For this reason, the *Model Rules* provides for the jurisdictions to publish the names of other jurisdictions that are “approved and listed.” It is anticipated that the NCEES will periodically study the rules of each jurisdiction requiring CPC and will make this information available to all jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction would then make its own decisions on the acceptable list, preferably being guided by the NCEES recommendations.

Consider the following hypothetical examples:

- Jurisdiction A follows the NCEES *Model Rules* but exempts licensees over 60 years old from CPC requirements.
- Jurisdiction B requires only 10 PDH per year.
- Jurisdiction C permits self study and credit for months of employment in the engineering/surveying field.

Since the above exceptions do not meet the *Model Rules* and the rules of many jurisdictions, each board must decide whether or not to accept these jurisdictions/territories for CPC comity. For this reason, the

wording of the rule was modified to include the suggested language “approved and listed.” This illustrates the benefits of jurisdictions accepting the *Model Law* as closely as possible.

Another consideration is that a jurisdiction could ask that a copy of the log of PDH activities be attached to their renewal application from another jurisdiction. For this reason, the model form and model log is included in this document as a possibility of becoming a de facto “standard” for jurisdictions to use.

As a caution, applicants for renewal in many jurisdictions should be aware that some jurisdictions may renew annually while others renew biennially. This may require the applicant to earn PDH credits spread over two years during the biennial period in order to have more current PDH units for jurisdictions renewing annually.

As the number of jurisdictions requiring CPC increases, the importance of the CPC jurisdictions accepting a standard log of PDH credits increases.

The illustrative model instruction form is shown in Appendix B. This instruction form may not be acceptable to all CPC jurisdictions. It does illustrate, however, many of the elements that may need to be considered when designing both the renewal form and the accompanying instructions.

## **SECTION 6 – AUDIT PROCESSES**

The auditing of a percentage of CPC renewal forms is strongly endorsed and encouraged. Although it is anticipated that most licensees will attempt to meet the requirements of the rule with a good-faith effort, there is a need for auditing to verify that the law and rules are being met and to identify any communication problems between a board and its licensees. The following is a summary of processes that can be considered by each board. At least three opportunities for checks and audits have been identified.

**Cursory review of forms by board staff** – Upon receipt of the CPC form, a cursory scan of the form by trained staff person(s) can reveal obvious errors in listing of activities, additions, rounding of PDH hours, carryover errors, and omitted signatures. Form letters can be used to return forms containing significant errors to licensees for correction or explanation.

**Board member review** – So that board members can be aware of the quality and accuracy of returned forms, each board member could be furnished with copies of 50 to 100 forms to review. This is particularly useful for jurisdictions newly undertaking CPC and permits the board members to see personally the quality and thoroughness of licensees’ actions.

**Randomly selected licensees for audit** – This is the official audit and should be conducted after each renewal period. The licensees can be selected by generating random license numbers or by other random processes. Each selected licensee is asked to furnish evidence of attendance at the listed activities. This would include resident licensees and non-resident licensees of a particular jurisdiction. The board would then establish its own procedures for dealing with unacceptable verifications.

<Jurisdiction> Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors

**RENEWAL FORM**

This is your application for Renewal of License as a <Professional Engineer> <Professional Surveyor> for 20\_\_.

**Part I – General Information**

	<b>FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY</b>
-- SAMPLE FORM --	
THIS IS SPACE THAT IS INTENDED FOR EACH	THIS ILLUSTRATES
BOARD TO USE AS NECESSARY.	SPACE THAT CAN
	BE RESERVED FOR
	BOARD USE AS
	REQUIRED.

**Part II – Certification** *This part must be completed and signed by the applicant. Check all items that apply.*

**I hereby certify that the following items completed and checked are true and correct.**

<input type="checkbox"/> I have met the continuing professional competency (CPC) requirements and am licensed in the jurisdiction of _____, PE/PS license # _____, which is listed as having CPC requirements acceptable to the <jurisdiction> board.					
<input type="checkbox"/> I qualify for exemption based on: <input type="checkbox"/> Retired Status <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Active Duty Status in US Military Service <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Requires a Letter of Explanation)					
<input type="checkbox"/> I am applying for: <input type="checkbox"/> Reciprocity/Comity <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Status					
<input type="checkbox"/> The current status of my license is: <input type="checkbox"/> Active <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree <input type="checkbox"/> Lapsed					
Printed Name			PE	PS	PE/PS
Signature			PE/PS License No.		
Jurisdiction (Jurisdiction or Territory)			Date		



**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION  
FOR RENEWAL OF LICENSURE IN <JURISDICTION>**

You must complete Parts I, II, and III of the enclosed application for renewal. If you are exempt from the continuing professional competency requirement, you are required to complete only Part I and Part II. Please note that exemption from the continuing professional competency requirement does not exempt you from the renewal fee.

**Who may claim an exemption** – Exemptions apply as follows:

- (1) New licensees are exempt this first renewal period only.
- (2) Those who have qualified or those who may qualify for a Retired Status\*, as defined below, are exempt.
- (3) Those in foreign employment or a noncareer military licensee serving on active duty for over 120 days may be exempted upon board approval. Supporting documentation is required.
- (4) Those who have experienced serious illness or injury during the past year of a nature and duration which has prohibited completing continuing professional competency requirements may be exempted. Supporting documentation must be furnished to the board.

\*Retired Status - totally separated from the profession of engineering and/or surveying in <Jurisdiction> and in all other jurisdictions, and the PE or PS meets the following conditions in <Jurisdiction> and all other jurisdictions:

- the words “engineer,” “engineering,” “surveyor,” or “surveying” do not appear in the licensee’s work title; and
- the licensee is not employed with a company or organization which performs or offers to perform engineering or surveying services or a company or organization which uses engineering or surveying in the company or organizational title; and
- the licensee, as an individual, is not performing or offering to perform engineering or surveying services or making engineering or surveying decisions.

If you qualify for the exemption section, you will be required to certify to your exemption under Part II of the renewal form. Exemption requested for “Other” will require a letter of explanation.

**Reciprocity** – If you are currently licensed in and are a resident of a jurisdiction which has mandatory continuing professional competency requirements, you may attach your log of PDH activities earned from that jurisdiction and certify under Part II that all continuing professional competency and licensing requirements have been met in that jurisdiction.

**Step 1 – Complete Part I – General Information**

{Continue instruction indigenous to your jurisdiction}

**Step 2 – Complete Part II – Certification**

You must complete this section and sign and date the form. We cannot process your renewal unless this part is completed and your remittance is enclosed.

**Step 3 – Complete Part III – PDH Log**

**Detailed Listing of Activities**

**General requirements** – All activities for which PDH credit is claimed must be relevant to the practice of engineering or surveying and may include technical, ethical, or managerial content. These activities should advance the professional or technical competence of the licensee.

Qualifying continuing professional competency activities may be sponsored or presented by colleges or universities, by employers, by government agencies, by nationally affiliated engineering or surveying technical or professional societies, or by other organizations. The board does not preapprove courses for PDH credit. It is your responsibility to ensure that the activities in which you participate meet the requirements.

Qualifying activities to meet <Jurisdiction>'s continuing professional competency requirement can be earned in any jurisdiction. A PDH credit is roughly equivalent to one clock hour of instruction and should be rounded to the nearest half hour. The following table summarizes the PDH credits for various primary activities:

Successful completion of college courses	1 Sem. hour = 45 PDH 1 Qtr. hour = 30 PDH
Courses offering CEU credit	1 CEU = 10 PDH
Active participation in seminars, in-house courses, workshops, televised or videotaped courses	1 hour = 1 PDH
Teaching or instructing above courses	1 hour = 2 PDH

Typical activities which will qualify are as follows:

- Completing or attending qualifying courses, seminars, instruction, in-house programs, or training
- Attending technical or professional society meetings when an engineering/surveying topic is presented as a principal part of the program
- Teaching a course for the first time or teaching a course previously taught if substantial time has been spent in updating the material
- Attending satellite video courses where attendance is verified and program material meets the requirements
- Language courses or software instructional courses which relate to the improvement of one's business or profession

Typical activities which will *not* qualify are as follows:

- Regular employment
- Real estate licensing courses
- Personal, estate, or financial planning
- Self-study or personal self-improvement courses
- Service club meetings or activities
- Equipment demonstrations or trade shows
- Topics not relevant to engineering or surveying
- Enrollment without attendance at courses, seminars, etc.
- Repetitive teaching of the same course without updating the course material
- Attending committee and business meetings of any organization
- Conversational language courses for personal use

Engineering-related activities will not qualify as meeting the requirements for surveying, and surveying-related activities will not qualify as meeting the requirements for engineering.

**Appendix B (continued)**

**Completing the form** – See the typical examples below and also Part III of the renewal form for a further listing of activities which will qualify.

In Part III, list your activities in the space provided, using as many blocks as required. If additional space is needed, duplicate Part III of the form and identify the duplication form with your license number. Under the column called Dates of Activity, please furnish date or beginning and ending dates of courses, seminars, etc.

You may use a computer-generated form to list your activities if it is similar to Part III. Please limit your page size to 8½ × 11 and be sure your license number is clearly shown.

It is important that sufficient name and/or description be given to identify that the activity relates to engineering/surveying as appropriate, including the presenter’s name. The name of the sponsoring organization must be provided as well as the location of where the instruction or class was held. For classes that are part of a college curriculum, please list the class number. PDH earned for PE or PS credit should be placed in the appropriate columns. Add the credits and enter the total in the space provided.

No documentation is required at this time. The board will audit a selected percentage of all renewals to ensure compliance with continuing professional competency requirements. Auditing will be done after renewals are complete. If your name is selected for audit, you will be contacted to provide the necessary documentation.

All records of attendance and completion of PDH credits should be maintained for three years for audit purposes.

**Examples of right and wrong ways of filling out the log:**

	Date(s)	Sponsoring Organization’s Name Location (City, Jurisdiction)	Title/Description	PDH	
				PE	PS
<b>Example 1 – WRONG</b>  <b>RIGHT</b>	3/20/95	Big Time Engineering Co. Hometown, Jurisdiction	Basic Supervision	6.5	
	3/20/95	Big Time Engineering Co. Hometown, Jurisdiction	“Supervising the Staff” In-house seminar; R. D. Jones, AVP	6.5	
<b>Example 2 – WRONG</b>  <b>RIGHT</b>	2/15/94 to 6/30/94	Local Engineering Society Hometown, Jurisdiction	6 presentations during regular meetings	4.3	
	2/15/94	Local Engineering Society Hometown, Jurisdiction	“Earthquake Proof Buildings,” Dr. Ron Smith, P.E., Acme Construction Co.	0.5	
<b>Example 3 – WRONG</b>  <b>RIGHT</b>	Jan to Dec.	National Surveyor’s Society Big City, Jurisdiction	Various meetings of Ethics Committee		8.0
	6/4/95	National Surveyor’s Annual Meeting Big City, Jurisdiction	Workshop on Total Station Operation; John Straightline, Mgr., Acme Surveying Co.		2.5

**Description of errors:** **Example 1** - Insufficient description, too general

**Example 2** - Various activities grouped and not adequately described, PDH hours not rounded correctly

**Example 3** - Date must be more specific, committee meetings are not acceptable

<Jurisdiction> Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors

**QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR CPC  
COURSE SPONSORS**

Organizations that agree to conduct courses which will enhance and improve a licensee's professional skills according to the standards of the board, may, upon qualification of this board, conduct continued professional competency courses or programs which will be recognized by this board without further qualification by the licensee.

The board will maintain a list of sponsors that have agreed to conduct programs in accordance with the standards set forth by this board. Said sponsors shall indicate their agreement by signing a CPC Program Sponsor Agreement provided by this board. Upon approval by this board, said sponsor shall be deemed to be an "approved sponsor."

An approved sponsor must agree to the following:

1. Allow persons designated by this board to attend any or all courses without fee or charge for the purpose of determining that said course meets the standards of the board.
2. Allow persons designated by this board to review course material for the purpose of determining that said course meets the standards of the board.
3. State in every brochure or other publication or announcement concerning the course, the general content of the course and the specific knowledge or skill to be taught or addressed, as well as the credit to be earned in professional development hours (PDH).
4. Ensure that each instructor or presenter of the course or program is qualified to teach the subject matter.
5. Provide each person completing the course with written documentation attesting to that person's attendance to the course as well as the name of the course, the date and location held, the sponsor's name, and the number of PDH earned.
6. Forward to the board within one week, written documentation which shall include the sponsor's name, the name of the course, the date and location held, the instructor's name, the number of PDH earned by attendance, and a list of attendees.
7. Retain for a period of five years a copy of the above documentation.

Failure of an approved sponsor to comply with these terms shall be grounds for the board to terminate the agreement and to remove the sponsor's name from the list of approved sponsors and to notify the licensees of the board of said action.

<Jurisdiction> Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors

**SPONSOR APPLICATION FORM**

Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization

Accredited Higher Educational

Professional or Technical

Business Entity

Governmental Agency

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a description of your organization and its qualification for sponsorship. Include such documentation as you deem appropriate.

**SPONSOR AGREEMENT**

We agree to comply with the requirements of <Jurisdiction> and to cooperate with the board in monitoring compliance with this Agreement including maintenance of appropriate documentation, and will make such records available for review by persons designated by the board.

Said records shall include the name, date, and location of each course or presentation, the name of the instructor, an outline of the subject matter, the number of PDH credit, and a list of those attending.

We agree to allow a person designated by the board to attend any or all courses or activities presented for credit and at no cost and to make such changes or modifications in the course material or presentation as shall be directed by this board.

Such courses as are presented by an approved Sponsor will be deemed approved by the board.

We understand that the board may revoke this Sponsor Agreement at any time and at its sole discretion.

By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE LETTER OF REPLY FOR CPC SPONSOR INQUIRY CONTACT**

(BOARD LETTERHEAD)

(Date)

Mr. John A. Doe  
Box 123  
Anytown, USA 00000

Dear Mr. Doe:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the requirements for sponsoring continuing professional competency (CPC) activities for relicensing of {engineers}{surveyors}. We particularly appreciate your interest in fully meeting the requirements of <Jurisdiction> law and rule and serving the needs of our licensees.

A summary of requirements is listed here. Further details are provided in attachments.

- Any organization may provide a qualifying continuing professional competency activity as long as it further meets all requirements of the board.
- The rule provides a definition of course/activity as follows: “Any qualifying course or activity with a clear purpose and objective which will maintain, improve, or expand the skills and knowledge relevant to the licensee’s field of practice.”
- The course/activity may consist of technical or professional instruction including subject matter of a technical, managerial (business), or ethical nature.
- A sponsoring organization must provide verification of attendance to the attending licensee showing the course/activity title, location, instructor, instructor’s title, and duration. Activities of less than one-half hour will not qualify, and the reporting of duration should be rounded to the nearest half hour.
- One contact (instructional) hour equates to one professional development hour (PDH). Short breaks are permissible as long as each hour includes at least 50 minutes of instruction. Total PDH shown on the attendance verification cannot exceed the clock (contact) hours of instruction.
- Care must be exercised to ensure that the course presenter is well qualified by education and/or experience.
- The ultimate responsibility of the acceptability of the course/activity to meet the requirements of the rule rests with the licensee <unless your organization has been qualified and pre-approved by this board>. {optional for those jurisdictions that might pre-approve sponsors}

If you have further questions, you may call me or our staff at \_\_\_\_\_.

Again, thank you for your interest and inquiry.

Yours very truly,

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Attachments may include a copy of the <jurisdiction> rule concerning CPC and parts of Section 3 of this document, if desired.

---

Executive Director

Attachment

**SAMPLE LETTER OF REPLY FOR LICENSEE INQUIRY**

(BOARD LETTERHEAD)

(Date)

Mr. John A. Doe, P.E.  
Box 123  
Anytown, USA 00000

Dear Mr. Doe:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning <jurisdiction's> requirement for continuing professional competence (CPC) activities in order to renew your license.

We have enclosed a copy of our renewal form and instructions. This material gives details on CPC requirements and should enable you to understand and to undertake activities which will fully meet the requirements. You must keep a log of your CPC activities and furnish this information to the board on the renewal form. We encourage you to keep reasonable documentation to support your PDH log because random audits are conducted.

Please write or call the board if you have further questions.

Yours very truly,

Executive Director

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By revising the first paragraph, this letter could also serve to advise new licensees, both by examination and comity, of the CPC and recordkeeping requirements.

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*Prepared by the  
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