Use of the Architect's Seal

Questions & Answers

What does an architect's seal look like?

Two inches in diameter, containing the registrant's name and registration number in the inner circle substantially resembling the sample here:

Can an architect prepare and seal engineering plans?

Generally, no; however, "incidental" engineering is allowed. Architects generally should not seal electrical, mechanical, plumbing, civil, or structural engineering drawings, unless the engineering is of a minor nature or an addition to the primary engineering system.

Can an architect use an electronic seal on architectural plans?

Yes.

Can a registrant seal another registrant's standard design (prototypical) plans?

Yes, under conditions outlined in Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5-.08.

Is the project manual required to be sealed?

Yes.

If an architect prepares plans for a single-family home or another exempt project, should the documents be sealed?

Yes, if he/she uses the title "architect" in conjunction with the project.

Must a registrant seal change orders?

Yes, if the documents can only be lawfully prepared by a registered architect.

Are addenda and field changes required to be sealed?

Yes, if changes are prepared by a registrant.

Are "record drawings" required to be sealed?

Yes. It is advisable to identify them as "record drawings" with a statement or disclaimer.

Is the registered architect required to place his/her signature on the seal or any part of the drawings?

Not under the registration law; individual jurisdictions may require it.

Can a registrant modify and seal a deceased registrant's sealed drawings without completely re-drawing them?

Yes, in compliance with the conditions of Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5-.05.

Can a registrant modify and seal drawings previously sealed by another registrant who was terminated by the owner without completely re-drawing them?

Yes, in compliance with the conditions of Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5.-05.

Can a registrant seal plans begun or contracted for by a person who is not registered?

No. The licensee must make the plans his/her own work product.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Who has jurisdiction over a building project if there is no local building official?

The Alabama Fire Marshal assumes jurisdiction in this case. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (334) 241-4166 or FireMarshal@insurance.alabama.gov.

Can a person registered in another state practice architecture in Alabama prior to receiving his/her Alabama registration?

No.

Can a person interview for a project, participate in a design competition, or submit a response to an RFP for architectural services prior to receiving his/her Alabama registration?

No.

How do I verify an architect's registration status in Alabama?

Visit the Board's web site at http://www.boa.alabama.gov. In the "Important Links" box, click on License Search and enter the person's last name or registration number. If access to the Internet is not available, call the Board office at (334) 242-4179.

What is a Certificate of Authorization (COA)?

A Certificate issued to a firm entity (corporation, professional corporation, professional association, partnership, or limited liability company) which acknowledges it is practicing architecture as an entity in Alabama as opposed to being a sole practitioner.

Are all firms required to have a COA?

Yes, unless the architect is practicing as a sole proprietor.

Who do I contact if there is no architect on a project that requires one?

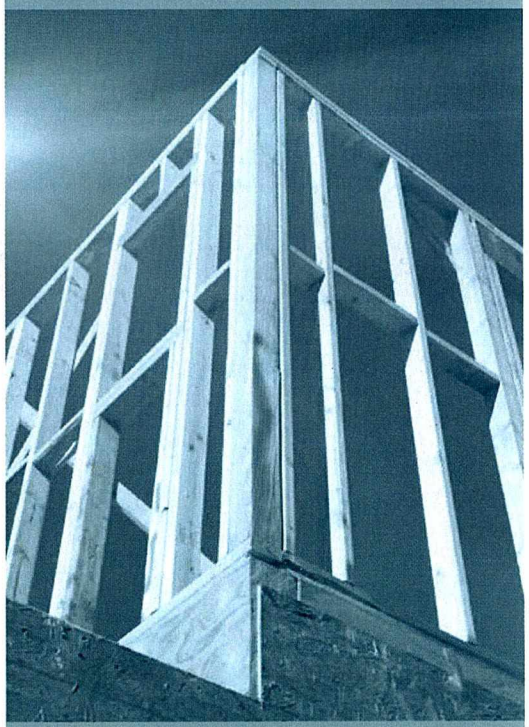
Alabama Board of Architects
100 North Union Street, Suite 390
Montgomery, AL 36130-4450
www.boa.alabama.gov
(334) 242-4179 (office) • (334) 242-4531 (fax)

BOA

Board for Registration of Architects
100 North Union Street, Suite 390
Montgomery, AL 36130-4450

"Safe Buildings Begin with an Architect."

Do I Need an Architect?



BOA

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

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What Types of Building Projects Do NOT Require An Architect?

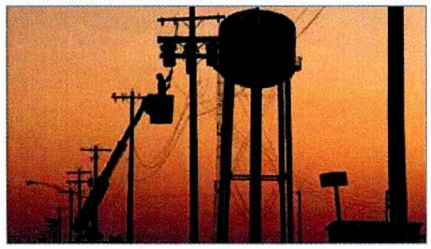
RESIDENTIAL PLANS
if the building is a detached, single-family home.

FARM BUILDINGS
if not for public use.

SMALL BUILDINGS
if under 2,500 square feet or not intended for assembly or education occupancy, as defined by the building code adopted in the local jurisdiction.

SMALL RESTAURANTS
under 2,500 square feet with occupancy load less than 50.

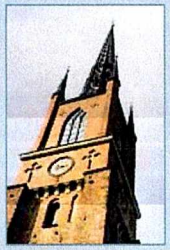
UTILITY WORKS, STRUCTURES OR BUILDINGS
if the person who designs them is employed by an electric, gas, or telephone public utility.



What Types of Building Projects DO Require An Architect's Seal?

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCES
duplexes, triplexes, quadriplexes, apartments, townhomes (sharing common walls).

ASSEMBLY OR EDUCATION OCCUPANCY
buildings intended for assembly or education (as classified by the building code adopted in the jurisdiction where the building will be located).



BUILDINGS LARGER THAN 2,500 SQUARE FEET

INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
involving a change in occupancy type to a more stringent occupancy type; e.g., business to education or assembly.

RED FLAGS

(CONDITIONS LIKELY TO BE IN VIOLATION OF A LAW OR REGULATION)

- Architectural "A" drawing sheets sealed by an engineer.
- Engineering "E" drawing sheets sealed by an architect.
- Plans not sealed by the registrant.
- Unsealed church plans.
- Contact for the project is not the registrant, or it is difficult to contact the registrant.
- Plans, details, or other documents do not apply to the specific project.
- Plans have numerous serious code violations.
- Plans are confusing, unclear, or contain non-dated revisions.