

## Frequently Asked Firm Licensure Questions

### 1. Is firm registration required?

A. Yes. Section 40-3-270 provides that only an architect practicing in his or her own name who does not employ another architect is exempt from this requirement. For example, John Doe, Architect, would not be required to register as a firm. However, John Doe, Architects, or John Doe Associates, or Doe Associates or similar firm names would be required to register as an architectural firm.

### 2. What forms are required for firm licensure?

A. [Firm licensure Certificate of Authorization \(COA\)](#)

### 3. Are there any restrictions regarding the firm name?

A. Section 40-3-270. (D) & (E) Firm Registration states:

(D) If a South Carolina firm seeks to register under a name referring to persons rather than a trade name, the persons referred to in the firm's name must be licensed as individual architects, engineers, land surveyors, or landscape architects in this State.

(E) If an out-of-state firm seeks to register under a name referring to persons rather than a trade name, the persons referred to in the firm's name must be licensed as individual architects, engineers, land surveyors, or landscape architects in this State or in another jurisdiction.

### 4. On individual and corporate seals, the city and state are to be put in the inner circle. Is that the city where I live or where I work?

A. For the individual seal, you need to indicate the city and state in which you reside; for the corporate seal, indicate city and state where the company is located. (Regulation 11-11 (C) (D))

### 5. What are the procedures for making a company name change?

A. If it is only a name change and the company's Federal ID Number has not changed, you can complete the [Amended Certificate of Authorization form](#) and email back to the board for processing. The name will be revised in the database and a new certificate will be mailed. If the Federal ID number has changed, you would need to file a new application and fee.

### 6. What are the requirements for sealing design documents in South Carolina?

Seals for Individual Architects and Firms

Sealing requirements are set forth in Section 40-3-280 and Regulation 11-11

Section 40-3-280. Seals

(A) Every architect and firm practicing in this State shall have a seal, the impression of which shall contain the name, the place of business, and the words "Registered Architect, State of South Carolina" with which they shall stamp all drawings, prints, and specifications for use in their profession.

(B) The seal of the individual architect in responsible charge, as well as the seal of the firm, must appear on each print of the drawings and the index sheet, or sheets, of each set of specifications offered to secure a building permit and one record set for use on the construction site. The required seal identification may be a rubber stamp impression placed on original drawings and specification copy. The architect in responsible charge shall affix his signature over his seal. An electronic seal and signature may be used in lieu of an original seal and signature by applicable policy or regulation.

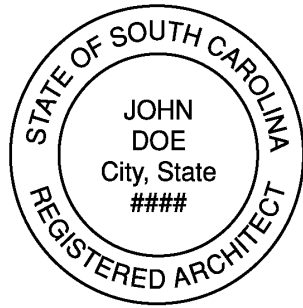
#### Regulation 11-11 Seals

A. The personal seal and signature of the architect in responsible charge and the architectural firm's seal shall appear on all architectural documents to be filed for public record and shall be construed to obligate the architect and the firm. A firm seal alone is insufficient; documents shall be signed personally and sealed by the responsible architect. Record documents used for obtaining building permits (not tracings, etc.) shall be so signed. The signing and sealing of the index sheet(s) or the title page of specifications shall be considered adequate.

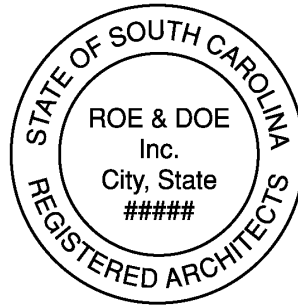
B. An architect shall not affix, or permit to be affixed, the architect's seal or name to any plans, specifications, drawings, or other related documents which were not prepared by the architect or under the architect's direct responsible charge. Architects shall not use their seal or perform any other service as an architect unless holding at the time a current Certificate of Registration.

C. Description of Registrant's Seal. The seal shall be circular in shape and 1 3/4 inches in diameter. Concentric with the outside of the seal there shall be a circle 1 3/16 inches in diameter; in the annular space between the circle and the outside of the seal shall be the words "State of South Carolina" at the top and "Registered Architect" at the bottom. The name of only one (1) architect, business location, and registration number shall be placed within the inner circle.

D. Description of Firm Seals. The seal shall be circular in shape and 1 3/4 inches in diameter. Concentric with the outside of the seal there shall be a circle 1 3/16 inches in diameter; in the annular space between the circle and the outside of the seal shall be the words "State of South Carolina" at the top and "Registered Architects" at the bottom. The name, business location, and license number of the firm shall be placed within the inner circle.



(INDIVIDUAL)



(FIRM)

Section 40-3-320. Building officials required to have sealed plans. The building official or other authority charged with the responsibility of issuing building or other similar permits of any county, municipality, or other subdivision, before issuing the permit, must be in possession of a sealed set of plans and specifications for which the seal of a registered architect is required and to verify that the architect who sealed the architectural plans and specifications is an architect registered in South Carolina.

#### COMMENTARY

When sealing plans for projects in South Carolina, the individual architect must seal only those plans he/she prepared or which were prepared under his/her direct supervision. Additionally, the firm's seal must appear on all architectural documents. Rubber stamps, embossing seals or electronically produced seals are permissible.

A minimum two sets of project plans must be sealed and signed. Additional sets may be sealed at the architect's discretion or for other purposes, but only two sets are required by South Carolina law to be sealed:

- one set offered to secure a building permit;
- one set for use at the construction site.