ARTICLE 28-04
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

Chapter
28-04-01 Continuing Education

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

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28-04-01-01. Purpose.

The purpose of mandatory continuing education is to reinforce the need for lifelong learning in order to stay current with everchanging technology, equipment, procedures, processes, tools, and established standards. Qualifying activities must have a clear purpose and objective that will maintain, improve, or expand the skills and knowledge relevant to the registrant's field of practice. Registrants are encouraged to select meaningful activities that will be of benefit in the pursuit of their chosen fields.

History: Effective October 1, 2004.
General Authority: NDCC 43-19.1-33
Law Implemented: NDCC 43-19.1-33

28-04-01-02. Definitions.

The terms used throughout this chapter have the same meaning as in North Dakota Century Code chapter 43-19.1 and North Dakota Administrative Code section 28-01-02.1-07. Additional terms are:

1. "Active participation" means making a regular, substantial contribution to an organization. Membership by itself does not constitute active participation.

2. "Contact hour" is a minimum of fifty minutes of actual instruction not to include any breaks.

3. "Continuing education units" is equivalent to ten contact hours of instruction, i.e., ten professional development hours. Continuing education units are nationally recognized and are a uniform unit of measure for continuing education and training.

4. "International association for continuing education and training programs" means those continuing education and training courses offered by various organizations that meet the minimum requirements for a qualifying continuing education and training course as established by the international association for continuing education and training.

5. "Professional development hour" is defined as one contact hour of instruction or presentation. It is the common denominator for the other units of credit. Round off professional development hours to the nearest one-half hour. No activity under one-half hour will be accepted for credit.

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28-04-01-03. General requirements.

All individual registrants must acquire thirty professional development hours every two years before renewing their license.

1. At least twenty professional development hours must be in technical subjects that directly safeguard the public's health, safety, and welfare, including technical professional management subjects such as total quality process or technical engineering or land surveying software training.

2. A maximum of ten professional development hours may be in nontechnical professional management subjects such as ethics-oriented or administration-oriented computer classes.

3. All registrants will be required to submit a list of continuing professional development activities that they participated in and sign a statement that they have met this requirement as part of the renewal process.

4. Registrants holding both professional engineering and surveying registrations must earn a minimum of one-third, or ten professional development hours in each profession with a total of thirty professional development hours every two years. A dual registrant is not required to obtain more than thirty professional development hours per biennial renewal period because of dual registrations.

5. A maximum of fifteen qualifying professional development hours may be forwarded to the subsequent biennial renewal period.

6. Comity for continuing professional development is allowed if the registrant is currently licensed in a jurisdiction or state that requires mandatory continuing professional competency and meets the minimum requirements as established by the North Dakota state board of registration for professional engineers and land surveyors.

7. New registrants shall comply with continuing education requirements as follows: registrants who receive their license prior to the fourth quarter in an odd-numbered year shall report the full biennial requirement of thirty professional development hours at the time of next renewal; and registrants who receive their license prior to the fourth quarter in an even-numbered year shall report one-half of the biennial requirement, i.e., fifteen professional development hours, at the time of next renewal.

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28-04-01-04. Recordkeeping.

Recordkeeping is the responsibility of the registrant. Adequate records must be maintained for a minimum of four years from the date of last biennial renewal for auditing purposes. Records may be maintained by a professional registry, such as the professional development registry for engineers and surveyors. Records that are maintained by such a registry do not necessarily require approval of these courses by this board. Records required include:

1. A log showing the type of activity claimed, sponsoring organization, location, duration, date, instructor's or speaker's name, and professional development hour credits claimed. This permits the proper completion of professional development hour activities at renewal time. Specific information on each activity is required. Simply stating "attending education activities at ABC Company" is not acceptable.

2. Attendance verification records in the form of certificates or other documents supporting evidence of attendance. The registrant must have sufficient verification for all credits claimed.

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Law Implemented: NDCC 43-19.1-33

28-04-01-05. Qualifying activities.

The board may preapprove courses, providers, or activities. Until the board preapproves such courses or activities, it is the responsibility of the registrant to determine whether the activity qualifies under this board's requirements. The board has final approval of professional development hour credit. Examples of typical qualifying and nonqualifying activities are available by contacting the office of the board or visiting the board's web site. All professional development hour allowances stated in this section are biennial allowances. Qualifying activities include:

1. **College unit, semester, or quarter hour credit for college courses.** A course must be regularly offered and participants tested with a passing grade required. One semester hour generally consists of fifteen class meetings of fifty to fifty-five minutes duration. It is assumed that twice as much study time is required as class contact time, thus equating to forty-five professional development hours. Similarly, a quarter hour qualifying course meets ten times and thus thirty professional development hours are allowed. Monitoring courses do not require a test, and therefore only the actual class contact hours are allowed. On occasion, educational institutions may offer a one-day seminar and award fractional quarter hour credit such as one-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 requirements. For courses such as this, only actual contact hours will be allowed for professional development hour credit.

2. **Interactive activities.** Other qualifying courses, seminars, employer-sponsored educational activities, programs, and activities are allowed one professional development hour credit for each contact hour. A correspondence course, videotaped programs, and online courses (self-study) must require the participant to show evidence of achievement with a final graded test.

3. **Teaching credit for short courses.** Teaching credits for the instructor are twice that of the participants in qualifying courses and seminars. However, repetitive teaching of the same course will not earn additional credit.

4. **Published paper, article, or book.** A published paper, article, or book must be a serious effort to qualify. For example, a news article in a technical or professional bulletin is not considered a published paper. Although it is recognized that often many more hours are spent in being an author of a publication, ten professional development hours are allowed for publication. Only one publication may be claimed for professional development hours per renewal period. Repetitive publication of the same paper or article will not earn additional credit.

5. **Active participation in professional and technical societies.** Active participation in professional and technical societies is to encourage registrants to participate fully in appropriate technical and professional societies. Contact with one's peers at such meetings is considered one way to stay abreast of current topics, issues, technical developments, ethical situations, and learning opportunities. Two professional development hours per biennium can be earned for each organization with a maximum of six professional development hours per biennium allowed. All technical and professional societies are included, but this does not include civic or trade organizations.

6. **Patents.** Patents are allowed ten professional development hours after a patent is issued and the inventor submits details to the board. The invention must be related to the registrant's profession.

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Law Implemented: NDCC 43-19.1-33

28-04-01-06. Audit.

Audits can be conducted anytime up to three years after the biennial renewal is submitted to ensure compliance with continuing education requirements. If selected for audit, the registrant will be contacted to provide necessary documentation. Each registrant selected for audit must respond with detailed information on the professional development hour activities within thirty days. If the audit conducted indicates a failure to comply with continuing education requirements, the registrant has sixty calendar days after receipt of written notice to further reinforce the claim of professional development hour credits or to acquire sufficient professional development hour credit to meet the requirements. The board may also audit a registrant's professional development hour activities based on complaints or charges against a registrant. Registrants who refuse to comply with continuing professional competency requirements may be subject to disciplinary action as allowed by North Dakota Century Code section 43-19.1-25.

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Law Implemented: NDCC 43-19.1-33

28-04-01-07. Exemptions.

A registrant may be exempt from the continuing education requirements for one of the following reasons:

1. A registrant serving on temporary active duty in the armed forces of the United States, or a registrant serving on regular active duty who is deployed for a period of time exceeding one hundred twenty consecutive days in a year, shall be exempt from obtaining the professional development hours required during that year.

2. Registrants experiencing physical disability, illness, temporary leave from professional activity, or other extenuating circumstances as reviewed and approved by the board may be exempt. Supporting documentation must be furnished to the board. In the event such a person elects to return to active practice of professional engineering or land surveying, fifteen professional development hours must be earned before returning to active practice for each year exempted not to exceed the biennial requirement of thirty professional development hours.

3. Professional engineer registrants exempt from registration by North Dakota Century Code section 43-19.1-29 but voluntarily registered are exempt from continuing professional competency requirements. A claim of exemption under this provision must be verified by the board. This exemption is based on the registrant's primary employment. If the registrant provides engineering services outside the scope of primary employment, the exemption will be voided and the registrant will be required to comply with the continuing professional competency requirements. A person who is registered because of a requirement in the person's job description or qualification for a pay grade is not voluntarily registered. Noncompliance with the provisions of this exemption shall be grounds for disciplinary action as allowed by North Dakota Century Code section 43-19.1-25.

4. Registrants who qualify for retired status on the board-approved renewal form shall be exempt from the continuing education requirements. A registrant whose license has been retired for

one year or more and who meets all other requirements may reinstate a retired license. A registrant who has reinstated a license is required to file an interim continuing professional competency report within one year of the date of reinstatement verifying that a minimum of fifteen professional development hours have been accomplished. A registrant whose license has been retired for less than one year and who meets all other requirements may reinstate a retired license. A registrant who has reinstated a license must show compliance within the previous two years with the continuing professional competency requirements set forth in this chapter.

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