



LICENSING EXEMPTIONS

The National Society of Professional Engineers advocates for the elimination of all professional engineering license exemptions. Exemptions, which exist in varying degrees across the United States, allow unlicensed engineers to be in responsible charge of projects that impact public health and safety. Having a licensed professional engineer in responsible charge presents the best-case scenario for protecting public health and safety. NSPE urges state legislatures to prioritize public safety by ending engineering license exemptions.

Key Points

- Exemptions that allow unlicensed engineers to be in responsible charge exist in 48 states and territories, and across a variety of industries and sectors. [link report]
- Exemptions allow individuals and organizations to perform engineering services without being licensed.
- Exempt individuals and organizations are not subject to the same legal and ethical requirements as licensed PEs.
- Exemptions undermine the intended purposes of engineering licensure -- namely, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
- The National Transportation Safety Board's final report on the Merrimack Valley gas pipeline explosions calls for states to end engineering license exemptions for natural gas infrastructure projects.
- Companies that employ engineers often claim that either 1) there aren't enough licensed engineers to meet demand if exemptions are eliminated or 2) that the cost of employing licensed engineers would be too great.
 - The total number of PE licenses in the United States is over 820,000.

Action Items

- End engineering license exemptions and require licensed professional engineers to be in responsible charge when the public health, safety, and welfare is potentially impacted.
- Advocate for the creation of policies that require the licensing of engineers.
- Urge companies that employ engineers to promote licensure. (NSPE can be a resource to companies seeking to license their current engineering staff.)