ASTTBC TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

Frequently Asked Questions
An update on progress towards reserved practice for technology professionals
May 8, 2024

On May 8, 2024, the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG) released a joint statement from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (the Ministry), Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), and the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC). The joint statement provides an update on the progress towards reserved practice for technology professionals. This FAQ was created to provide additional information for those impacted.

1) Who should be aware of reserved practice for technology professionals?
The joint statement impacts technologists and technicians both registered and unregistered with ASTTBC, as well as EGBC registrants, and the general public.

2) Why was there a need for this joint statement?
Reserved practice for technology professionals has been in discussions for some time, and the OSPG, EGBC, and ASTTBC felt there was a critical need to provide a united update.

The goal of reserved practice for technology professionals is to address a regulatory gap that currently exists where the public can perform work that they have no education or competencies to perform. This area of engineering has levels of risk that specifically require the knowledge and experience of an ASTTBC registrant to achieve the protective purpose of a reserved practice for these professionals.

3) When will a reserved practice for technology professionals be implemented?
This work is underway right now, and ASTTBC encourages individuals not registered to do so prior to the regulation coming into effect. We anticipate several thousand technology professionals will need to become registered with ASTTBC.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills hopes to present the proposal for consideration in the near future, contingent upon its readiness and the availability of government decision-makers.

4) What will change for ASTTBC registrants?
Currently, there is a regulatory gap where work is reserved for engineers and the skilled trades but the work for technologists and technicians can legally be performed by the public. With reserved practice, ASTTBC technologists and technicians will have a defined scope of practice that will be reserved for those professionals and will require that people are registered with ASTTBC if they want to perform this work.

Maintaining registration will be important, ASTTBC will be working with employers so that they can understand the new regulation and the legal obligations of registrants and employers.

5) What will change for engineering professionals and licensees?
There will be no change to the reserved practice of professional engineers and licensees. Professional engineers and licensees will continue to supervise those people who are performing work in the reserved practice of engineering. Professional engineers will be able to practice and supervise others in the future reserved practice of ASTTBC registrants.

6) Why was ASTTBC brought under the Professional Governance Act (PGA)?

ASTTBC was brought under the *PGA* because the Ministry recognizes the intricate nature of work performed by ASTTBC registrants. These professionals engage in technically challenging work that requires a combination of competencies that are both learned and gained through education and experience and should not be performed by the general public.

Section 54 of the *Professional Governance Act* states:
Prohibitions regarding reserved practice

54 (1) If a regulation under section 51 (1) (b) or 89 (2) (d) prescribes a service as a reserved practice that may only be provided by a registrant of a particular regulatory body,

(a) a person other than a registrant of the regulatory body must not provide the service, and

(b) a person must not recover a fee or remuneration in respect of the provision of the service unless, at the time the service was provided, the person was a registrant of the regulatory body.

(2) If a regulation under section 51 (1) (b) or 89 (2) (e) prescribes a service as a reserved practice that may only be provided by or under the supervision of a registrant of a particular regulatory body,

(a) a person other than a registrant of the regulatory body must not provide the service unless the person does so under the supervision of such a registrant, and

(b) a person other than a registrant of the regulatory body must not recover a fee or remuneration in respect of the provision of the service unless, at the time the service was provided, the person providing the service was supervised by such a registrant.

7) What is the difference between regulated practice and reserved practice? What is reserved practice for technology professionals?

Regulated practice encompasses work that isn't exclusive to registrants of a single regulatory body. It may overlap among different regulatory bodies or be conducted by individuals who aren't registered with any regulatory body.

Reserved practice ensures that only registrants of a specific regulatory body have the authority to practice their profession. Under the *PGA*, regulatory bodies listed on schedule 3, including ASTTBC, can be granted this privilege through government regulation. Establishing reserved practice for ASTTBC registrants serves the public interest by upholding standardized accountability measures outlined in the Act for engineers, technologists, and technicians.

8) Will any consultation take place?

Yes, ASTTBC values the input of its registrants and stakeholders and will perform consultations over the next several months and into next year. To ensure that development of a reserved practice is informed by feedback from registrants and others who may be impacted by this change, the Ministry, ASTTBC and EGBC will be seeking input on a proposal for reserved practice for ASTTBC registrants from key partners.

If Cabinet approves the regulation for reserved practice, the specifics of the reserved practice – which would take the form of a regulation under the *PGA* – would be published to BC Laws and be shared more broadly.

Previous practice by the Ministry shows that it can be beneficial to delay the in-force date of the reserved practice to approximately one year after the publication date. This approach gives plenty of time for registrants and industry to prepare for implementation and allow feedback to be gathered from a wider audience.

9) Will a merge between EGBC and ASTTBC take place?

No. The Ministry is planning to implement reserved practice for applied science technology, while upholding the presence of two distinct regulators - EGBC and ASTTBC. Both organizations are dedicated to enhancing the regulatory framework, ensuring clear delineation between professional domains for the benefit of the public and industry stakeholders.

10) How much does it cost to become registered with ASTTBC?

Information on ASTTBC's application process and fees can be found on the ASTTBC website.

Please submit any questions or feedback by email to reservedpractice@asttbc.org.