



BACKGROUND:

During the Covid-19 public health emergency, consulting engineering firms are exploring options to perform their work in a manner that achieves three principle objectives:

1. Protect the health, welfare, and safety of the public
2. Promote safe and supportive working environments for our team members
3. Maintain appropriate levels of professional practice in the service of clients

Based on feedback from members and clients, and in consultation with other industrial partners, the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies BC (ACEC-BC) is supporting the industry by providing guidance for consulting engineering companies that balances professional practice with achievement of these objectives. This guidance will evolve over time and updates will be posted to our website.

DISCLAIMER: *Guidance* supports consulting engineers in the applying BC Professional Practice Guidelines.

Guidance is not the same as a Practice or Quality Management Guideline.

The opinion or advice of the professional regulator should be sought if a practitioner has questions regarding interpretation and application of obligatory professional practice guidelines.

Regulated professionals must always satisfy themselves that their practice meets the intent of the practice guidelines.

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Area of Practice:	Engineering Field Review

ENGINEERING FIELD REVIEW:

Field Review is governed by Engineers and Geoscientists BC Quality Management Guidelines:

[Documented Field Reviews During Implementation or Construction](#) (v1.3, January 9, 2018)

[Direct Supervision](#) (v1.3 – January 9, 2018)

These documents support professionals to adequately perform and document field reviews.

In considering the performance of field review, consulting engineering companies must also ensure compliance with Provincial Health Authority [Orders, Notices and Guidance](#) (specifically [Guidance to Construction Site Operation](#)), [WorkSafe BC](#) any other local, provincial or federal safety order, notice or guidance.

Any team member who is required to be present on site must:

1. At least 24-hours before arrival, communicate their intention to be on site with the Prime Contractor. The team member should request information on additional site safety practices and ensure they understand the information before arriving.
Note: Under the [Provincial Health Authority Guidance to Construction Site Operation](#), the Prime Contractor is required to ensure all persons accessing a site are recorded on a daily log.
2. Do not plan to be on site if you have any cold / flu symptoms (sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing).
3. Follow recommended prevention practices:
 - **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water for a minimum of 20-seconds or use alcohol-based hand rubs when soap and water are not available.
 - **Do not touch your face**, eyes, nose or mouth; cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow if you need to cough or sneeze
 - **Minimize close contact** with other people by keeping at least 2-metres apart.

The following guidance is in support of consulting engineering firms who must perform Field Reviews during the Covid-19 health emergency, but who may be considering alternate approaches to protect the health, welfare and safety of the public and their team members.

A Field Review is typically performed by attending on site, a practice that often requires the Professional of Record (POR) (engineer or geoscientist) to travel and directly engage with



colleagues, clients and contractors. This approach is efficient and ideal under normal circumstances but may conflict with a consulting engineering firm's effort to promote social distancing including the restriction of travel or to protect vulnerable persons under the care of the POR.

There are many ways for a professional to meet the intent of a guideline. In this case, **an Engineer of Record (EOR)** may find reasonable, alternate means to perform a Field Review that **does not require them to be physically present in the field**.

Relevant Quality Management Guideline References:

Section 3.6.5 of the Documented Field Reviews During Implementation or Construction Quality Management Guideline states:

"Engineering/Geoscience Professionals may delegate Field Reviews only when the Field Reviews are carried out under their direct supervision."

While the EOR is responsible for assurance, a Field Review does not need to personally perform a Field Review provided Direct Supervision of the Field Review by the EOR is reasonable.

Section 3.3 of the Direct Supervision Quality Management Guideline provides information on the adequacy of supervision. The guidance refers to a *Subordinate*, which in this context means any individual whose actions are directed by another. Practically speaking, the EOR may delegate and direct *any* individual they deem appropriate to perform the review of their behalf.

Section 3.3.4 of the Direct Supervision Quality Management Guideline notes specific considerations that the EOR must address before delegating work including complexity, criticality of the work and training of the Subordinate.

A consulting engineering firm may consider the following example options or other acceptable alternatives for performance of Field Review:

a) **Live technology assisted review**

If a site has reliable network coverage, a Field Review may be performed by a proxy and supported through use of technology such as body cameras, video or real-time video chat (MS Teams, FaceTime, etc.). The EOR can direct the proxy to observe details, ask questions or perform tests as needed to satisfy the EOR obligations.

b) **Delegation to a local team member**

Many firms have small offices in remote locations across BC. An EOR who is not local to a site may delegate Field Review to a colleague located in the region to limit travel by the EOR. The review may be live technology assisted or performed independently by the delegate.



c) **Delegation to a local sub-consultant or other Professional Engineer or Geoscientist**

If a team member is not available or if there are no resources near the site, and EOR may wish to consider engaging a sub-consultant or another Professional Engineer or Geoscientists (for example, an Engineer from the contractor team) to perform the Field Review.

Regardless of who performs a Field Review, the EOR remains the authority responsible for assuring compliance with professional practice guidelines. The EOR must be satisfied that the approach taken – whether the Field Review is performed personally or by a proxy – provides assurance of performance and that the review is properly documented and communicated according to the Documented Field Reviews During Implementation or Construction Quality Management Guideline.