



Guideline for Advertising of Professional Services

V2.0
April 2005

The Association of Professional Engineers,
Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta

FOREWORD

This guideline is a revision of the APEGGA document entitled *Advertising of Professional Services, A Guideline*, September 1996. The document was revised to conform to the current style for guidelines and practice standards and to clarify certain items.

An APEGGA guideline presents procedures and practices that are recommended by APEGGA. In general, an APEGGA Member should conform to the recommendations in order to be practising in accordance with what is deemed to be acceptable practice. Variations may be made to accommodate special circumstances if they do not detract from the intent of the guideline.

Guidelines use the word *should* to indicate that among several possibilities, one is recommended as particularly suitable without necessarily mentioning or excluding others; or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required; or that (in the negative form) a certain course of action is disapproved of but not prohibited (*should* equals *is recommended that*). The word *shall* is used to indicate requirements that must be followed (*shall* equals *is required to*). The word *may* is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the guideline (*may* equals *is permitted*).

PARTICIPANTS

APEGGA's Practice Standards Committee (PSC) publishes practice standards and guidelines to promote high standards of professional practice. At the time this revision was completed, the committee had the following membership:

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Jobsite/Project Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jobsite/project signs should be limited to information permitted on professional business cards. Reference to the specialty service being provided on the project is acceptable. ▪ Jobsite signs shall be of sizes and in locations that do not contravene any restrictions with respect to municipal bylaws or development guidelines (i.e., on public road rights of way, within utility easements/rights of way, etc.). ▪ With the consent of the owner, affixing a Member's name permanently to the work of which the Member is a professional of record is acceptable.
Other Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signs which are not vehicle signs or which are not directly associated with a jobsite/project are not acceptable (e.g., signs on billboards, transit buses or benches, etc.).
Radio and Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participating in radio or television networks/programs dealing with subjects of public interest related to the practice of the professions is acceptable. Any advertising of professional services should be secondary to the public interest aspects of such participation. ▪ Stand-alone advertising of professional services is acceptable within the limits of the general principles.
Internet and E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertising professional services on the World Wide Web in accordance with the guidelines for corporate brochures is acceptable. ▪ Using mass e-mails for distribution of corporate information for the purpose of soliciting clients is not acceptable.

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- Brochures**
- Distributing brochures and other technical documents to inform prospective clients about a Member's experience and capability is acceptable. Such documents may include photographs, illustrations and technical information describing the actual services provided by the Member to enable the prospective client to judge the Member's experience and capability.
 - Displaying a Member's designs or reports that have been prepared for specific projects, subject to client approval, in newspapers and magazines is acceptable.
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- Publications**
- Advertising professional services in newspapers, magazines, etc. is acceptable.
 - The text and photographs in advertisements should ensure that the role played by the Member is accurately described.
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- Announcements**
- Announcements of personnel and corporate changes in the printed and electronic media are acceptable. Such announcements may include information permitted for professional cards, a photograph, corporate logo, biographical sketch and brief profile of the company.
 - Advertising for recruitment of personnel is acceptable.
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- Testimonials and Promotional Items**
- Testimonials made by a Member on the product or service of his or her employer or client are acceptable.
 - The prudent use or distribution of promotional items such as pens, rulers, calendars, etc. inscribed with the Member's name and/or logo is acceptable as a method of advertising. Similarly, displaying, with discretion, a Member's corporate logo on athletic caps, sweaters, equipment, etc. when sponsoring activities is acceptable.
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- Sponsorships**
- The sponsorship of worthwhile public interest activities (scholarships, youth groups, seminars, etc.) is acceptable. The advertising of professional services should be secondary to the public interest of these sponsorships.
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- Vehicle Signs**
- Identification signs on vehicles owned or leased by a Member exclusively for professional activities should be limited to the information permitted on professional business cards.
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1 OVERVIEW

Advertising of professional services has significant potential to influence the public perception of the professions as well as an individual client's perception and expectations of members of the Association (Members). The *Code of Ethics* requires Members to "uphold and enhance the honour, dignity, and reputation of their professions and thus the ability of the professions to serve the public interest." The Code also requires that Members only undertake work that they are competent to perform and that they act with integrity and honesty. These tenets also apply to advertising of professional services.

1.1 SCOPE

This guideline sets out general principles concerning the advertising of professional services by members of the Association. The principles pertain to all forms of advertising. In addition, the guideline also provides examples of typical specific items. The list of those items is not intended to be exclusive, however, in terms of the application of this guideline.

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to assist Members in understanding the Association's expectations and limitations concerning advertising of professional services. It also serves as a guide against which Member conduct can be measured.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this guideline, the following terms and definitions apply.

Association

The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA).

Members

Individual persons and permit holders registered under the *Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Act*.

Professional Services

Professional services are those services that pertain to the practice of engineering, geology or geophysics.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Advertising shall be clear, factual, and without exaggeration.
- Advertising shall be in good taste and not diminish the dignity, professional image or stature of the professions.
- Advertising shall not be critical of, or claim superiority over, others.
- Advertising shall comply with all applicable laws.
- A professional service shall not be advertised unless that service is provided under the direct personal supervision of a Member who is available to the extent necessary to provide competent direction of the work.
- Advertising shall not make any reference to fees or charges for services.

- Professional stamps/seals or permit stamps shall not be displayed for advertising or commercial purposes.

3 SPECIFIC ITEMS

To assist Members in dealing with specific matters, several common forms of advertising professional services are identified in this section. This table provides typical examples to which deviations may be made after considering the intent of the general principles.

FORM	GUIDELINES
Professional Business Cards	Information on professional cards should be limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name, academic degrees and professional designation ▪ Business affiliations ▪ Logo, name, address and telephone/fax numbers and e-mail address ▪ Fields of specialization ▪ Date of the founding of the firm and/or years of service.
Stationery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acceptable information on stationery includes information permitted on professional cards as well as company achievement awards and listings of APEGGA Members and other key personnel. ▪ Membership in APEGGA, both individual and corporate, on letterheads is acceptable. If the names of individuals are listed, their respective designations should be shown.
Office Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office signs should be informative, appropriate, and limited to information permitted on professional cards. Signs should also conform aesthetically to size of existing signage on the premises.
Directories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listing of Members' names, in bold or regular type, in the white pages of telephone/fax directories is acceptable. ▪ Advertising in yellow pages of telephone/fax directories, professional or commercial directories should be limited to that information pertaining to business cards.