



## Media Release

### Professional Engineers Ontario Launches Investigations, Lends Support to Effort to Determine Cause of Algo Centre Mall Collapse in Elliot Lake

Toronto – (September 10, 2012) – Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), the licensing and regulating body for professional engineers and professional engineering in the province, has launched investigations related to the June 23, 2012 collapse of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake.

As outlined in section 33 of the *Professional Engineers Act*, PEO, through the Registrar, is enabled to initiate the investigative process in the absence of a complaint being filed, on reasonable and probable grounds that a member of the association or a holder of a certificate of authorization, a temporary licence, provisional licence or limited licence has committed an act of professional misconduct or incompetence, or that there is cause to refuse to issue or to suspend or revoke a certificate of authorization.

Investigators appointed by the Registrar are provided powers, similar to those provided to law enforcement officials under a search warrant, to enter the business premises of the licence or certificate holder under investigation and examine anything relevant to the subject of the investigation. These investigations could lead to discipline of PEO licence or certificate holders by the association.

“It is imperative that we determine if work by PEO licence holders was performed competently and in compliance with the regulations under the *Professional Engineers Act*, as well as other applicable statutes, regulations, standards, codes, bylaws and rules,” said Denis Dixon, P.Eng., FEC, president of PEO. “This action is necessary to carry out our mandate to govern licence and certificate holders and regulate professional engineering practice to serve and protect the public interest.”

In addition, PEO has offered to assist Justice Paul R. Bélanger, who is leading the public inquiry into the mall collapse, in reviewing relevant legislation, regulations and bylaws, as well as the policies, processes and procedures of provincial and municipal governments and others with respect to structural integrity and safety, and the emergency management and response to the collapse of the Algo Centre Mall. PEO expects to seek standing at the Inquiry Hearing.

“We are grateful for the PEO's interest in assisting the Commissioner in his mandate,” said Bruce Carr-Harris, counsel for the Inquiry after receiving PEO's offer.

To help guard against a repeat of incidents similar to the tragedy in Elliot Lake, PEO President Dixon has recommended creating a provincial engineer position, similar to the province's chief medical officer of health. In a letter to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, President Dixon advised that a provincial engineer “could take overall authority for engineering works in the province, to provide specific direction in the event of situations like Elliot Lake, and to ascertain whether such situations are indicative of systemic problems.” President Dixon is scheduled to meet with the premier's staff on September 12 to discuss the concept.

As set out in section 38 of the *Professional Engineers Act*, any person making an investigation under section 33 must keep confidential all matters that come to his or her knowledge in the course of his or her duties, employment, examination, review or investigation. The investigation report would be presented to Council or the Executive Committee. The Council or the Executive Committee may, by resolution, refer to the Discipline Committee for hearing and determination any allegation of professional misconduct or incompetence on the part of a member of the association or a holder of a certificate of authorization, a temporary licence, provisional licence or limited licence specified in the resolution. Discipline Committee proceedings are generally open to the public.



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## **About Professional Engineers Ontario**

Through the *Professional Engineers Act*, PEO governs over 80,000 licence and certificate holders and regulates professional engineering in Ontario to serve and protect the public. Professional engineering safeguards life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare and the environment. Professional engineers can be identified by the P.Eng. after their names.

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