

# **Handbook for New Mexico Building Officials**



**PUBLISHED BY THE JOINT PRACTICE COMMITTEE OF THE NM BOARD  
OF EXAMINERS FOR ARCHITECTS, THE NM BOARD OF LICENSURE FOR  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND  
PROFESSIONAL SURVEYORS, and THE NM BOARD OF LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTS**

Revised 2025

Sample Architect's Seal and Certification:



Sample Engineer's Seal and Certification: (older seals may state "Registered" or "Licensed" instead of "Professional Engineer".)



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Sample Surveyor's Seal (older seals may state "Registered" or "Licensed" instead of "Professional Surveyor")



*John Q. Public*

*November 23, 2011*

Sample Landscape Architect's Seal and Certification



*John Doe*  
*April 30, 2000*

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NM Board of Landscape Architects  
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## Foreword

The Joint Practices Committee of Fiscal Year (FY) 25 has prepared and updated this handbook in the spirit of service to the public by the Board of Examiners for Architects, the Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors, and the Board of Landscape Architects. JPC Members in FY 25 are: NM Board of Examiners for Architects; Chair Ray Vigil, Architect Michael Bodelson, Architect Barbara Felix. NM Board of Landscape Architects; Landscape Architect George Radnovich, Landscape Architect Chris Green, and Landscape Architect Robert Loftis. NM Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers & Professional Surveyors; Chair Emilie Dohleman and Professional Surveyor Ben Aragon. The handbook was reviewed and updated by the JPC in 2025.

This handbook is intended as a source of basic information and does not attempt to address all of the questions concerning the practices of architecture, engineering, surveying, and landscape architecture. Periodic updates to this handbook will be made. Updates will also be posted on the Boards' web sites.

If you need further information or assistance concerning the requirements for the use of professional seals in New Mexico, please write, call, or visit the web site and e-mail:

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<https://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/landscape-architects/>

### **Rosters:**

**Architects-** an updated & searchable roster is available on the website and may be obtained in electronic form.

**Engineers-** an updated & searchable roster is available on the website and may be obtained in print form.

**Surveyors-** a continually updated & searchable roster is available on the website and may be obtained in print form.

**Landscape architects-** a continually updated & searchable roster is available on the website and may be obtained in print form.

The boards are indebted to the many Building Officials who have provided information and assistance for this handbook.

## **Introduction**

Building codes and professional registration laws are meant to work together. Building code jurisdictions and architectural, engineering and surveying, and landscape architectural registration boards each exist to protect the public against unsafe structures and site conditions.

Licensing officials protect the public by ensuring that all design professionals have satisfied education and training standards and pass a rigorous examination on technical and practice issues. Building officials promulgate and enforce building code requirements that protect the public's health and safety.

## I. Requirements for Professional Seals

### A. General

The State of New Mexico requires professional seals on construction drawings submitted for permit in order to protect the public's life, safety and welfare.

**A requirement of critical importance** to a building code jurisdiction is:

When any professional seal is required for a building permit, according to the project and/or building facility type, occupant load or valuation of the project, every standard page of the construction documents must bear a professional seal, with signature and date, certifying professional responsibility for every aspect of the project. Referenced serial drawings (governmental and institutional drawings and details) do not require a seal. These drawings and details are the responsibility of the issuing agency.

(See Section 1C: Use of Professional Seals page 3 for specific details on sealing documents) Occupancy is a determining factor in the requirement for professional seals. Occupancy is always calculated in accordance with the current adopted code. Whenever any addition to a building or structure is submitted for permit, the occupant load is calculated on the combined square footage of the existing structure and the new structure.

### B. Seal Requirements

#### 1. No Professional Seal Requirement

The following construction projects do not require the seal of an architect, engineer, surveyor or landscape architect, unless the building official determines such seal is necessary to protect public life, safety and welfare:

- a. Single-family dwellings not more than two (2) stories in height;
- b. Multiple dwellings not more than (2) stories in height containing not more than four (4) dwelling units of wood-frame construction; provided this paragraph shall not be construed to allow a person who is not registered under the Architectural Act to design multiple clusters of up to four (4) dwelling units each to form apartment or condominium complexes where the total exceeds four (4) dwelling units on any lawfully divided lot;
- c. Garages or other structures not more than two (2) stories in height which are appurtenant to buildings described in Paragraphs a and b of this subsection or;
- d. Nonresidential buildings, as defined in the current adopted code New Mexico Building Codes General, Title 14 Chapter 7 NMAC, or additions having a total occupant load of ten (10) or less and not more than two (2) stories in height, unless the building code official having jurisdiction has found that the submission of plans, drawings, specifications or calculations prepared and designed by an architect or engineer licensed by the state is necessary to obtain compliance with minimum standards governing the preparation of building plans and specifications adopted by the construction industries division of the regulation and licensing department. This exemption does not apply to E-3 (Day Care), H (Hazardous), or I (Institutional) occupancies, which must be certified by an architect or engineer regardless of the occupant load.
- e. Alterations to buildings or structures which present no unusual conditions, hazards, change of occupancy, or code violations.

**[See the Architectural Act, §61-15-9 NMSA, Regulation 16.30.1.7 H. (3) Exceptions NMAC, and C.I.D. Rules and Regulations 14.5.2.9 & 14.5.2.10 C NMAC]**

## 2. Single Seal Requirement

a. *The single seal* of either an engineer or architect meets the requirement for professional certification on non-residential projects and residences not exempted under Paragraph B with a building value not greater than six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) and having a total occupant load not greater than 50; incidental practice provisions of both statutes establish this requirement.

**[See the Architectural Act, §61-15-2 E. and G. and Regulation 16.30.1.7 H. (1)(2) NMAC and the Engineering Act, §61-23-3. L., §61-23-22 and Regulation 16.39.4.8 NMAC]**

b. An architect must seal and sign all work prepared by the architect or under the architect's responsible charge. This includes work for project exemptions under Architectural Act, §61-15-9

**[Architectural Act, §61-15-7 A. and Regulation 16.30.3.18 B. (2) NMAC]**

Gazebos and not fully enclosed picnic shelters, park structures, and shade structures may be sealed by an architect, engineer, or landscape architect. This would also include kits, prefabricated or pre-engineered structures for recreational use. This does not negate the CID requirements for electrical, mechanical or other specialized certification, as needed.

## 3. Seals of Multiple Professions Requirement

The professional seals of both an architect and an engineer (or engineers) are required on non-residential projects and residences not exempted under Paragraph B with EITHER a construction value greater than six hundred thousand dollars \$600,000 and having a total occupant load greater than fifty (50). Occupant load shall be in accordance with the current, adopted code.

**[See the Architectural Act, §61-15-9 B. and Regulation 16.30.1.7 H NMAC and the Engineering Act, §61-23-3. L., §61-23-22, and Regulation 16.39.4.8 C. NMAC]**

## 4. Exceptions to the Multiple Seal Requirement

An architect, engineer, surveyor or landscape architect may submit a request to the appropriate board asking for a variance from the incidental practice rule. The request will be submitted to the Joint Practice Committee.

## C. Use of Seals by Profession

It is illegal to use an out-of-state architect's, engineer's, surveyor's, or landscape architect's seal on any New Mexico project.

All professional services provided by architects, engineers, surveyors, and landscape architects in New Mexico shall be sealed, signed and dated as specified in this section. Each qualified registrant will sign and seal only the document(s) for that portion of the work prepared by him or her.

### 1. Sealing Architectural Work

The following apply to the sealing of architectural work:

A. Each original construction document and each cover sheet of reports and specifications prepared by, or under the direct supervision of an individual architect, must bear the imprint of the seal with the signature of that architect and the date of the signature closely aligned to the seal.

**[Regulation 16.30.3.18 B. (1) NMAC]**

B. The name and current address of the architect must also appear on the sealed page.

**[Regulation 16.30.3.18 B. (1) NMAC]**

C. All plans, specifications, plats and reports prepared by an architect or under the architect's responsible charge shall be signed and sealed by that architect, including all plans and specifications prepared by an architect or under architect's responsible charge, including project exemption work described in Subsection B of Section 61-15-9 NMSA 1978.

**[§61.15.7 A. NMSA and Regulation 16.30.3.18 B. (2)]**



D. A registrant may affix an electronically generated seal, signature, and date of signature. An electronic signature may be utilized provided the registrant utilizes a secure method of affixation per requirements defined in.

**[Regulation 16.30.3.18 B. (1) NMAC]**

E. By placement of a seal and signature on a drawing, an architect verifies that his or her registration is valid and that he or she is practicing in accordance with the Architectural Act, Sections 61-15-1 Through 13 NMSA 1978 and these rules.

F. An architect's placing of the architect registration seal and signature on a document certifies that the architect has exercised direction, guidance and judgment on all issues pertaining to the health, safety and general welfare of the public- , and accepts all legal responsibility for all architectural matters embodied within the document which shall meet the acceptable standards of architectural practice in the State of New Mexico as put forth by the board (Subsection 1 of Section 61-15-2 NMSA 1978).

**[Regulation 16.30.1.7 O NMAC]**

**[See sample architect's seal inside front cover of published book]**

## **2. Sealing Engineering Work**

The following apply to the sealing of engineering documents:

Each licensed professional engineer shall obtain a seal/stamp, which shall appear on all final engineering design drawings, the certification page of all specifications and engineering reports prepared by the licensee in responsible charge. Adjacent to the seal/stamp shall appear the original signature of the licensee along with the date the signature was applied. Rubber stamps signatures are not acceptable. Electronic signatures as provided by law and the board's policy shall be acceptable. The seal/stamp shall be the impression type seal, the rubber type, or a computer-generated facsimile. Computer generated seals shall be bona fide copies of the actual seal/stamp specific to the work being presented.

**[Regulation 16.39.3.12 NMAC]**

An engineer may only provide engineering services in areas in which he or she is professionally qualified and shall use qualified engineers or architects for any portion of the work for which the contracting engineer is not qualified.

**[Regulation 16.39.8.9.B NMAC]**

**[See sample engineer's seal inside front cover of published book]**

By sealing or signing engineering documents, the professional engineer accepts responsibility for the engineering work represented by the documents and that applicable engineering standards have been met.

**[\$61-23-3.P. NMSA]**

## **3. Sealing Surveyor's Work**

The following apply to the sealing of surveying documents:

Each licensed professional surveyor shall obtain a seal/stamp which must be impressed on all plats, reports, etc., prepared by the licensee in responsible charge. Adjacent to the seal/stamp shall appear the original signature of the licensee along with the date the signature was applied. Rubber stamps and all facsimiles of signatures are not acceptable. Electronic signature as provided by law and board's policy shall be acceptable. The seal/stamp shall be either the impression type seal, the rubber type, or a computer-generated facsimile. Computer-generated seals shall be bona fide copies of the actual seal/stamp specific to the work being presented.

**[Regulation 16.39.5.11 NMAC]**

**[See sample surveyor's seal inside back cover]**

By sealing or signing surveying documents, the professional surveyor accepts responsibility for the engineering or surveying work, respectively, represented by the documents and that applicable surveying standards have been met.

**[\$61-23-3.P. NMSA]**

#### **4. Sealing Landscape Architect's Work**

The landscape architect's seal must be imprinted (with signature and date) on all plans, specifications and reports prepared by the Landscape Architect. A landscape architect's placing of seal and signature on a document indicates he has exercised his decisions and judgments on matters pertaining to the health, safety and general welfare of the public.

**[See sample landscape architect's seal inside back cover of published book]**

## **II. Definitions of Architecture, Engineering, Surveying, and Landscape Architecture**

### **Architecture**

New Mexico statute §61-15-2 NMSA 1978 defines “architect”, “architectural services” and the “practice of architecture” as follows:

§61-15-2 A. “architect” means any individual registered under the Architectural Act to practice architecture;

§61-15-2 B. “architectural services” means the services as defined by the rule of the board, performed in the practice of architecture. These services include predesign services, programming and planning, providing designs, drawings, specifications, other technical submissions, administration of construction contracts, coordination of technical submissions prepared by others and such other professional services as may be necessary to the planning, progress and completion of any architectural services. An architect who has complied with all the laws of New Mexico relating to the practice of architecture has a right to engage in the incidental practice of activities properly classifiable as engineering; provided that the architect does not hold himself out to be an engineer or as performing engineering services and further provided that the architect is professionally qualified and uses qualified professional engineers, architects or others for those portions of the work in which the contracting architect is not qualified. Furthermore, the architect shall assume all responsibility for compliance with all laws, codes, rules and ordinances of the state or its political subdivisions pertaining to documents bearing an architect’s professional seal.

§61-15-2 G. “practice of architecture” means rendering or offering to in connection with the design, construction, enlargement or alteration of a building or group of buildings and the space within the site surrounding those buildings, which have as their principal purpose human occupancy or habitation. “Practice of architecture” does not include the practice of engineering or surveying as defined in the Engineering and Surveying Practice Act but may include such incidental engineering work as is incidental practice.

### **Engineering**

New Mexico statute §61-23-3 NMSA 1978 defines “engineer” and the “practice of engineering” as follows:

§61-23-3. F. “engineer” means a person who has completed engineering education and has training and experience in the application of engineering principles and the interpretation of engineering data.

§61-23-3. H. “engineering” or “practice of engineering” means any creative or engineering work that requires engineering education, training and experience in the application of engineering principles and the interpretation of engineering data to such creative work as consultation, investigation, forensic investigation, evaluation, planning and design of engineering works and systems, expert technical testimony, engineering studies and the review of construction for the purpose of ensuring substantial compliance with drawings and specifications; any of which embrace such creative work, either public or private, in connection with any utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, work systems, projects and industrial or consumer products or equipment of a mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, chemical, pneumatic, environmental or thermal nature, insofar as they involve safeguarding life, health or property, and including such other professional services as may be necessary to the planning, progress and completion of engineering work. The “practice of engineering” may include the use of photogrammetric methods to derive topographical and other data. The “practice of engineering” may include the use of photogrammetric methods to derive topographical and other data. The “practice of engineering” does not include responsibility for the supervision of construction, site conditions, operations, equipment, personnel or the maintenance of safety in the workplace.

## **Surveying**

§61-23-3. Q. "surveying" or "practice of surveying" means any service or work, the substantial performance of which involves the application of the principles of mathematics and the related physical and applied sciences for:

(1) the measuring and locating of lines, angles, elevations and natural and man-made features in the air, on the surface of the earth, within underground workings and on the beds or bodies of water for the purpose of defining location, areas and volumes;

(2) the monumenting of property boundaries and for the platting and layout of lands and subdivisions;

(3) the application of photogrammetric methods used to derive topographic and other data;

(4) the establishment of horizontal and vertical controls that will be the basis for all geospatial data used for future design surveys, including construction staking surveys, surveys to lay out horizontal and vertical alignments, topographic surveys, control surveys for aerial photography for the collection of topographic and planimetric data using photogrammetric methods and construction surveys of engineering and architectural public works projects;

(5) the preparation and perpetuation of maps, records, plats, field notes, easements and property descriptions; and

(6) the depiction and transmittal by paper or digital means of any digital geospatial data for use in geographic information systems or land information systems that purports to be the authoritative location of points or features of a survey regulated by the Engineering and Surveying Practice Act, but excludes data used solely for a cadastre, such as assessment and tax mapping purposes, or general representations of surveyed or historic data used for mapping purposes, such as land parcels and built infrastructure;

§61-23-3. S. "surveyor", "professional surveyor", "licensed surveyor" or "registered surveyor" means a person who is licensed as a professional surveyor by the board and who is a professional specialist qualified to practice surveying by reason of the person's education in the principles of mathematics and the related physical and applied sciences requisite to surveying of real property;

§61-23-3. U. "surveying work" means the work performed in the practice of surveying; and

§61-23-3. V. "supplemental surveying work" means surveying work performed in order to densify, augment and enhance previously performed survey work or site information but excludes the surveying of real property for the establishment of land boundaries, rights of way and easements and the dependent or independent surveys or resurveys of the public land system.

### **Landscape Architecture**

New Mexico statute §61-24B-3 [NMSA 1978] defines “landscape architect” and the “practice of landscape architecture” as follows: §61-24B-3(C) “landscape architect” means any individual registered under the Landscape Architects Act to practice landscape architecture; and

§61-24B-3(D) “landscape architectural services” means the practice of landscape architecture, including but not limited to consultation, investigation, research, design, preparation of drawings and specifications and general administration of contracts where the dominant purposes of such services are:

1. the preservation or enhancement of land uses and natural features;
2. the location and construction of functional approaches for structures, pathways or walkways; or
3. the design of trails, plantings and landscape irrigation.

Nothing contained in this definition shall be construed as authorizing a landscape architect to engage in the practice of architecture, engineering or land surveying as defined by §61-15-2 and 61-23-3(E) and 61-23-3 (N), (R), and (S) NMSA 1978.

### **III. Roles of the Architect, Engineer, Surveyor and Landscape Architect**

Presented in this section are descriptions of the general areas of responsibility of architects, engineers, surveyors and landscape architects. The descriptions are general rather than all-inclusive and are intended as a guide.

#### **A. Role of the Architect**

An architect must be concerned with the basic concepts of the full spectrum of design considerations. Listed below are examples of matters architects typically address:

1. Site layout (e.g., parking, accessibility, zoning requirements, grading, building layout).
2. Aesthetics and overall design.
3. Building classification (e.g., occupancy, type of construction).
4. Building circulation and exiting (e.g., stairway, exit width, travel distances, corridors).
5. Life safety considerations (e.g., requirements for sprinklers, fire ratings, fire walls, separations, fire alarms, smoke control).
6. Interior space planning.
7. Interior and exterior finish materials (e.g., durability, function, aesthetics, and fire ratings).
8. Environmental impacts (e.g., sound attenuation, quality of living, impact on natural surroundings).
9. Barrier free design and accessibility requirements.
10. Overall project coordination.

#### **B. Role of the Engineer**

An engineer must be concerned with the planning, analysis, and design of a wide variety of building systems. Listed below are examples of matters engineers typically address:

1. Structural systems (e.g., framing, structural connections, foundations).
2. Electrical systems (e.g., power distribution, lighting, security, fire alarm and smoke detection).
3. Electronic systems, including communications.
4. Mechanical systems (e.g., plumbing, water distribution systems, HVAC, fire protection systems).
5. Life safety considerations (e.g. design of sprinklers, fire alarm systems, and smoke control systems).
6. Soils analysis (e.g., soils reports, soil stabilization, geotechnical investigations).
7. Civil works design (e.g., site work, site drainage, grading, utilities, circulation).
8. Coordination of engineering works (e.g., power stations, dams, bridges, water treatment facilities).
9. Barrier free design and accessibility requirements.
10. Environmental Systems, Impact Studies, Improvements and Assessments.
11. Overall Project Coordination.

### **C. Role of the Surveyor**

A surveyor provides plats and maps used by design professionals, contractors, insurers, lenders and property owners to properly assess site conditions during the design and building phases of the project. Listed below are some examples of matters surveyors typically address:

1. Determine the boundaries of the property (boundary survey).
2. Prepare a survey of the existing conditions of the property for use by an architect, engineer and/or landscape architect to develop a site plan for the project (topographic or design survey).
3. Perform a survey for title insurance companies and/or lenders (ALTA survey).
4. Layout proposed improvements (utilities and structures) for the contractor (construction staking).
5. Site survey for completed project to ensure governing authorities that improvements were constructed as per plans (as-built survey).
6. Improvement survey to secure permanent financing for the project (ALTA survey).

### **D. Role of the Landscape Architect**

A landscape architect must be concerned with the planning and analysis of a wide variety of site conditions, landforms, structures, and systems concerned with the full spectrum of landscape architectural conditions. Listed below are examples of landscape architects typically address:

1. Site layout design (e.g., parking, accessibility, zoning requirements, grading, landscaping, structure locations, site drainage).
2. Aesthetics and overall project design. Site structures classification (e.g., shade structures, provided such structures are not fully enclosed except for prefabricated and kit facilities such as restrooms; open landscape retaining walls; fences; playground structures).
3. Site circulation and exiting (e.g., walkways, travel distances, and other access requirements).
4. Life safety considerations (e.g., requirements for recreational facilities, playground structures, shade structures, water distribution for potable and landscape uses, fencing).
5. Plant material analysis (e.g., plant material for condition hardy species, form, color, water usage, health, anti-allergy selection species, accessibility).
6. Finish materials (e.g., durability, function, aesthetics).
7. Environmental impacts (e.g., water conservation, land use consideration, natural resource analysis, aesthetic analysis, re-vegetation and reclamation, plant selection, sound attenuation, quality of life, impact on natural and built surroundings).
8. Barrier free design and accessibility requirements (e.g., play structures, site structures, site access, facility access).
9. Overall project coordination.
10. Interior and Exterior Landscape Design (e.g. planting design, irrigation design).
11. Outdoor Assembly (e.g. sports fields, parks, trails, shelters, spectator spaces, playgrounds).

## **IV. The Prime Design Professional**

A prime design professional will be required for any project submitted for permit to the Building Official which requires multiple professional seals (e.g., architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, and surveying).

### **A. Role of the Prime Design Professional**

The prime design professional must develop a comprehensive package of design documents for submittal to the building department, taking all aspects of the project into account and coordinating various submissions prepared by other project team members.

### **B. Selection of Prime Design Professional**

An engineer or architect may be the prime design professional on various building projects. The owner, user or using agency shall select the prime design professional (architect or engineer) for any building project based on the requirements and nature of the project. The landscape architect may be the prime design professional on exterior projects that include architecture and/or engineering work, however; the building official shall determine seal requirements.



## V. Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

### A. Applications for Permit

1. May anyone other than an architect, engineer, or landscape architect prepare plans for submission to building officials?

*Yes, in instances where exceptions to the requirement for an architect and/or engineer(s) are noted in C.I.D. Rules & Regulations 14.5.2.9 NMAC. Building Officials should document the exception for the record when a permit is granted based on unsealed plans.*

2. Must architects, engineers, or landscape architects be listed on a building permit application and must permit requests for revisions be professionally sealed?

*The architect's, engineer's, and landscape architect's names, as appropriate, must be listed on the application. All permit requests for modifications or revisions to the sealed plans must be sealed by the responsible architect, engineer, surveyor or landscape architect and issued by that architect, engineer, surveyor or landscape architect; as required by the code official.*

3. May construction documents for a commercial building, such as a bank, office or convenience store, be prepared by a contractor or a drafting service when there are only three employees?

*No, not if the occupant load exceeds 10 persons according to the current adopted code. The actual number of employees is not relevant.*

4. Do shop drawings have to be sealed by an architect or engineer and submitted to the Building Official for approval?

*No, typically shop drawings are intended as contractor or fabricator details. These are not part of the filed plans.*

### B. Changes to Permitted Documents

5. May a building official/owner/builder/contractor make changes to an architect's, engineer's, landscape architect's plans or a surveyor's plat?

*No. When plans are prepared by an architect, engineer, surveyor, landscape architect or a designated employee, no changes may be made except by that professional or a person who is under the responsible charge of that design professional.*

6. Who may issue change orders and addenda to building permit construction documents that have been filed for non-exempt structures?

*Change orders, additional drawings and/or addenda that alter documents when an architect's and/or engineer(s)', surveyor's and/or landscape architect's seal was required must be signed by the architect, engineer, surveyor or landscape architect responsible for the modifications.*

### **C. Requirements for Professional Seals**

7. May a building official require an architect's or engineer(s)' seal on construction drawings for a commercial project with an occupant load of less than ten (10) or any other exempt project?

*Yes, if the Building Official finds such professional certification is necessary to protect the public.*

8. May a draftsman or contractor submit sketches or elevations for permit review for a non-exempt building prior to preparing the full plans?

*Only licensed professionals may prepare schematic design for a non-exempt building, by definition of the practice of architecture, engineering or landscape architecture.*

9. Does a non-residential building with a construction valuation of greater than \$600,000 but an occupant load of less than ten (10) require a professional seal?

*Yes. Since the construction valuation is greater than \$600,000, and non-residential, the project is considered a multiple discipline project and would require an architect and engineer(s) seals.*

10. Would either an architect or engineer qualify to seal building plans for a project with a construction valuation up to \$600,000?

*Yes. As long as the occupant load does not exceed fifty (50), either an architect or a qualified engineer may prepare such plans.*

11. If there are four separate buildings (each under 4,000 square feet, e.g., a mini storage facility) with a construction value of over \$600,000 for the entire project, does the project require both an engineer and architect?

*Yes. This includes modular buildings which may be built offsite.*

12. Can a design professional prepare architectural drawings?

*Yes, as outlined in NMAC 16.30.3.18. However, the AHJ may reject drawings not prepared under the direct supervision of a licensed architect. This oversight is crucial for maintaining the integrity of projects and upholding professional standards within the construction industry.*

13. If an unregistered designer or owner prepares plans for a non-exempt building and applies for a building permit, should the building official require the designer or owner to hire an architect or engineer, whichever is appropriate?

*Yes. However, an architect or engineer may seal only plans prepared by him or her or under his or her responsible charge. An architect may assume responsibility for a project that has been prepared by another but must follow procedures outlined in NMAC 16.30.3.18 C. Assumption of projects. An architect assuming responsibility for a project also must maintain records for five years.*

14. What are examples of component or manufactured building designs that are required to be sealed by an architect or engineer when submitted to the Building Official for approval?

*Components or manufactured buildings are treated no differently than other buildings. The plans must be prepared and sealed by an architect and/or engineer. Examples of such designs are prefabricated metal buildings, Modular non-assembled component panels, roof truss systems, post tension or prestress designs and precast concrete building components.*

15. What are the electronic sealing and signature requirements?

*The electronic sealing and signature requirements for each discipline are as follows: For architects, a registrant may affix an electronically generated seal, signature, and date of signature. The registrant must utilize a secure method of affixation. (See the Boards Rules and Regulations at <https://www.bea.state.nm.us>. For professional engineers and professional surveyors, electronic drawings may have electronic signatures only if they are encrypted electronic signature files that protect the integrity of the drawings (see Board's rules and policy at <https://www.sblpes.state.nm.us>). For landscape architects, seal requirements shall be in accordance with the Landscape Architects Act.*

#### **D. Practice of Other Disciplines**

16. May an architect or engineer prepare and seal documents for landscape architecture?

*No, except within the limits of his or her licensure.*

17. May an architect or engineer prepare and seal documents for interior design?

*Yes.*

18. May an architect prepare and stamp engineering documents?

*No, except when the project has a construction valuation not greater than six hundred thousand dollars \$600,000 and an occupant load not greater than fifty (50).*

19. May an engineer prepare and seal architectural documents?

*No, the project valuation or occupant load should not preclude the engineer from stamping any architectural drawings. Except when the project has a construction valuation not greater than six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) and an occupant load not greater than fifty (50).*

20. May landscape architects prepare and seal architectural documents?

*No, except that landscape architects may seal drawings for site structures or shade structures, provided such structures are not fully enclosed except for prefabricated and kit facilities such as restrooms.*

21. May architects and landscape architects seal topography maps?

*No. Topography maps are typically sealed by a surveyor but may be sealed by a qualified engineer only as defined by NMSA §61-23-3. Q. and Regulations 16.39.5.10 F., 12.8.2.7 B. (3) and 12.8.2.11 NMAC. Architects and landscape architects may certify finish contours on single-seal projects; however, they may not certify to existing conditions.*

22. May a surveyor prepare and submit site and grading plans?

*No. Professional surveyors may prepare maps, which provide topographical and related measurement data. Plans that include design features for grading or construction must be prepared and certified by a qualified architect, a qualified engineer or a qualified landscape architect.*

23. May an architect or landscape architect prepare and submit grading plans?

*Yes. An architect or landscape architect can prepare and seal plans that include grading and site structures insofar as the grading falls within the limits of incidental practice. [Note: Additional requirements for drainage calculations by a licensed professional engineer may be required by some agencies.]*

24. May an engineer, architect or landscape architect prepare, seal and submit survey documents?

*No. All survey documents must be prepared, signed and sealed by a licensed surveyor, except an engineer may obtain supplemental survey information for the planning and design of an engineering project as provided for in NMSA §61-23-3. Q.*

## **E. Certification by Out-of-State Professionals**

25. Can a contractor sign the cover sheet of a set of plans prepared by a person registered as an architect or engineer in another state and comply with the law?

*No.*

26. Can a set of plans be stamped and signed by a person registered as an architect in another state? Does the plan submittal meet the requirements in New Mexico?

*No. Only New Mexico architects have authority to practice in New Mexico. A person registered as an architect in another state must obtain registration in New Mexico in order to practice in this state.*

27. Can a set of plans be stamped and sealed by a person licensed as an engineer in another state? Does the plan submittal meet the requirements in New Mexico?

*No. Only New Mexico licensed engineers have the authority to practice in New Mexico. A person licensed as an engineer in another state must obtain licensure in New Mexico in order to practice in this state.*

28. Can survey plats be stamped and sealed by a person licensed as a surveyor in another state? Does the plat submittal meet the requirements in New Mexico?

*No. Only New Mexico licensed surveyors have the authority to practice in New Mexico. A person licensed as a surveyor in another state must obtain licensure in New Mexico in order to practice in this state.*

29. Can a set of plans be stamped and sealed by a person registered as a landscape architect in another state? Does the plan submittal meet the requirements in New Mexico?

*No. Only New Mexico registered landscape architects have the authority to practice in New Mexico. A person registered as a landscape architect in another state must obtain registration in New Mexico in order to practice in this state.*

30. Can an architect "over stamp" plans prepared and stamped by a person registered as an architect in another state for submittal in New Mexico?

*No. An architect may only prepare, and seal drawings prepared by him or her or under his or her responsible charge. An architect assuming responsible charge of a project must follow the procedures outlined in NMAC16.30.3.18 C. Assumption of projects.*

31. Can an engineer or landscape architect "over stamp" plans prepared and stamped by a person licensed as an engineer or landscape architect in another state for submittal in New Mexico?

*No, except when all of the following circumstances have been met for engineering plans or landscape architecture plans (as the case maybe):*

- (1) the drawings have been prepared by an engineer or landscape architect registered in a US jurisdiction;
- (2) the reviewing engineer or landscape architect has the authority to make any changes to the construction documents in accordance with his professional knowledge and judgment; and
- (3) the engineer or landscape architect has reviewed the plans prior to the preparation and sealing of the final set of construction documents to be submitted for permit.

At no time is it legal for an engineer or landscape architect to review and seal drawings prepared by a draftsperson or other person not licensed as an engineer or landscape architect, respectively, except when that person has been working for the engineer or landscape architect under his or her responsible charge.

## APPENDIX A

### Sample Certification for Exempted Buildings

#### CERTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION FROM PROFESSIONAL SEAL REQUIREMENTS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that the technical submission for  
the project known as:

\_\_\_\_\_

located at:

\_\_\_\_\_

has been prepared by me under the exception to the requirement for architectural and/or engineering certifications as set forth in CID Regulation 14.5.2.9 *NMAC*, Architectural and Engineering Standards Requirements and as noted below:

- ☐ 1. Single-family dwellings not more than two (2) stories in height.
  
- ☐ 2. Multiple dwellings not more than (2) stories in height containing not more than four (4) dwelling units of wood-frame construction; provided this paragraph shall not be construed to allow a person who is not registered under the Architectural Act to design multiple clusters of up to four (4) dwelling units each to form apartment or condominium complexes where the total exceeds four (4) dwelling units on any lawfully divided lot.
  
- ☐ 3. Garages or other structures not more than two (2) stories in height which are appurtenant to buildings described in Paragraphs 1 and 2 above.
  
- ☐ 4. Nonresidential buildings, as defined in the current international building codes or additions having a total occupant load of ten (10) or less and not more than two (2) stories in height, which shall not include E-3 (Day Care), H (Hazardous), or I (Institutional)
  
- ☐ 5. Alterations to buildings or structures which present no unusual conditions, hazards or change of occupancy. Keeping in mind the building official or the plan review official is authorized to require submittal documents to be prepared and sealed by an architect, registered in accordance with the New Mexico Architectural Act, and the rules promulgated pursuant thereto, or by a professional structural engineer, registered in accordance with the New Mexico Engineering and Surveying Practice Act, and the rules promulgated pursuant thereto. An architect or engineer stamp is required for all uses listed in table 1004.1.1 in the IBC.

## APPENDIX B

### Minimum Standards for Code Submissions

Plans and specifications submitted to the Building Official for permit must be sufficiently clear to show the project in its entirety with emphasis on the following:

1. Structural integrity
2. Life safety
3. Architectural barriers
4. Building code compliance
5. Definition of scope of work

The required drawings will depend upon the size, nature and complexity of the project. Following is a suggested standard of minimum required drawings for review by Building Officials. Additions and remodels may not require all these for plan submittal and review.

#### Cover Sheet

1. Project identification
2. Project address and a location map
3. All design professionals identified
4. The principal design professional (the professional responsible for project coordination) shall be identified. All communications should be directed through this individual.
5. Design Criteria list:
  - ☐ Occupancy group
  - ☐ Type construction
  - ☐ Location of property
  - ☐ Seismic zone
  - ☐ Square Footage/Allowable area
  - ☐ Fire sprinklers
  - ☐ Height and number of stories
  - ☐ Occupant load
  - ☐ Land use zone

#### Site Plan

Show proposed new structure and any existing buildings or structures, all property lines with dimensions, all streets, easements and setbacks. Show all water, sewer, electrical points of connection, proposed service routes and existing utilities on the site. Show all required parking, drainage and grading information. Indicate drainage inflow and outflow locations and specify areas required to be maintained for drainage purposes. When appropriate include a topographic survey. Show north arrow.

#### Plat

**If required, a plat indicating ownership, property boundaries, utility easements, right-of-ways, etc. may be submitted.**

#### Landscape Plan

Show locations and quantities of all landscape materials (e.g., plant species, mulch, turf areas, mounding, edging, etc.) required for construction of the project. Not required for building permit.

#### Irrigation Plan

Show location and provide product type of backflow prevention device, controller, valves, main line, lateral line and sprinkler heads for the entire system. Indicate on plans point of connection, pipe sizing, flow in g.p.m. for each valve in spray and irrigation zones. Not required for building permit.

### **Foundation Plan**

Show all foundations and footings. Indicate size, locations, thicknesses, materials and strengths and reinforcing. Show all imbedded anchoring such as anchor bolts, hold downs, post bases, etc. **NMAC 14.7.3.12.** Where quantifiable data created by accepted soil science methodologies indicate expansive, compressible, shifting, or other questionable soil characteristics are likely to be present at a particular location, a soil test to determine the soil's characteristics at a particular location shall be performed. **See this section of the IECC and add the following sentence to the end of the section. R403.1.3.2** Where the slabs-on-ground are cast monolithically and rigid insulation is used as a forming material, a minimum of 1½ inch rigid insulation shall be used. Where sandy, silty sand or sandy gravel soils are present, rigid insulation shall not be used as a forming material. Forms must be constructed to prevent the possibility of failure or collapse. Forms shall be constructed and maintained so that the finished concrete complies with section R401.2.

### **Floor Plan**

Show all floors including basements. Show all rooms, with their use, overall dimensions and locations of all structural elements and openings. Show all doors and windows. Provide door and window schedules. All fire assemblies, area and occupancy separations and draft stops shall be shown.

### **Framing Plans and Roof Framing Plans**

Show all structural members, their size, methods of attachment, location and materials for floors and roofs. Show roof plan.

### **Exterior Elevations**

Show all views. Show all vertical dimensions and heights. Show all openings and identify all materials and show lateral bracing system, where applicable.

### **Building Sections and Wall Sections**

Show materials of construction, non-rated and fire rated assemblies and fire rated penetrations. Show dimensions of all heights.

### **Mechanical System**

Show the entire mechanical system. Include all units, their sizes, mounting details, all duct work and duct sizes. Indicate all fire dampers where required. Provide equipment schedules. Must meet the requirements of the current New Mexico Energy Conservation Code and New Mexico Mechanical Code.

### **Plumbing System**

Show all fixtures, piping, slopes, materials and sizes, and show point of connections to utilities. Septic tanks, pre-treatment of sewer systems and water wells. Must meet the requirements of the New Mexico Plumbing Code.

### **Electrical System**

Show all electrical fixtures (interior, exterior and site) wiring sizes and circuiting, grounding, panel schedules, single line diagrams, load calculations and fixture schedules. Show point of connection to utility. Must meet the requirements of the New Mexico Electrical Code.

### **Re-roofing**

The building official or the plan review official is authorized to require submittal documents to be prepared and sealed by an architect, registered in accordance with the New Mexico Architectural Act, and the rules promulgated pursuant thereto, or by a professional structural engineer. When the stamp is requested, the following will need to be determined:



1. Structural integrity
2. Roof System manufacturer
3. Roof deck is structurally sound
4. Roof drains and drainage meet code requirements
5. Existing roof system are securely attached
6. The existing roof assembly is dry and not deteriorated
7. Fire retardant requirements are maintained

### **Solar PV Systems**

Structural analysis must be performed by a **professional engineer or architect licensed in the state of New Mexico as determined by code official**, in order to determine if the roof structure is capable of supporting the added loads of a solar PV electric module when any of the following occur.

1. The total added dead load of the array is greater than 5 lbs. / sq. ft. on roof construction
2. The total added point load of the array is greater than 45 lbs. on roof construction
3. The total added dead load exceeds 200 lbs. on any one truss, rafter or roof joist
4. The mounting of the system is of a unique roof mounted design
5. The roof structure contains over-spanned trusses, rafters or roof joists

Any person bidding or contracting for the installation of a building mounted solar PV system must possess a valid license issued by the construction industries division (CID) in the EE-98 or ER-1 license classification, subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of Subsection A of 14.6.6.9 NMAC. CID license classifications can be found in Section 9 of 14.6.6 NMAC.

### **Wind turbine systems 10KW or less**

1. Any person bidding or contracting for the installation of a building mounted wind turbine system must possess a valid license issued by the construction industries division (CID) in the EE-98 or ER-1 license classification, subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of Subsection A of 14.6.6.9 NMAC. CID license classifications can be found in Section 9 of 14.6.6 NMAC.
2. Any person performing the installation of a wind turbine system, or related work, must possess a valid journeyman certificate issued by CID in the EE-98J or ER-1J classification, or be an apprentice working under the direct supervision of such a certified journeyman.
3. Structural analysis must be performed by a **professional engineer licensed in the state of New Mexico** in order to determine if the roof structure is capable of supporting the added loads of a wind turbine.
4. If structural modifications are required, engineered details shall be provided. Structural documents must be sealed by a professional engineer licensed in the state of New Mexico. Reinforcement of the structure will require corresponding building permits and inspections by a certified building inspector.
5. If structural modifications are not required one electrical permit shall be issued to a properly licensed contractor for wind turbine installation.

**Structural Calculations**

Where required, provide structural calculations for the entire portion of the structural system of the project being permitted.

**Specifications**

Either on the drawings or in booklet form, further define construction components, covering materials and methods of construction, wall finishes and all pertinent equipment. Schedules may be incorporated in project manual in lieu of drawings.

**Addenda and Changes**

It shall be the responsibility of the individual identified on the cover sheet as the principal design professional to notify the Building Official of any and all changes throughout the project and provide revised plans, calculations or other appropriate documents prior to actual construction.

**Revisions**

For clarity, all revisions should be identified on the drawings.

*If you need further information or assistance concerning the requirements for the use of design professional seals in New Mexico, please write, e-mail or call:*

**NM Board of Examiners for Architects**

P.O. Box 509 Santa Fe, NM 87504

505-476-4830

<https://www.bea.state.nm.us>

**NM Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers  
and Professional Surveyors**

P.O. Box 1967

Santa Fe, NM 87504

505-476-4565

<https://www.sblpes.state.nm.us>

**NM Board of Landscape Architects**

5500 San Antonio Dr., Suite B

Albuquerque, NM 87109

505-222-9826

<https://www.rld.state.nm.us/Landscape/index.html>