

## **RESPONSIBLE CONTROL: ON-GOING FUNCTION, NOT A SPORADIC "HAPPENING"**

by Ralph Liebing, RA, CSI, CDT  
Cincinnati, OH

"RESPONSIBLE CONTROL" is wrongly perceived if seen as a continual, microscopic inspection of every increment of project documentation. Rather, it is an umbrella term to ensure propriety in the work, a logic that if one is to take full responsibility, a certain comfort level must be achieved in all work and workers, whether such workers are on-staff, in associated firms, or members of other reliable sources (satisfactory to the professional who will sign and seal the documents).

"RESPONSIBLE CONTROL" is not a statement of omnipotent scrutiny and meticulous oversight of some work by others. Also it is not a figment of law that is an absolute so egregious as to endanger the professional.

"RESPONSIBLE CONTROL" can also be perceived as a prism through which the project work passes and is focused in like manner, as required by the project program. A lens that highlights the interplay of the various features, and the work of various players and sources doing the work.

Rather it is a concept--a concept that some party--and usually one of the principals of a firm, or close-held Associates with assigned power--will watch over, oversee, monitor, coordinate and ensure, on-going, that the work of documenting the project is executed in a careful, correct, and professional manner.

Each code or set of regulations will extract a portion of attention where compliance is required. These can be fashioned and incorporated into the project documents and work in any of many ways.

Certain parameters surround the professionals and their office organization. There is nothing that requires that every professional office be staffed, organized, and operated in precisely the same format, styling, and staffing. So the fundamental "who-does-what" among the employees is predicated on the principals, their values, style, concepts, ideas, and perceptions.

Portions of construction projects require high levels of specific knowledge, which is usually sourced in those who work almost exclusively in those areas, All-day-every-day experiences garner the insight, knowledge, and flexibility requires function in a meaningful manner in construction.

In some areas of construction documentation, added insight and experience is invaluable! But it is not always seated in the individual office. Some sources outside the office are available and carry the added ability to meet expectations utilizing the up-graded knowledge and experience require--often these "outside" firms do nothing but this same work, so they become increasingly expert over and over again! Such firms many times perform in like manner for many other firms on a consulting basis, with application of knowledge and expertise as uniquely required by each.

Some language in construction-related laws, demand compliance with the building and other applicable codes, and require that the documentation for the construction of the project be done under "responsible control" of a person(s) whom the state has seen fit to register and accept as a tested and properly trained professional. But nowhere is there any reference or even illusion to a situation of one-on-one, next to every shoulder; working side by side; checking line by line, or similar incisive scrutiny and defined as "responsible control". And nowhere is there any requirement or mandate for ALL project documentation to be performed by persons with some level of certified expertise! Some people are merely well trained drafters (including prison-trained convicts!) who input information coming from more experienced (and perhaps registered) staffers.

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What is reasonable is the professional-of-record ensuring that the people under hire, no matter their status or expertise, are performing the work correctly and as required, and as overseen by other colleagues, project leads, associate architects, or those placed in charge of some portion of the project. If each piece of the project work is properly executed then the whole should be too.

An all-day, every line, omnipotent, all-inclusive, watch-dog, absolute effort is not needed to achieve "responsible control". And it is not produced by requiring that every hand that does some work belongs to some accredited or registered entity.

There is no stigma or threat in project documentation being a collective effort. From junior drafter to firm Associates to discipline consultants, it is the combination of the work, interrelated that produces the project. So long as any one person is willing and properly entitled to take "responsible control" there is no errant process involved. Mere titles, designations, certifications, etc. cannot necessarily be determinants or substitutes for valid, purposeful, and expert work.

So long as the law is satisfied with registering professionals who take on the liability for "responsible control" there need be (and is) no impetus to re-configure the professional effort.