

Republic Act No. 544*
(As Amended by R.A. 1582)
An Act to Regulate the Practice of Civil Engineering
in the Philippines

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Article I

TITLE OF THE ACT AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 1. *Title of Act.*” This Act shall be known as the “Civil Engineering Law.”

Section 2. *Definition of Terms.*”

(a) The practice of civil engineering within the meaning and intent of this Act shall embrace services in the form of consultation, design, preparation of plans, specifications, estimates, erection, installation and supervision of the construction of streets, bridges, highways, railroads, airports and hangars, port works, canals, river and shore improvements, lighthouses, and dry docks; buildings, fixed structures for irrigation, flood protection, drainage, water supply and sewerage works; demolition of permanent structures; and tunnels. The enumeration of any work in this section shall not be construed as excluding any other work requiring civil engineering knowledge and application.

(b) The term “civil engineer” as used in this act shall mean a person duly registered with the Board for Civil Engineers in the manner as hereinafter provided.

Article II

BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR CIVIL ENGINEERS

Section 3. *Composition of Board.*” Within thirty days after the approval of this Act there shall be created a Board of Examiners for Civil Engineers, hereinafter referred to as the Board, to be composed of a chairman and two members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines, upon recommendation of the Commissioner of PRC. The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years after appointment or until their successors shall have been appointed and shall have qualified. The first members of the Board appointed under this Act shall hold office for the following terms: One member for one year; one member for two years; and one member for three years. Each member of the Board shall qualify by taking the proper oath of office before entering upon the performance of his duties. Any member of the Board may be removed by the President of the Philippines, upon recommendation by the Professional Regulation Commission for neglect of duty, incompetency, malpractice, unprofessional, unethical, immoral, or dishonorable conduct, after having been given opportunity to defend himself in a proper administrative investigation: Provided, That during the process of investigation, the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the PRC, shall have the power to suspend such member under investigation and shall appoint a temporary member in his place. Vacancies in the Board shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

Section 4. *Powers and Duties of the Board.*” The Board for Civil Engineers is vested with authority, conformable with the provisions of this Act, to administer oaths, issue, suspend and revoke certificates of registration for the practice of civil engineering, issue certificates of recognition to civil engineers already registered under this Act for advanced studies, research, and/or highly specialized training in any branch of civil engineering subject to the approval of the PRC, to investigate such violations of this Act and the regulations, there under as may come to the knowledge of the Board and, for this purpose, issue subpoena and subpoena duces tecum to secure appearance of witnesses in connection with the charges presented to the Board, to inspect at least once a year educational institutions offering courses in civil engineering, civil engineering works, projects or corporations, established in the Philippines and, for safeguarding of life, health and property, to discharge such other powers and duties as may affect ethical and technological standards of the civil engineering profession in the Philippines. For the purpose of this Act, the Director of Public Works and/or his authorized representative in the provinces and chartered cities shall be ex-officio agents of the Board and as such it shall be their duty to help in the enforcement of the provisions of this Act. The Board may, with the approval of the Professional Regulation Commission issue such rules and regulations as may be deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. The board shall also adopt a code of ethics in the practice of civil engineering and have an official seal to authenticate its official documents.

Section 5. *Qualifications of Board Members.*" Each member of the Board shall, at the time of his appointment:

- a. Be a citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- b. Be at least thirty years of age and of good moral character;
- c. Be a graduate of civil engineering from a recognized and legally constituted school, institute, college or university.
- d. Be a registered civil engineer duly qualified to practice civil engineering in the Philippines;
- e. Have practiced civil engineering, with a certificate as such, for a period of not less than ten years prior to his appointment.
- f. Not be a member of the faculty of any school, institute, college, or university where civil engineering course is taught, nor have a pecuniary interest in such institutions;
- g. No former members of the faculty of any school, institute or university where civil engineering is taught can become a member of the Board unless he had stopped teaching for at least three consecutive years.

Section 6. *Fees and Compensation of Board.*" The Board for Civil Engineers shall charge for each application for examination the sum of P100 (one hundred) payable to the collecting and disbursing officer of the PRC upon filing of said application, and for each certificate of registration, fifty pesos. Each member of the Board shall receive a compensation of fifteen pesos for each applicant examined. A civil engineer in the service of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines appointed as member of the Board shall receive the compensation as herein provided, in addition to his salary in the Government. All authorized expenses of the Board, including the compensation provided for herein, shall be paid by the collecting and disbursing officer of the PRC out of such appropriation as may be made for the purpose. (See RA 6511 & PD 223)

Section 7. *Annual Report.*" The Board shall, at the end of each fiscal year, submit to the PRC a detailed report of its activities and proceedings during the period covered by the fiscal year ended.

Article III

EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION

Section 8. *Examination Requirement.*" All applicants for registration for the practice of civil engineering shall be required to pass a technical examination as hereinafter provided.

Section 9. *Holding of Examination.*" Examination of candidates desiring to practice civil engineering in the Philippines shall be given in the City of Manila of each year, provided that such days do not fall on official holidays, otherwise the examinations shall be held on the days next following.

Section 10. *Subjects of Examination.*" Applicants for certificate of registration as civil engineer shall be examined, in the discretion of the Board, on the following subjects: mathematics, including algebra, plane and spherical trigonometry, analytics, descriptive and solid geometry, differential and integral calculus, and rational and applied mechanics; hydraulics; surveying, including highway and railroad surveying; plane, topographic and hydrographic surveying, and advance surveying; design and construction of highways and railroads, masonry structures, wooden and reinforced concrete buildings, bridges, towers, walls, foundations, piers, ports, wharves, aqueducts, sanitary engineering works, water supply systems, dikes, dams and irrigation and drainage canals.

Section 11. *Executive Officer of the Board.*" The Commissioner of Professional Regulation Commission shall be the executive officer of the Board and shall conduct the examinations given by the said Board. He shall designate any subordinate officer of the Professional Regulation Commission to act as the Secretary and custodian of all records including examination papers and minutes of the deliberation of the Board.

Section 12. *Qualifications for Examination.*" Any person applying for admission to the civil engineering examination as herein provided shall, prior to the date of the examination, establish to the satisfaction of the Board that he has the following qualifications:

- a. Be at least twenty-one years of age;
- b. Be a citizen of the Philippines;
- c. Be of good reputation and moral character; and
- d. Be a graduate of a four-year course in civil engineering from a school, institute, college or university recognized by the Government or the State wherein it is established.

Section 13. *Oath of Civil Engineers.*” All successful candidates in the examination shall be required to take a professional oath before the Board of Civil Engineers or other Government Officials authorized to administer oaths, prior to entering upon the practice of the civil engineering profession.

Section 14. *Seal and Use of Seal.*” All registered civil engineers shall obtain a seal of such design as the Board shall authorize and direct: Provided, however, That the serial number of the certificate issued by the Board shall be included in the design of the seal. Plans and specifications prepared by, or under the direct supervision of a registered civil engineer shall be stamped with said seal during the life of the registrant’s certificate, and it shall be unlawful for any one to stamp or seal any documents with said seal after the certificate of registrant named thereon has expired or has been revoked, unless said certificate shall have been renewed or re-issued.

Section 15. *Exemption from Registration.*”

1. Registration shall not be required of the following persons:

- a. Officers or enlisted men of the United States and Philippine Armed Forces, and civilian employees of the Government of the United States stationed in the Philippines while rendering civil engineering services for the United States and/or Philippines.
- b. Civil engineers or experts called in by the Philippine Government for consultation, or specific design and construction of fixed structures as defined under this Act, provided that their practice shall be limited to such work.

2. Any person residing in the Philippines may make plans on specifications for any of the following:

- a. Any building in chartered cities or in towns with building ordinances, not exceeding the space requirement specified therein, requiring the services of a civil engineer.
- b. Any wooden building enlargement or alteration which is to be used for farm purposes only and costing not more than ten thousand pesos.
- c. Provided, however. That there shall be nothing in this Act that will prevent any person from constructing his own (wooden or light material) residential house, utilizing the services of a person or persons required for the purpose, without the use of a civil engineer, as long as he does not violate local ordinances of the place where the building is to be constructed.

3. Nor shall anything in this Act prevent draftsmen, student clerk-or-work, superintendents, and other employees of those lawfully engaged in the practice of civil engineering under the provisions of this Act, from acting under the instruction, control or supervision of their employer.

4. Nor shall anything in this Act prevent any person who prior to the approval of this Act have been lawfully engaged in the practice of “maestro de obras” to continue as such, provided they shall not undertake the making of plans supervision for the following classes of work:

- a. Building of concrete whether reinforced or not.
- b. Building of more than two stories.
- c. Building with frames of structural steel.
- d. Building of structures intended for public gathering or assemblies such as theaters, cinematographs, stadia, churches, or structures of like nature.

5. Nor shall anything in this Act prevent professional architects and engineers to practice their professions.

Section 16. *Refusal to Issue Certificate.*” The Board for Civil Engineers shall not issue a certificate to any person convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude, or to any person guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct, or to any person guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct, or to any person of unsound mind. In the event of a refusal to issue a certificate to any person, the Board shall give to the applicant a written statement setting forth its reason for such action, which statement shall be incorporated in the records of the Board.

Section 17. *Suspension and Revocation of Certificates.* “ The Board shall have the power, after due notice and hearings to suspend or revoke the certificate of registration for any cause mentioned in the preceding section.

Section 18. *Re-issue and Replacement of Certificates.* “ The Board may, after the expiration of one year from the date of certificate of registration is revoked and for reasons it may deem sufficient, entertain an application for a new certificate of registration from the registrant concerned. Such application shall be accomplished in the same form prescribed for examination, but the Board may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from taking the requisite examination.

Section 19. *Transitory Provisions.*" As soon as this Act takes effect, any person desiring to practice the profession of civil engineering shall be required to obtain a certificate of registration in the manner and under the conditions hereinafter provided. All civil engineers duly licensed under the provisions of Act Numbered Twenty-nine hundred and eighty-five, as amended, at the time this Act takes effect, shall be automatically registered under the provisions hereof. Certificates of registration held by such persons in good standing shall have the same force and effect as though the same have been issued under the provisions of this Act. All graduates in civil engineering from a school, institute, college, or university recognized by the Government who have passed the civil service examination for senior civil engineer and have been practicing or employed in the Government as such during five years are exempted from taking examination.

Article IV

ENFORCEMENT OF ACT AND PENAL PROVISIONS

Section 20. *Enforcement of the Act by officers of the law.*" It shall be the duty of all duly constituted law officers of the national, provincial, city and municipal governments, or any political subdivisions thereof, to enforce the provisions of this Act and to prosecute any person violating the same.

Section 21. *Registration required.*" Unless exempt from registration, no person shall practice or offer to practice civil engineering in the Philippines without having obtained the proper certificate of registration from the Board for Civil Engineers.*

Section 22. *Penal provisions.*" Any person who shall practice or offer to practice civil engineering in the Philippines without being registered in accordance with the provisions of this Act or any person presenting or attempting to use as his own the certificate of registration of a registered civil engineer, or any person who shall give any false or forged evidence of any kind to the Board, or any person who shall impersonate any registrant civil engineer of different name or any person who shall attempt to use a revoked or suspended certificate of registration, or any person who shall use in connection with his name or otherwise assume, use or advertise any title or description tending to convey the impression that he is a civil engineer, without holding a valid certificate of registration, or any person who shall violate any of the provision of this Act, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to a fine of not less than five hundred pesos nor more than two thousand pesos, or to suffer imprisonment for a period of not less than six months not more than one year, or both, in the discretion of the court.

Article V

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 23. *Preparation of plans and supervisions of construction by registered civil engineer.*" It shall be unlawful for any person to order or otherwise cause the construction, reconstruction, or alteration of any building or structure intended for public gathering or assembly such as theaters, cinematographs, stadia, churches or structures of like nature, and any other engineering structures mentioned in section two of this Act unless the designs, plans, and specifications of same have been prepared under the responsible charge of, and signed and sealed by a registered civil engineer, and unless the construction, reconstruction and/or alteration thereof are executed under the responsible charge and direct supervision of a civil engineer. Plans and designs of structures must be approved as provided by law or ordinance of a city or province or municipality where the said structure is to be constructed.

Section 24. The practice of civil engineering is a professional service, admission to which must be determined upon individual, personal qualifications. Hence, no firm, partnership, corporation or association may be registered or licensed as such for the practice of civil engineering: Provided, however, That persons properly registered and licensed as civil engineers may, among themselves or with a person or persons properly registered and licensed as architects, form, and obtain registration of, a firm, partnership or association using the term "Engineers" or "Engineers and Architects," but, nobody shall be a member or partner of such firm, partnership or association unless he is duly licensed civil engineer or architect, and the members who are civil engineers shall only render work and services proper for a civil engineer, as defined in this Act, and the members who are architects shall also only render work and services proper for an architect, as defined in the law regulating the practice of architecture; individual members of such firms, partnership or association shall be responsible for their own respective acts.

Section 25. *Reciprocity requirements.*" No person who is not a citizen of the Philippines at the time he applies to take the examination shall be allowed to take it unless he can prove in the manner provided by the Rules of Court that, by specific provision of law, the country of which he is a citizen, subject, or national either admits citizens of the Philippines to the practice of the same profession without restriction or allows them to

practice it after an examination on terms of strict and absolute equality with citizens, subjects, or nationals of the country concerned, including the unconditional recognition of degrees issued by institutions of learning duly recognized for the purpose by the Government of the Philippines: Provided, That if he is not a citizen of the Philippines, and was admitted to the practice of a profession in the Philippines after December 8, 1941, his active practice in that profession, either in the Philippines or in the state or country where he was practicing his profession, shall not have been interrupted for a period of two years or more prior to July 4, 1946, and that the country or state from which he comes allows the citizens of the Philippines by specific provision of law, to practice the same profession without restriction or on terms of strict and absolute equality with citizens, subjects or nationals of the country or state concerned.

Section 26. *Roster of civil engineers.*" A roster showing the names and places of business of all registered civil engineers shall be prepared by the Commissioner of PRC periodically but at least once a year. Copies of this roster shall be placed on file with the PRC and furnished to all department heads, mayors of all chartered cities, to the Director of Public Works, to such other Bureaus, government entities or agencies and municipal and provincial authorities as may be deemed necessary and to the public upon request.

Section 27. *Repeal.*" All laws, parts of laws, orders, ordinances, or regulations in conflict with the provisions hereof; including parts of Act Numbered Twenty-nine hundred and eighty-five, as amended, as pertains to the practice of civil engineering, are hereby repealed, except the provisions of Act Numbered Thirty-one hundred and fifty nine amending Act Numbered Twenty-nine hundred and eighty-five, pertaining to the practice of "maestro de obras."

Section 28. *Construction of Act.*" If any part or section of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, such declarations shall not invalidate the other provisions hereof.

Section 29. *Effectivity.*" This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, June 17, 1950 (As amended by R.A. No. 1582, approved on June 16, 1956).