

Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng)

The New Zealand CPEng is the only quality mark requiring professional engineers to undertake an assessment to revalidate competence at regular intervals and have a knowledge of New Zealand-specific engineering practice.

How can I be sure that a CPEng is appropriate for the work being carried out?

The CPEng register only records the names and contact details of engineers on the register – it does not record the type or discipline of the engineer, for example, structural or mechanical. You should therefore require the engineer to certify that he or she is competent to carry out the work you want completed.

How many CPEngs are there and how do I contact them?

Currently there are some 2,000 engineers from all around New Zealand on the CPEng register. Where CPEng registrants have given consent for their contact details to be published, they are included in the CPEng register at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/finding/cpeng/search/search.cfm – to email a registrant simply click on the link provided in the listing.

Consumers would normally seek the services of a professional engineer by approaching a consulting engineering company. However, companies cannot be registered as CPEngs, so check www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/finding/cpeng/search/search.cfm to ensure that the engineer responsible for your work is currently registered as a CPEng.

■ IPENZ – the Registration Authority

IPENZ has statutory responsibilities under the Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act 2002 for administering the CPEng register which include assessing an engineer's competence for registration and hearing complaints about CPEngs.

IPENZ National Office
Ground Floor, 158 The Terrace
PO Box 12 241, Wellington, New Zealand
Phone: 04 473 9444
Fax: 04 474 8933

Email: ipenz@ipenz.org.nz
Website: www.ipenz.org.nz

What to look for
when choosing
a professional
engineer



The term “professional engineer” is not restricted in New Zealand, which means that anyone is able to claim to be a professional engineer. This makes it important to be careful when engaging professional engineering services.

The Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act 2002 establishes Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng) as the quality mark of current competence for professional engineers. The Act achieves this by creating a register of professional engineers who have been assessed by the Registration Authority as having met the CPEng standard of competence. The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) is the CPEng Registration Authority.

There are various situations when you may require the services of a currently competent professional engineer:

- to meet the requirements of a territorial local authority (TLA)
- when the engineering work involves health and safety issues
- to reduce risk

TLAs have requirements for activities such as building a house or other structure requiring a building consent, developing a property or new subdivision, or building foundations or retaining walls. TLAs are able to set their own requirements for professional engineering competence. Check with the TLA in your area about current requirements because not all work requires engineers to be CPEng and requirements may change as the Building Act 2004 is implemented.

Sometimes there is a legal requirement for a professional engineer performing or certifying work to be a CPEng. Examples include:

- certification of amusement devices
- classification of a dam or audit dam safety programmes as a “recognised engineer”
- engineering design of restricted (building) work as a “licensed building practitioner”

In each of these situations CPEng registration provides assurance that the professional engineer is a currently competent practitioner.

■ Why Choose a CPEng?

To be registered as a CPEng a professional engineer must:

- have undertaken an assessment of competence by the Registration Authority within the last five years
- agree to be bound by the CPEng Code of Ethical Conduct
- agree to maintain his/her professional competence

A CPEng is assessed for competence in the area of professional engineering in which he/she practises. The CPEng Code of Ethical Conduct requires a CPEng to work only within his/her competence – he/she must refuse to undertake any proposed work outside his/her area of competence.

■ How to Check if Someone is a CPEng

You can check that a person is a CPEng by viewing the CPEng register at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/finding/cpeng/search/search.cfm. The search function enables you to search for all CPEng registrants in a particular region.

An engineer commits an offence if he/she claims to be a CPEng while not on the CPEng register. If someone cannot be found on the register, it could be for one of the following reasons:

1. The person’s registration is in abeyance because he/she requested it, or he/she failed to pay registration fees. You can check the list of people with CPEng in abeyance at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/finding/cpeng/search/abeyance.cfm
2. The person asked to be removed from the CPEng register.
3. The person’s registration has been suspended because of disciplinary action, non-payment of fines or costs,

or an inability to satisfy competence requirements for continued registration.

4. The person may have applied for CPEng but his/her application is still being processed.

■ How to Complain About a CPEng

A complaint can be made when a CPEng carries out work in an incompetent manner or when he or she is in breach of the CPEng Code of Ethical Conduct found at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/forms/pdfs/CPEng_Code_of_Ethical_Conduct.pdf. As the Registration Authority, IPENZ can take action against the CPEng – even if he/she is no longer a CPEng.

If you are unhappy with a professional engineer’s service, you can contact IPENZ on 04 473 9444 to discuss the situation or get advice on lodging a complaint. All complaints about a CPEng must be made in writing. Detailed information about the complaints process can be viewed at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/Complaints

■ CPEng Frequently Asked Questions

I have seen engineers using titles or postnominals that are similar to CPEng – are these the same as the New Zealand CPEng?

No. There are several other quality marks from overseas engineering organisations or licensing bodies that appear similar to the CPEng quality mark – but they are not the same! The CPEng Rules, which have the effect of regulations, require these quality marks to identify the jurisdiction from which they were awarded. Thus, a CPEng awarded in Australia must be represented as CPEng(Aust) or CPEng(Australia). Similarly, a Chartered Engineer (CEng) from the United Kingdom must be written as CEng(UK) and an engineer with a professional engineer license from either Canada or the United States must use the title PEng(Canada)/PEng(USA) or PE(Canada)/PE(USA).