

RECOGNITION OF STEEL DETAILERS



SDIBC

NEWSLETTER

STEEL DETAILERS INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Professional Accountability

by Martin Mac Gregor ASCT



'Professional Accountability' is certainly one of those rather used phrases; it is also one that conceals some very real issues for Technology Professionals. It may therefore be helpful to pause and consider what phrases as this, those that we routinely apply to ourselves, actually really mean!

So Professional Accountability...Who is accountable to whom and what is a professional anyway?

Accountability, that has that ring of subservience to it...but to whom or what? Professional, that has that ring of authority, but again but to whom or what? So the whole phrase, Professional Accountability, has the intimation of some sort of a conundrum, it almost seems at odds with itself.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary describes accountability as being responsible or liable to give account ...and what is a Professional...? The Dictionary defines that as someone engaged in a branch of learning or science.

And while we are considering our responsibilities, what really is our profession of Engineering Technology...Engineering means to construct, manage or arrange physical objects... And Technology being the science of industrial arts. So quite certainly then engaged as we are in a branch of learning or science, we are indeed professionals.

Returning though to the Accountability issue...that Oxford said it meant you are bound to give account or be responsible. Now there is a word people duck away from these days - responsible, is it not now all about their rights...what is just and fair treatment for me!

But perhaps that is what accountability actually means...you are responsible for doing what is just and fair, respecting others' rights, even if it negatively impacts you! Such as the right of others to assume that the work you do is beyond reproach. That is the higher calling of accountability, far beyond the vaunt of calling yourself professional!

As Francis Bacon, that noted Elizabethan philosopher and statesman remarked in the preface to his work, *The Elements of Common Law*... "I hold every man a debtor to his profession"...meaning that Everyone has a duty to their own branch of learning or science...paraphrased...Professionally Accountable.

So you debtors to your profession, this means you must govern your actions by doing what is just and fair! However, what is just and fair or what is ethical, is too often very complex and difficult to be objective about. As mere mortals we can but 'do our very best' on a day-to-day basis and look for higher guidance in our dealings with our fellow man.

Not in the realms of higher guidance, but certainly a very practical guide to ethical conduct in our professional lives, ASTTBC publishes a Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines for its registrants. In common with other similar professional bodies,



Seahawks Stadium, detailed by Deltec.

the ASTT Act binds ASTTBC Members to this Code of Ethics and the corresponding Practice Guidelines. A sort of Code of Moral Conduct, this is guidance on your professional actions through a heightened awareness of our responsibility to ourselves and **most importantly others**. Any genuine professional body will have a similar document upon which it will examine prospective candidates as well as require their continued adherence to it.

For the ASTT Act empowers the Association to "establish, maintain and develop Standards of Ethics amongst its members". As well the Act says ASTT may "do all lawful things that are incidental to the accomplishments of these objectives". So when the British Columbia Legislature enacted the ASTT Act it was saying...here are a group of Professionals who owe a duty of care to the public, each other and their employers and we are going to give the Association the power to discipline any who fail in this duty of care. We the elected representatives of the people of British Columbia demand proper Professional Accountability within this group.

That is why for any ASTTBC Member who maliciously flouts their Code of Ethics, under the ASTT Act there is Practice Review Board and provisions for Disciplinary Committees and penalties.

Penalties could typically range from specified further education to ultimately expulsion from membership and possibly fining; and please bear in mind this is apart from any civil penalty or censure by the employer. Recently in Vancouver, an ASTTBC applicant was imprisoned for unprofessional actions that the Court viewed as both fraud and endangering public safety; the matter involved improper servicing of fire protection equipment.

So there is a difference between a qualified and a certified individual. Possession of a qualification or skill just says I have passed this exam, it teaches us how to "be a wise fool" as someone once said. Certification certainly says much more; that an individual has both the required education and has demonstrated a certain level of competency in the work they do. The Professional Account



Enron Office Tower, Houston, Texas, detailed by Candraft.

ability part comes about when you become certified, because you now have voluntarily placed yourself under a code of conduct, such as the ASTTBC Code of Ethics. This demands much more than just pleasing your supervisor, it requires you to ask all 'customers' of your actions to be judges of your conduct, and that includes yourself.

As was once observed the mark of a true professional is in knowing what you are not qualified to do. For the technologist or technician the consequences of improper actions may well be particularly devastating. Other professionals must place significant reliance on the work that you do and need to know that you, as they, are bound by a professional code of ethics and conduct.

It is the explosion of Technology that has evolved this large, burgeoning and very essential group, the Technology Professional, who perform most of their work in those areas in between the trades and senior professionals. Our work as Technology Professionals spans from that of the advanced trade worker to the less conceptual work of the senior professional and sometimes perhaps even beyond those bounds, where someone is especially qualified by training and experience.

Our determination to be recognized as Technology Professionals is only part of a global effort by a new profession to be an identified, legally recognized profession. Here in BC, the recognition by and negotiation with groups such as APEGBC, the Professional Engineers, that we all are part of a team who needs to have their scope of work properly and legally defined, seems to be approaching a satisfactory conclusion with the potential for legislative change.

As another example, in the UK the Engineering Council has just been renamed the Engineering & Technology Council with representation now included from Incorporated Engineers, the UK's Applied Science Technologist. In Europe, the European Union now recognizes the Technologist as a specific grade of the engineering profession.

As we seek increased professional recognition and statutory licensing, the importance of our self-discipline, our previous commitment to our profession through voluntary certification and professional accountability, this will be the unassailable testament to our role as Technology Professionals.

We are professionals; we are accountable and ultimately will be fully recognized as what we are, very essential members of the engineering team.



Brentwood Skytrain Station by George Third & Son (Photo by Ziggy Welsch).

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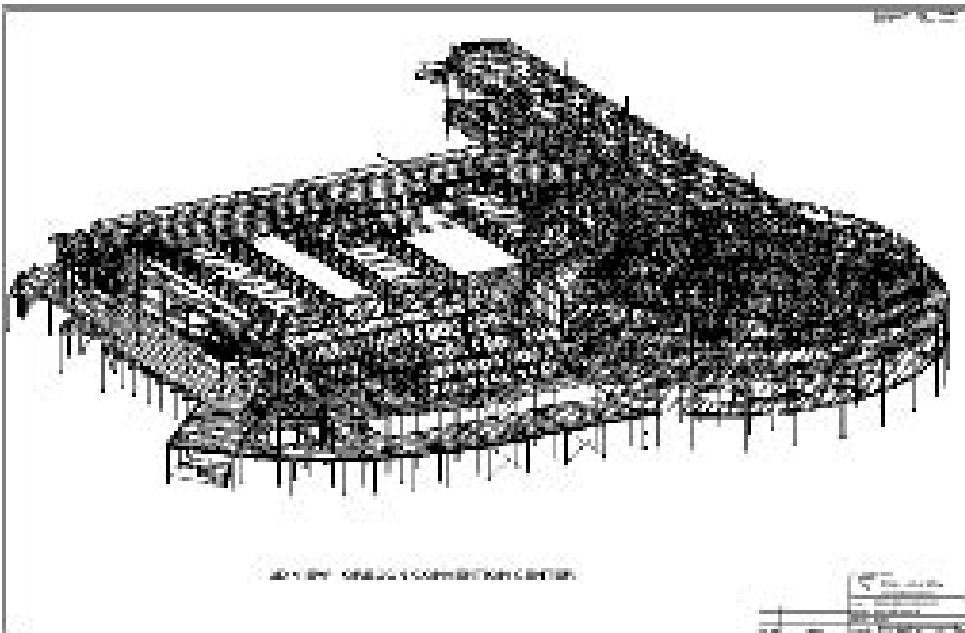
Steel Detailers' Institute of British Columbia (SDIBC) recommends Certification Changes

At the July Directors' meeting of SDIBC a motion to require membership in the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC) was passed. A recommendation will be sent to the Steel Detailing Certification Board (SDCB) of ASTTBC recommending that by December 31st 2003, all Certified and Registered Steel Detailers will be required to have applied for registration as a certified member of

ASTTBC; that is as a Certified Technician (CTech) or Applied Science Technologist (AScT).

It is anticipated that the Council of ASTTBC will ratify this change to certification policy at its first meeting in 2003.

Individuals who are already registered as a Certified Steel Detailer (CSD) or Registered Steel Detailer (RSD), and who for some reason are not currently qualified for registration as 'at least' a CTech will be registered as Associate Members of ASTTBC. As Associates they will be required to pursue a program of study leading to eventual registration as a certified member. Most Steel Detailers are already qualified, by virtue of previous training and experience, for registration as a certified member of ASTTBC.



Oregon Convention Center, detailed by Pro Draft.

SDIBC is now on line

We have a new website <http://sdibc.asttbc.org>. Hopefully it will establish a link for new detailers who wish to learn more about our organization and who are willing to join. For those who are already members it will keep our members up to date on coming events by the way of a Newsletter. This site is still in the preliminary stage so any new ideas for the site would be appreciated. If there is anything you feel you could add to improve our site, please let me know by dropping off an e-mail to brian.tyler.wong@shaw.ca. Do you have an article or picture you would like published - send to Ken Mussato at: kmus@dowco.com.

This Newsletter will be on our web site after October 31st 2002.



The Disney Concert Hall, a portion detailed by Dowco Consultants Ltd.

Welcome to SDIBC

Our Mission...

The **STEEL DETAILERS INSTITUTE OF B.C.** was created in a response to the steel industry's need for quality, experienced detailers with proven levels of expertise. Our goal is to help develop, uphold and maintain proper standards for steel detailers in their relationship to other members of the construction industry. We encourage individual steel detailers to apply for certification and membership.

Some Benefits and advantages of becoming a member of SDIBC

1. Posting your skills & expertise on a technical employment network (CTEN)
2. Purchasing Insurance (home, health & dental) especially if you're self-employed.
3. Phone saving on purchasing quality digital or digital/analog phones. Several no contract plans. (CITYFONE)
4. Discounts on new cars, decide what make and model of new car and your list of options.
Then contact (QUINELLA) for their best price.
5. Auto rentals, (HERTZ) take advantage of car rental discounts.

If you wish to receive further updates or our newsletter please fill out the following information below and mail to:

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Title: _____ Organization: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

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