

PRACTICE NOTE FOR USE OF “THE SISV PROFESSIONAL QUANTITY SURVEYOR SEAL – 2014”

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guideline is to provide Fellows or Members of the SISV Quantity Surveying Division with guidance on the proper use of the Professional Quantity Surveyor (PQS) seal as per Article 8 of the SISV By-Laws. The seal is the distinguishing mark of the Quantity Surveying (QS) profession and an indication to recipients and users of QS documents that the content of the documents were prepared by or under the personal supervision of a PQS.

The PQS, by affixing the seal, assumes responsibility and is answerable for the quality of the work presented therein. Proper use of the seal is essential, not only for complying with the SISV Byelaws, but also for assuring the public that the seal represents the profession’s commitment to standards of care and excellence.

For the public, the seal constitutes the distinctive mark of the PQS. It must be used to identify all work prepared by, or under the direct supervision of, a PQS as part of professional QS services rendered to the public. It assures the document’s recipient that the work meets the standards of professionalism expected of competent, experienced individuals who take personal responsibility for their judgments and decisions. The seal is important because it is a visible commitment to the standards of the profession and signifies to the public that a particular PQS accepted professional responsibility for the document.

USE OF THE SEAL

The seal used on a document is the impression of the rubber stamp issued by the SISV to all Professional Members who have fulfilled its requirements for membership. A PQS must always retain full control over the use of the seal and any reproduction of the seal so that no one can use it without explicit authorization. Such authority should not be given unless the PQS had direct supervision of the work.

SISV allows members to use electronic seals. An electronic seal is a facsimile of the impression produced by the rubber stamp in electronic format, either scanned or created as a drawing object by a software program. The electronic facsimile must be identical in size, shape, and content to the seal created by the rubber stamp. This impression has the same value as an impression generated by the original of the seal. A PQS must at all times retain full control over the electronic version of his or her seal. A PQS allowing another person to access an electronic seal could be held liable for any use made of the seal by that person. The seal must be clear and legible when applied to the document, regardless of how it is applied. An electronic facsimile of the seal may also include an electronic facsimile of the PQS’s handwritten signature.

WHAT TO SEAL

PQS’s must seal all final documents that are within the practice of professional quantity surveying provided as part of a service to the public. However, affixing a seal to a document does not turn it into something that is “within the practice of professional quantity surveying”. The content of the document determines whether it is a quantity surveying document.

This includes all documents containing and expressing quantity surveying opinions or giving instructions based on quantity surveying judgment. Seals must be affixed for example to Feasibility Studies, Estimates, Cost Plans, Cost Reports, Contract Documents, Valuation Certificates, Final Accounts and any other documents containing cost or contractual advice. PQS's should also apply their seals to forms for government or regulatory authority use that specifically require a PQS's seal. Attachments to reports need not be sealed individually, provided the document itself is signed, sealed and dated. Draft or incomplete documents and documents of a QS nature (personal or business correspondence, contracts, applications, etc.) should not be sealed.

WHO SEALS

The PQS who is taking professional responsibility for the work must seal documents. This is generally the quantity surveyor, who provided the largest contribution to preparing the documents, or, where junior staff did the work, by the quantity surveyor who closely supervised the work.

In general, draft or preliminary documents should not be sealed and should be clearly marked as "Draft", "Preliminary", "For Review Only", "For Discussion", or some other indication that the documents are not ready for anyone to rely on the contents. PQS's should closely control such documents and not release them to anyone who might depend on the validity of the contents. If it is necessary to sign and seal preliminary documents (such as to fulfill the requirements of a regulatory agency), this guideline's recommendations for sealing final documents should be followed. Signed and sealed preliminary documents should be clearly marked as incomplete and restricted to the particular use for which the document was released.

PROCEDURES

The PQS's signature, on which the document was sealed, within or beside the stamp, must always be included. Initials alone are not acceptable. The PQS's handwritten signature is an authenticating mark that complements the seal. The handwritten signature affixed to the document can be an electronic facsimile of a handwritten original.

SEALING DOCUMENTS

QS documents are usually prepared by at least one quantity surveyor and then reviewed for adherence to corporate standards by a supervisory quantity surveyor. For documents by several quantity surveyors, the document should be sealed by the PQS responsible for coordinating the work of the team or by the supervisory PQS if he or she was sufficiently involved in overseeing the work.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Professional responsibility refers to the PQS's obligations to conduct themselves in accordance with the technical, legal and ethical standards of the profession. Whenever individuals act in their capacity as PQS's, they must be prepared to answer for their conduct in discharging their obligations to the Institute, the profession and to the public. The seal is an indication of who is taking professional responsibility for the content of a document. By affixing the seal, a PQS agrees to take the responsibility and to be accountable for any deficiency of skill, knowledge or judgment found in his or her work. Should a complaint be made regarding a document that is alleged to demonstrate negligence or incompetence, the PQS who seals the document is answerable to the SISV Disciplinary Committee.