

Authentication of Professional Documents – The updating of a Standard of Practice

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Authentication of professional documents is the action that defines professional practice and separates the work of Professional Geoscientists from the work of non-licensed earth scientists.

A geoscience professional document can be differentiated from other technical documents if it passes an “exclusive AND” test:

1. It describes work of a technical nature, AND
2. The document is complete and fit for the purpose for which it was intended AND,
3. Someone relies of the truth and authenticity of the document for decision making or other purpose

The act of authentication by which a Professional Geoscientist takes responsibility for the work performed, and believes the conditions for three-fold test have been fulfilled, is to apply a physical rubber stamp or its digital equivalent to the document; signing and dating the stamp impression or its digital equivalent.

To authenticate a work product, its creator must have derived authority from the Alberta Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act as witnessed by a licence to practice. All other Canadian jurisdictions that license geoscientists have an analogous definition and grant of authority. Similarly, using the privileged titles for practitioners of professional geology, geophysics and environmental geoscience require licensure.

Not all documents created by a Professional Geoscientist need to be authenticated, nor does it imply that only P.Geo.'s can conduct research into Geology, Geophysics or Environmental Geoscience. Professional Geoscientists rely heavily on good science, wherever and by whoever it is done. Applied scientists must remain at the cutting edge of their science, which is essential for advancement of society's interests. Good science, professionally validated, must be the true statement of the state of the earth in the area and zone of interest as it is currently understood. These discoveries are the foundation for advancement of scientific principles.

The principles of science represent the cornerstone of geoscience professional work products. They are invoked by the practitioner and are the test for the completeness and fitness for the purpose they were created for. Demonstration of those specific scientific principles create the confidence that decision makers must have in the technical information and advice they are offered by Professional Geoscientists in order to ensure sound business, public policy and legal decisions.