





ALL OVER THE MAP

The debate over the complexity of continuing education (CE) requirements among jurisdictions has been a hot topic for the profession for the past several years. The requirements can be overwhelming when you are trying to maintain licensure in more than one jurisdiction. Among the 46 jurisdictions that currently require CE, terminology, types of hours, number of hours, and renewal dates are literally all over the map. There is the potential that you may not be able to use hours earned for one jurisdiction to satisfy the requirements of another jurisdiction.

In June, the U.S. registration boards passed a resolution to establish a CE standard in NCARB's *Legislative Guidelines and Model Law, Model Regulations* that, if adopted by the boards, will simplify the process for all architects.

"NCARB has laid the ground work for monumental change for the continuing education system that currently exists in the 54 jurisdictions," said 2010-2011 NCARB President/Chair of the Board Kenneth J. Naylor, AIA, NCARB, Hon. RAIC.

"This resolution will lead to greater standardization of continuing education requirements and simplified record keeping processes for Member Boards, while easing the burden on practitioners licensed in multiple jurisdictions," said Naylor.

THE NEW STANDARD

The new CE standard outlined in NCARB's *Model Law* and *Model Regulations* includes the recommendation of 12 health, safety, and welfare (HSW) continuing education hours (CEHs) per calendar year and that the hours must be acquired in structured educational activities. Additionally, the *Model Law* and *Model Regulations* recommend no carry-over hours, 60 days to remedy disallowed hours, and that records of documented hours be retained for six years.

BREAKING IT DOWN

THE CHALLENGE: TIME FRAME FOR ACQUIRING CONTINUING EDUCATION

In many jurisdictions, the time frame for earning continuing education is typically tied to the license renewal cycle. This can become problematic if an architect is licensed in more than one jurisdiction. Those with active licenses in numerous jurisdictions must pay close attention to the time frames in which they are obtaining and reporting their hours.

For example, it is possible that an architect who has acquired the appropriate number of continuing education hours to meet one jurisdiction's requirement might not be able to use some of those hours to meet another's requirement due to when those hours were obtained.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: IN A CALENDAR YEAR

Since license renewal cycles vary greatly among the 54 registration boards, a part of the proposed solution is to separate the CE reporting period from the jurisdiction's license renewal date. Changing the time frame in which the CE hours must be obtained from the renewal date to the calendar year (January 1 through December 31) eliminates the burden placed on architects licensed in multiple jurisdictions of making sure that their continuing education courses were completed in compliance with an individual jurisdiction's renewal period.

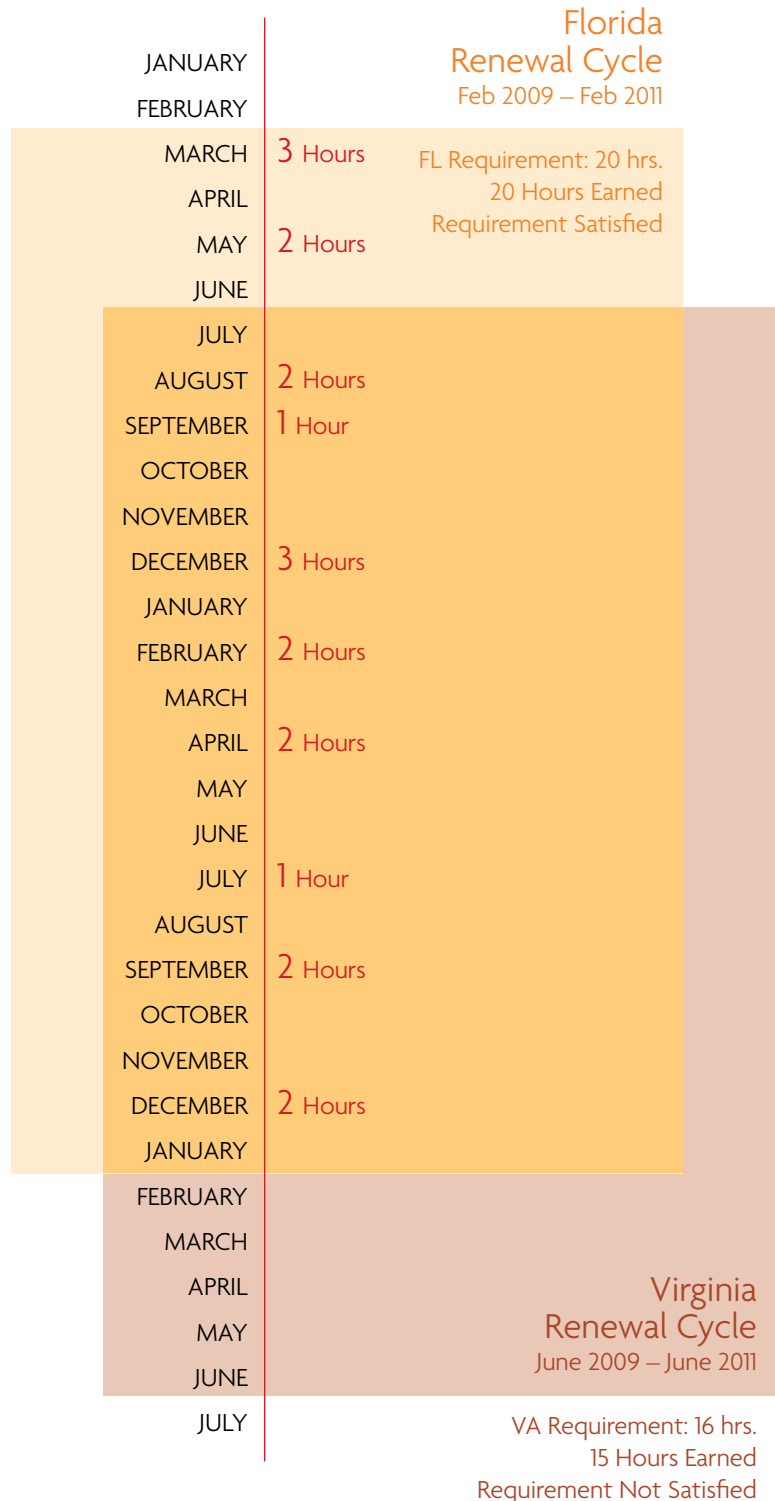
YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION CALENDAR

For illustrative purposes, consider if you were licensed in both Florida and Virginia—both jurisdictions require continuing education and both jurisdictions have a two-year license renewal cycle. Florida requires a total of 20 hours and Virginia requires 16 hours. However, the renewal cycle for the two jurisdictions is different.

Depending on when you earn your hours, it is possible that you could satisfy the 20 hours required in Florida without meeting the 16 hours in Virginia. [See the chart to the right.]

LICENSE RENEWAL VARIANCES

This example is to illustrate total hours vs. renewal cycles only.



THE CHALLENGE: NUMBER OF HOURS AND TYPE OF CE REQUIRED

CE requirements range far and wide—from five CEHs every two years to as many as 50 CEHs every five years. These varying requirements can be confusing and burdensome for practitioners to track.

Currently, 32 jurisdictions require an average of 12 hours per year. As each jurisdiction adopts the CE standard, we are that much closer to solving the complex equation that is continuing education today.

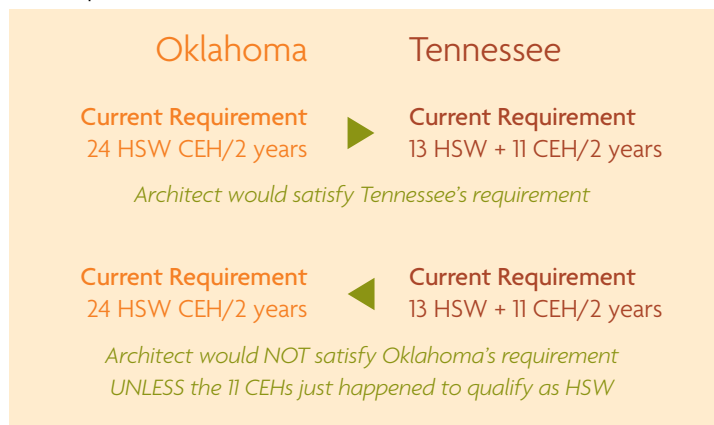
The complexity of the issue is further complicated by a variety of types of CE required. The primary types of hours are HSW and non-HSW CEH; however, some jurisdictions also require specific HSW subjects such as Sustainable Design (SD) hours, accessibility (ADA) hours, and state specific hours.

“When presented with the enormous disparity in continuing education requirements across the country, it was clear to us that complying with them was incredibly confusing for licensees. We are always on the lookout for ways to streamline information for licensees,” said Angie Kinnaird Linn, Program Director, Colorado Board of Licensure for Architects, Professional Engineers, and Professional Land Surveyors.

YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION EQUATION

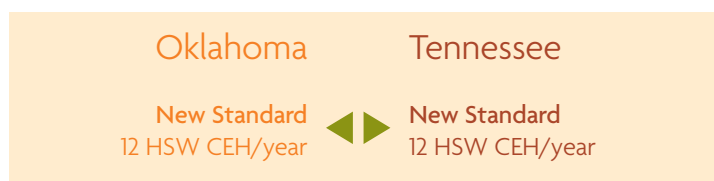
For an architect licensed in both Oklahoma and Tennessee—Oklahoma requires 24 HSW CEHs every two years, and Tennessee requires a total of 24 CEHs in the same two-year period. However, Tennessee’s requirement is further broken down into 13 HSW and 11 CEH.

If you completed the Oklahoma requirement, you would satisfy the Tennessee’s requirement; however, you might not satisfy the Oklahoma requirement by completing the Tennessee requirement:



Completing the Tennessee requirement would only satisfy the Oklahoma requirement if the 11 CEH were also HSW.

If both jurisdictions adopted the new standard, you would satisfy both requirements.



SO WHAT'S NEXT?

The next vital step is for registration boards that currently have a CE requirement to adopt and implement the newly revised standard. NCARB is not encouraging or discouraging jurisdictions from imposing mandatory continuing education.

Over 30 jurisdictions have the ability to change their requirement for CE by modifying their rules. NCARB has pledged to provide support to any jurisdiction that desires to implement this standardization of requirements.

“The proposal to adopt a standard approach nationally seemed like an obvious way to remove some of the confusion around CE and return the emphasis to increasing licensees’ knowledge, and we didn’t hesitate” said Kinnaird Linn.

Some jurisdictions have already adopted this standard, and others are in the process of doing so. North Carolina already required 12 HSW CEHs per calendar year, and Arkansas (1 July 2011) and Alabama (21 November 2011) have already implement-

ed this change to their rules. Revised rules will go into affect for Colorado and Ohio on 1 January 2012. Idaho will change their rule effective 1 January 2014. Several other jurisdictions are in the process of revising their rules.

Do you know what is happening in your jurisdiction? Contact your board to find out! **DC**