

Who is allowed to use the title “Architect” in Minnesota?

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Recently, the Board of AELSLAGID has seen an increase in the number of marketing brochures, professional journals and business cards that have violated current Minnesota statutes by the use of titles reserved only for licensed Architects. This article will help businesses, employees and unlicensed individuals to clarify what titles can be used in their practice.

The title “Architect” and any derivation of the word “Architect,” such as “architectural” or “architecture,” can only be used by a licensed Architect. It is a violation of Minnesota Statutes section 326.02, subdivision 1 (2006) for any person to practice or offer to practice, or to use or to solicit or to use in connection with a person’s name, or to otherwise assume, use or advertise, any title or description ‘tending to convey the impression that the person is an architect.’ This includes titles on business cards, advertisements, billing and marketing literature for individuals. For businesses to use the terms of architect, architecture, or architectural as a type of service offered, may be in violation of Minnesota Statutes section 326.02, subdivision 1 (2006) if the services offered are not provided by a licensed Architect whether or not that person is an employee or contracted with the firm/company.

Although some states do allow the use of the title ‘Architectural Intern’ or ‘Intern Architect’ by an unlicensed person, Minnesota does not allow use of these titles. In the public eye, someone could be construed to be licensed in architecture, but still in training by using the title of ‘Architectural Intern’ or ‘Intern Architect.’ For example, in medicine, an intern is a licensed MD, although still training.

So what titles may an unlicensed employee or individual use? Suggestions include: Draftsperson, Designer, Specification Writer, or Project Manager. Never use the words Architect, Architecture or Architectural in a title until the individual has been issued a current license as an Architect in the State of Minnesota.

So how may a business without a licensed employee or contracted licensed Architect advertise their business for exempt buildings or residential design only? These businesses may use “Design/Build” or “Designers/Builders” or “Residential Designers.” Businesses without a properly licensed individual should never use the words Architect, Architecture or Architectural when advertising services provided because the public perception may view this service as being done by a licensed Architect.

Please check your marketing brochures, business cards and individual titles to make sure your business or employee(s) or contracted employee(s) are in compliance with the Minnesota Statutes.