

Wisconsin Department of Safety & Professional Services

Mail To: P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

FAX #: (608) 261-7085
Phone #: (608) 266-2112

1400 E. Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

E-Mail: dsps@wi.gov
Website: <http://dsps.wi.gov>

EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND SOIL SCIENTISTS

CONSUMER GUIDE TO GEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Geologists in Wisconsin provide assistance with:

- Groundwater and Contaminated Land Investigation and Restoration
- Safe Disposal of Waste and Storage of Materials
- Building Materials and Aggregate Mineral Exploration, Development, Extraction and Rehabilitation
- Site Suitability and Stability Analysis
- Subsurface Characterization

What is a Geologist?

Geology is the science which addresses the study of the earth and its fluids, its processes, its history, and its composition. Many geologists are applied scientists utilizing this comprehensive knowledge of the earth for the use of humankind, and protection of our environment.

Just like physicians, there are many specialties within the profession.

Geologists are licensed to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Registration helps ensure that qualified, reputable individuals and firms are providing competent geologic information to the public.

Only geologists licensed as Professional Geologists by the Professional Geologist Section of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists and Soil Scientists or those under their direction, may engage in the public practice of geology in Wisconsin.

To qualify as a licensed professional geologist in Wisconsin, an individual must be a graduate of an accredited institution of higher education with a minimum of 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) in geology and have 5 years of experience in the practice of professional geology. All geologists registered or licensed since 1996 must also have successfully passed a national examination.

The National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) examinations are given by the Department. The exam is based on a national task analysis of geologic practice. The ASBOG examination is used in many states and tests both fundamental and professional practice competency.

Licensed professional geologists are also governed by rules of professional conduct. These rules are a means of ensuring that the professionals practicing before the public act ethically and competently.

Wisconsin Department of Safety & Professional Services

What does a licensed Professional Geologist do?

Geologists conduct surface and subsurface investigations and provide interpretive geologic services related to groundwater; mineral exploration and development; mine reclamation; foundation conditions; dam, building and highway construction; utility routing; sub-surface migration of contamination; disposal of waste; causes of geologic hazards; origins of geologic features; and, land use considerations. Applications of geologic principles are an integral part of many actions involving public health, safety, welfare, and environmental protection.

Geologists often work in conjunction with engineers, who use geologists' interpretations of soil, rock, and groundwater conditions to design and build safe structures and buildings, and to clean up contaminated land and groundwater.

Hiring a Professional Geologist?

To find a qualified Professional Geologist:

- (1) Ask the Department of Safety and Professional Services, or the Wisconsin Section of the American Institute of Professional Geologists for a list of geologists in your area.
- (2) Check with former clients and ask their opinion of the quality of the geologist's work.
- (3) Specify, in a written contract, the terms and performance expected and include the time frame. If the geologist asks for a retainer, know its purpose and whether it will be applied to the bill or charged separately.
- (4) Ask about professional liability insurance coverage.

What is the role of the Professional Geologist Section of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists and Soil Scientists?

The Section:

- (1) Certifies that an individual has met or exceeded statutory levels of education, experience, and knowledge prior to the individual receiving a license as a Professional Geologist.
- (2) Deters negligent, incompetent, or fraudulent practices through disciplinary action.
- (3) Promotes good practice through a code of ethics, administrative rules, and legislation.
- (4) Administers the examination.

Who serves on the Professional Geologists Section?

The Section is comprised of 3 licensed professional geologists and 1 public, non-geologist member. All are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Wisconsin Department of Safety & Professional Services

If you have a complaint:

The State of Wisconsin, Department of Safety and Professional Services is the state agency responsible for credentialing and regulating various professions in the State of Wisconsin. Regulation of the professions is accomplished through various licensing boards as well as directly by the department in some circumstances. Department staff may investigate complaints against persons credentialed by the department and boards, and may pursue disciplinary action against those individuals if there is evidence of a violation of the law.

Disputes over fees will not be investigated by the Section unless there are indications of negligence, incompetence or fraud.

Complaint forms may be found on the Department's website at: <http://drl.wi.gov/dept/complaint.htm>

Where do I get geological information?

The Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) is a separate state agency that provides information, maps and publications about geology, hydrogeology, soils, mineral resources, and topography. The State Geologist directs the WGNHS, which is located at 3817 Mineral Point Road, Madison, WI 53705, telephone (608) 262-7430 or on the web at www.uwex.edu/wgnhs.

The office of the U.S. Geological Survey is located at 8505 Research Way, Madison, WI 53562, telephone (608) 828-9901 or on the web at <http://www.usgs.gov>.

Many universities in the state offer geology programs and maintain geological libraries. These include University of Wisconsin campuses at Madison, Milwaukee, Whitewater, River Falls, Oshkosh, Platteville, Parkside, Eau Claire, and Green Bay. Private schools offering geology courses include St. Norbert's College in Green Bay, Beloit College in Beloit, and Lawrence University in Appleton.

There are also several professional societies active in Wisconsin that offer geological information; the largest is the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG). Contact the State Geologist for more information on these and other societies and organizations.

A state agency managing natural resources is the Department of Natural Resources, located in offices across the state. For specific locations and addresses, call the DNR in Madison at (608) 266-2621.

An application for registration as a professional geologist may be obtained by mail, phone or on the web at <http://drl.wi.gov>.