

Registration of Authorized Persons and Registered Structural Engineers as Registered Geotechnical Engineers

Introduction

Many developments in Hong Kong stand on steep hillsides and man-made slopes. In such cases, geotechnical works are usually involved which call for geotechnical expertise. In the past, the Buildings Ordinance (BO) only required the appointment of an authorized person (AP) as the coordinator of building works and a registered structural engineer (RSE) for the structural elements of the building works. As such, the AP had to be held statutorily responsible for geotechnical works although geotechnical engineers were usually engaged as sub-consultant to the AP for the design and supervision of the geotechnical works.

Registered Geotechnical Engineers

2. The Buildings (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 establishes a register of geotechnical engineers and introduces the requirement for the appointment of a registered geotechnical engineer (RGE) for the geotechnical elements of building works. The RGE so appointed will undertake the investigation, design and supervision of geotechnical works and will be statutorily responsible for such works.

AP/RSE applying for registration as RGE

3. The basic qualification for registration as RGE is a registered professional engineer in the geotechnical engineering discipline. The Building Authority (BA), however, also recognizes the experience and competence of those AP and RSE who have actually been engaged in geotechnical works in the past. Upon commencement of the registration system for RGE on 31 December 2004, an AP in the list of engineers or RSE may apply, within 12 months, i.e. on or before 30 December 2005, for registration as RGE under section 53I of the BO (added by clause 43 of the Buildings (Amendment) Ordinance 2004). He is qualified for registration if he satisfies the following conditions:

- (a) During the period of 7 years immediately preceding the date of his application, he has been engaged in or has taken part in site formation works carried out and completed in accordance with the BO.
- (b) He was the AP or RSE appointed in respect of the building works or street works in relation to which the site formation works were carried out.
- (c) He satisfies the BA that he has the appropriate geotechnical experience and competence in relation to the site formation works.

4. In relation to condition (c) stipulated in paragraph 3 above, the BA will be satisfied with the geotechnical experience and competence of the applicant if, within the period of 7 years immediately preceding the date of his application:

(a) He has been engaged in the following projects of site formation works from preparation of plans for submission to the BA for approval, obtaining approval of such plans from the BA and supervision of the carrying out of the works through to satisfactory completion of the works:

- 5 projects requiring Category I qualified supervision, or
- 2 projects requiring Category II qualified supervision, or
- 3 projects requiring Category I qualified supervision and 1 project requiring Category II qualified supervision.

For the above purpose:

- preparation of plans includes the supervision of his employees to prepare the plans but excludes the preparation of plans by a geotechnical engineering sub-consultant;
- Category I and Category II qualified supervision are as defined in PNAP 83;
- the projects must not be one which has been claimed to support an application under section 53I(2)(a) by other applicants;

(b) For an AP in the list of engineers, he has certified completion of the site formation works under the BO. For an RSE, being not in a position to certify completion under the BO, he has reported to the certifying AP of the site formation works that he is satisfied that the works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans and in compliance with the BO; and

(c) The site formation works were completed with no record of contravention of the BO.

5. The BA may require the applicant to furnish such information or documents as may be required to justify his application. Upon registration as RGE, the registration will be valid for 5 years which is renewable as long as his name remains in the register of AP/RSE.

6. This practice note should be read in conjunction with PNAP 43, particularly paragraphs 7 and 11 to 14 thereof.



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