



TBPG Newsletter - Autumn 2020

Questions about the use of P.G. Seals

Sealing Documents

Recently TBPG has received some inquiries about what documents should be sealed and how they should be sealed.

- **Should draft documents be sealed?**

No, draft documents should not be sealed according to TAC §851.156(k). However, the rule does state that preliminary documents need to be signed in the following way: "Preliminary documents released from their control shall identify the purpose of the document, the Professional Geoscientist(s) of record and the Professional Geoscientist license number(s), and the release date by placing the following text or similar wording instead of a seal: "This document is released for the purpose of (Examples: interim review, mark-up, drafting) under the authority of (Example: Leslie H. Doe, P.G. 0112) on (date). It is not to be used for (Examples: construction, bidding, permit) purposes."



- **Does firm registration information need to be included on sealed documents?**

Yes, in most cases. RULE §851.156 states that (r) All geoscience documents released, issued, or submitted by a licensee shall clearly indicate the Geoscience Firm name and registration number by which the Professional Geoscientist is employed. If the Professional Geoscientist is employed by a local, State, or Federal Government agency or a firm that is exempt from the requirement of registration under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 1002, Subchapter H, then only the name of the agency or firm shall be required.

To add to that question, if you are an *unincorporated* sole-proprietor, you are not required to have a firm registration. However, if you are a sole-proprietor operating under an LLC, firm registration is required.


- **Do I need to seal _____?**

This [guidance document](#) is an excellent resource. If you cannot find the answer to your question there, feel free to contact compliance@tbpg.texas.gov.

As a reminder, all PGs are required to provide a copy of their PG seal to the Board. If you are new P.G, please submit a [P.G. Seal Submission form](#) within

60 days. If your P.G. seal is lost or stolen, please notify TBPG.

Check your email for P.G renewal notices



Good afternoon:

Your P.G. license will expire on September 30, 2020. The standard annual renewal fee is \$223. For those aged 65 and over, the annual fee is \$112.

To renew your license now, you may renew online with a credit card using the [Online Services](#) link on the TBPG website. Or, to renew by mail with a check or money order, you may submit a [P.G. Renewal Application form](#) and mail it in with the appropriate renewal fee.

Additionally, TBPG recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all of our lives. Our office has adjusted daily operations but we are continuing our work to serve you. **If the COVID-19 crisis has created a hardship for you and your ability to renew at this time, please contact our office to discuss options that may be available.** You can reach us at 512.936.4408 or by email at licensing@tbp.state.tx.us to discuss your individual situation. Also, visit our website at www.tbp.state.tx.us for any information and updates related to licensing.

Please stay safe and know that we are all in this together.

Rene D. Truan
Executive Director, TBPG

PG Renewal notices by e-mail

Please be sure to check your email address for your P.G. renewal notice. TBPG is now sending out P.G. renewal notices by e-mail via Constant Contact.

If you would like to update your email address in our records, please log into the [TBPG online licensing system](#) and look for the option to "update your contact information."

Please note that Firm and GIT notices are still being sent via US mail.

The Chair's Report.

Becky L. Johnson, P.G., TBPG Board Chair

I recently attended the Texas Groundwater Webinar, billed as "Everything Aquifers and Groundwater Management" for the state of Texas, organized by the American Ground Water Trust in cooperation with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). I was very pleased with the two-day program and overwhelmed by the sheer volume of groundwater science being conducted in this state.



As I sat through the presentations, I had many concurrent thoughts:

1. Water in Texas is perhaps the most pressing issue we face (those that know me know that has been my mantra for over a decade).
2. We have such great groundwater scientists doing this work.
3. I've known a lot of these folks for decades...so much generational knowledge.
4. What happens when these folks retire? We are a "mature" bunch.
5. There are so many competing demands for water in Texas.
6. Where is the next generation of hydrogeologists coming from?
7. How can we make sure that the next generation is competent?
8. Licensure is critical to the future of Texas water.

One of the presentations from TWDB was about the need for accurate data to ensure the efficacy of state water planning efforts. The TWDB indicated that out of the 254 counties in Texas, 134 of them (53%) have more than half their drinking water supplied by groundwater. This potentially puts drinking water needs in direct conflict with agricultural needs – a conflict where no one wins. Every county that uses groundwater knows there are limits to availability and recharge so resiliency efforts include conservation, reuse, and building new

reservoirs. But they are also adding brackish water desalination, and aquifer storage and recovery to the arsenal. The 79th Texas legislature created Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) and Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) that allow Groundwater Conservation Districts to issue permits based on Modeled Available Groundwater (MAG). The implications are stunning: any restrictions on the use of groundwater will limit agricultural production; overpumping will cause aquifer decline and water quality issues (increased salinity, metals, minerals and contaminants); and aquifer recharge is likely to decline with a warming climate, making less water available each year.

For agriculture, USDA notes that Texas ranks first in the nation with just over 248,000 farms (127 million acres of agricultural land or 75% of the state's area) and nearly \$25 billion for the economy (in products sold) for 2017. Now imagine that Texas experiences aquifer decline, water quality issues and less available groundwater in the coming decade. Groundwater becomes the limiting or controlling factor, directly and adversely affecting crop prices, and has the potential to disrupt this thriving agricultural economy. To me, at least, it is exceedingly clear that geoscience is crucial to the future of Texas water and its economy.

The Texas licensing numbers support the claim that we are a mature bunch of scientists. We currently have 3392 licensed PGs in Texas and 67% of them are 55 or older! Our new licensee numbers are woefully insufficient to replenish the number of PGs that are needed to secure Texas groundwater for future generations. While we all know that 2020 has been an unusual year and COVID has prevented administration of the March ASBOG exam, we have licensed only 26 new PGs. In 2019 – a “normal” year - we licensed 93. These rates mean we won’t be able to replace the generational knowledge we are likely to lose in the next decade!

With the future of Texas water in the hands of geoscience, we need to ensure that licensing continues in Texas, we need colleges and universities to talk about licensure with their students (you might be surprised how many still don’t), and we need those students to pursue careers in hydrogeology! I urge each of you to reach out to your local college or university and stress the importance of licensure. TBPG has resources we can provide for outreach efforts, so contact us or me directly – I’m happy to speak to any group! bjohnson@tbpg.texas.gov

Becky L. Johnson, P.G., Chair
Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists



TBPG Licensing Numbers

Current Licensing Numbers

September 1, 2020

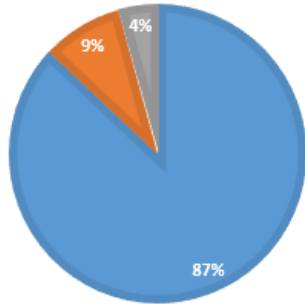
Professional Geoscientists - 3394

Registered Firms - 342

Geoscientists-in-Training - 166

LICENSING NUMBERS

PGs 3394 Firms 342 GITs 166



New Professional Geoscientists!

There are 81 new Professional Geoscientists that have been licensed in Texas for fiscal year 2020, which began September 1, 2019 and ended August 31, 2020.

Here are the list of new PGs:

[New PGs in FY 2020](#)



Coming soon... PG in the spotlight!

Who is the youngest P.G. licensed in Texas? Who is the oldest? Do you know?
What activities are Texas Geoscientists engaged in?
What do they enjoy most about being in the geoscience industry?

In upcoming newsletters, TBPG will shine a spotlight on individual Professional Geoscientists that make up our valued licensed geoscience community. Do you know someone you would like to nominate to be in the Spotlight? Let us know at licensing@tbpg.texas.gov.

TBPG Board Meeting Highlights

August 14, 2020 Board Meeting

Requests for Waiver of a licensing requirement.

- Three applicants for P.G. licensure requested a waiver of the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam. The three candidates each met the Board policy requirements for this waiver. The Board approved each of the three requests for waiver in a unanimous vote of 8-0.
- One applicant for PG licensure requested a waiver of the ASBOG **Practice** of Geology examination. The candidate met the Board policy requirements for the waiver. The Board approved the request for waiver unanimously, in a vote of 8-0.
- Four applicants for PG licensure requested a waiver of the ASBOG Fundamentals and Practice of Geology examinations. The candidates each met Board policy requirements for both waivers. The Board approved both requests for waiver in a unanimous vote of 8-0.

COVID-19 pandemic; TBPG responses and actions.

In recent months due to the pandemic, the Executive Director has taken certain actions in cooperation with TBPG's Board Chair: 1) enacted a temporary CE policy for PG licensees whose licenses expire in the months of March through August 2020; and 2) on a case by case basis has extended certain license expiration dates to defer licensing renewal payments on a case by case basis, as authorized by 22 TAC 851.85. The Board reviewed these actions and unanimously approved to continue these actions taken by the Executive Director through January 1, 2020.

Overview of upcoming TBPG four year rule review of 22 TAC 850 and 851.

TBPG will be starting its four year rule review in coming months to review its entire set of rules to ensure the reason for them still exists.



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