MINNESOTA BOARD OF
ARCHITECTURE ▪ ENGINEERING ▪ LAND SURVEYING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE ▪ GEOSCIENCE ▪ INTERIOR DESIGN

November 20, 2026

Dear Consumers, Building Officials, and Licensees,

In recent months, the Board has seen a rise in instances where consumers are purchasing what they believe to be professional work through freelance websites, which turns out to be fraudulent. There is a rising trend across the nation of fraudulent seal and certification use.

These fraudulent schemes are conducted by individuals under false names with limited contact information. Typically, once the fraudsters become aware that their scheme has been noticed, they close their accounts only to operate under new accounts with different information.

Because Minnesota uses a unique certification compared to most states, a quick check is to verify that the "seal" matches the following:
I hereby certify that this [survey, plan, specification, document, or report] was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed [PROFESSIONAL] under the laws of the state of Minnesota.
Signature: _____ Typed or Printed Name: _____
Date_____ Lic. No._____

Licensees in Minnesota can use a more common, circular seal in addition to this language, but without the above language included on the document, it is not a signed and sealed document by a licensed professional in the State of Minnesota. See Minnesota Rule 1800.4200.

Consumers, please consider taking the following actions if you are considering purchasing work in one of the professions under the Board's jurisdiction or from a licensed professional in the State of Minnesota (and remember, if the price or timeframe seems too good to be true, it probably is):

1. Verify that they are duly licensed by looking them up by name or license number on the Board's website;
2. Prior to purchasing work, reach out to the Board for their publicly available contact information if you are unable to locate their business contact information online;

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PH 651-296-2388 ▪ TTY 800-627-3529 ▪ EMAIL: aelslagid@state.mn.us ▪ WEB: mn.gov/aelslagid
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

3. Reach out to the licensee directly (outside of the freelance website);
4. If you believe their information has been used fraudulently, report this information to the Board at aelslagid@state.mn.us;
5. Report the incident to the freelance website and the Federal Trade Commission - ReportFraud.ftc.gov; and
6. Consider contacting the Minnesota Attorney General's Consumer Assistance Division - File a Complaint – as an additional reporting option.

Building Officials, please consider taking the following actions to help combat licensure fraud in the State of Minnesota:

1. Validate the license number listed on documents you receive by using the License Lookup on the Board's website;
2. Verify that the proper certification language has been used on the required documents;
3. If the license is expired or if you believe their information has been used fraudulently, report this information to the Board at aelslagid@state.mn.us.

Licensees, if you suspect that your license has been used fraudulently:

1. Contact the Board with any information you have regarding the situation at aelslagid@state.mn.us – this information will be noted in your license record;
2. Report this instance of identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission;
3. Consider using a license verification website to authenticate your credentials.

All parties are also able to file a complaint with the Board against an individual that they believe used a license fraudulently. While the Board may be unable to take action in every reported fraud case as circumstances allow, reporting fraud when it is suspected creates a record that helps protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public as well as the integrity of a professional's license.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.