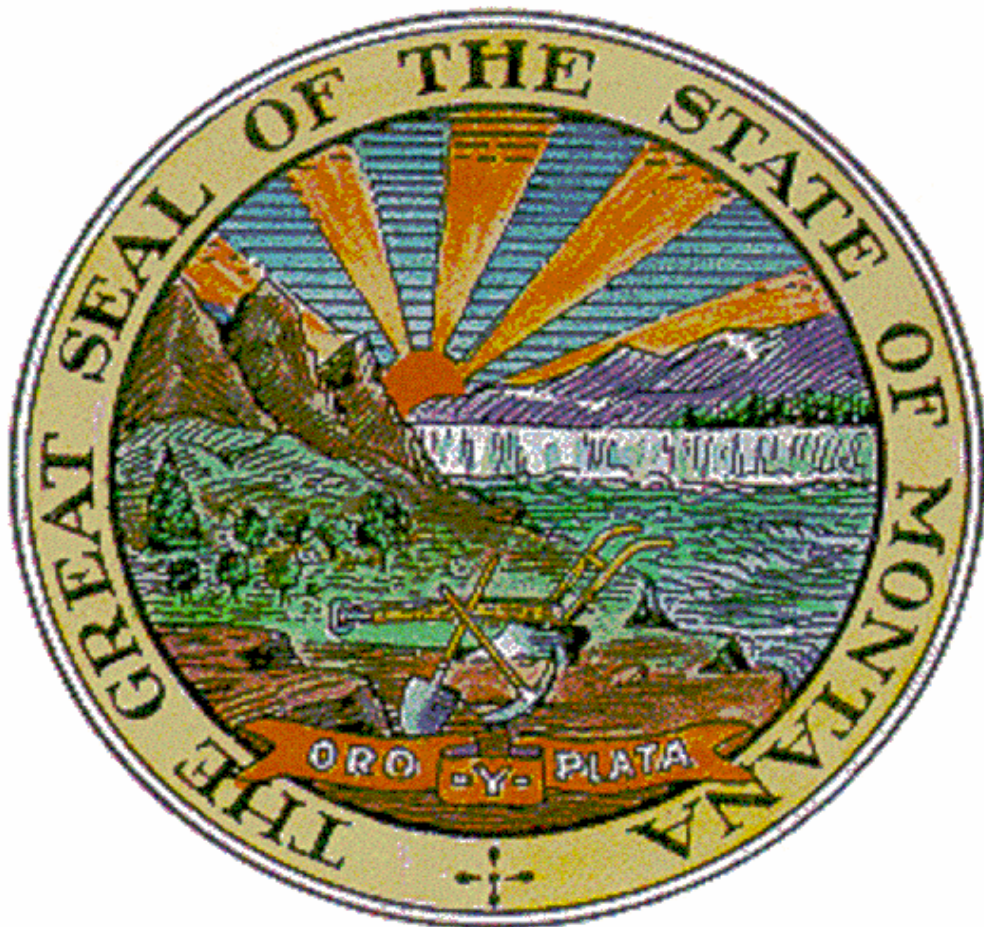


# The Professional Use of Seals

Requirements regarding the practice of  
Architecture and Engineering  
in Montana



## DO I NEED A PROFESSIONAL TO SEAL PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS?

### Architects Sealing Engineering Plans

State law does allow an architect to perform engineering work that is incidental to their practice of architecture. However, an architect should not seal engineering plans such as electrical, mechanical, plumbing, civil, or structural.

### PROPER SEAL

Architecture

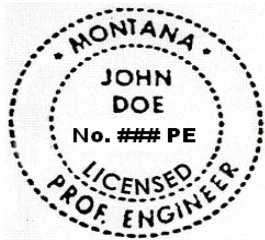


### Professional Engineers Sealing Architecture Plans

State law does allow a professional engineer to perform architecture work that is incidental to their practice of engineering. However, a professional engineer should not seal architectural drawings or work that are labeled as such.

### PROPER SEAL

Professional Engineer



## SEALS WITH QUALIFYING STATEMENTS

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Preliminary - Do Not Use for Construction
- Structural, Fire Protection, Electrical, etc. Only.
- Final Drawings - For Review Purposes Only

## EXEMPTIONS FROM PROFESSIONAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The following are exemptions from the requirements of having an **architect** seal the documents:

- Alterations to any building which do not involve changes affecting the structural safety thereof or the public health.
- The preparation of details and shop drawings by persons other than architects for use in connection with the execution of their work.
- The preparation of drawings or details for fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other interior appliances or equipment or for any work necessary to provide for their installation unless the same involves public health or safety.

- Consultants, officers, and employees of the United States while engaged solely in the practice of architecture for said government.
- Professional engineers performing architectural services, which are purely incidental to their engineering practice. Any person planning, designing, altering, repairing, supervising, or engaging in residential construction consisting of less than eight living units regardless of size or cost or farm buildings which are not intended for use or used as a public building.
- The planning, design, alteration, construction, repair, or supervision of construction of a building by its owner if the building is not intended for use as a public building.

The following are exemptions from the requirements of having a **professional engineer** seal the documents:

- The practice of any other legally recognized professions or trades.
- The mere execution of work by a contractor, as distinguished from its planning or design or the supervision of the construction of work as a lead supervisor or superintendent.
- The practice of professional engineering by licensed architects when the practice is purely incidental to their practice of architecture.

#### **SEALING REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCUMENTS**

- All plans prepared for bidding, permitting or construction
- All specifications that require a seal
- Change orders required to be prepared by a licensee
- Addenda and field changes required to be prepared by a licensee
- Record drawings or as built drawings
- Engineering reports filed with public authorities

#### **DOCUMENTS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A SEAL**

- Documents used to communicate conceptual information only
- Documents in progress
- Shop drawings

#### **ABOUT THE USE OF THE SEAL**

- Cover sheet or individual sheets may be stamped which is acceptable for both professions
- Either profession requires that only licensed individuals seal documents.
- Both Architects and Professional Engineers do allow electronically generated seals and signatures.

#### **RED FLAGS:**

- Architecture sheets sealed by an engineer
- Engineering sheets sealed by an architect
- Plans sealed by an engineer who is an employee of a company without a certificate of authority to practice
- In process documents sealed without a disclaimer
- Plans that have not been sealed, signed and dated by the licensee [dated by engineers only]
- Documents that do not bear the seal of a Montana licensee
- Unsealed church plans.
- Seals appear to be cut and pasted
- Contact person is not the licensee or it is difficult to contact the licensee
- Plans, details, letter reports, etc. do not appear to apply to the project.
- Plans that have numerous or serious code violations Non-dated revisions [date required by engineers only]

**WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FEEL THERE ARE RED FLAGS:**

- Check out the people offering services on board websites to see if they are licensed - <http://app.mt.gov/lookup/>
- Reject the work done by unlicensed individuals
- Get errors corrected by a licensed professional
- Contact licensing boards
- File complaint with board office

**MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS?**

Board of Architects -

(406) 841-2367 [www.architect.mt.gov](http://www.architect.mt.gov)

Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors -

(406) 841-2367 [www.engineer.mt.gov](http://www.engineer.mt.gov)