

PRECONSTRUCTION DESIGN MEMORANDUM

MEMO: PCDM-04

SUBJECT: Digital Signatures for Licensed Professionals

As design documents are now routinely submitted, reviewed, and stored in purely electronic form, allowing them to be easily reproduced and modified, the use of digital signatures provides improved security and convenience for licensed professionals needing to certify their work. Digital signatures allow viewers to confirm that the signature is valid, not copied or forged, and that no changes have been made to an electronic document since it was signed. As documents can be signed in electronic form without being printed and re-scanned, digital signatures also help prevent visual quality losses from scanning, eliminate paper waste, and speed up the process of revising and recertifying plans.

In accordance with South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (SCDLLR), SCDOT recognizes that a digital signature satisfies a law requiring seal and signature for licensed professionals, such as engineers, surveyors, architects, and landscape architects. Below is a summary of the standards concerning the use of digital signatures:

- Computer generated seals, signatures, and dates are acceptable to sign and seal the electronic files for design drawings, final construction plans, specifications, plats, documents, and reports, provided that a digital certificate is embedded in the electronic files in accordance with the requirements of SCDLLR.
- The digital certificate must be capable of free independent verification from a certification authority and shall permit a valid exchange of electronic files in a compatible manner. Verification must be possible independent of the continued future operation of that authority; all files and programs necessary for this purpose shall be provided and stored with the signed documents.
- Digital certificates for SCDOT-produced files shall be provided and verifiable using the ARX CoSign software, authorized and operated through the SCDOT network. Outside consultants may use any software that meets SCDLLR requirements.
- Computer generated seals shall be identical in size, design, and content with the approved impression seals.
- Computer generated signature and date shall be affixed under or across the face and beyond the circumference of the seal. The licensee's license number, name, signature, and date shall be legible.
- Electronic files shall be created in or converted to the Adobe PDF format as "full-size" (i.e., 22"x36" for plan sheets) for submittal.



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- The design drawings, final construction plans, and plats prepared by or under the responsible charge of a licensee(s) shall consist of separate electronic files for each sheet and carry the required seal(s), date(s), signature(s), and digital signature certificate(s) on each sheet.
- When submitting a plan set, all sheets must be prepared in digital format, or all sheets in paper format, by the date that they are due. SCDOT will not accept mixed sets (paper and digital) or accept paper copies with signed digital files to follow at a later date. All revisions after the initial submittal must be in the same format as the initial submittal.¹
- For specifications, documents, and reports, where more than one page is bound together in one volume, the licensee(s) or permit holder(s) may digitally seal, date, and sign only the table of contents sheet, provided that the signed sheet clearly identifies all of the other sheets comprising the bound volume with responsibility clearly delineated.
- SCDOT reserves the right to request one or more paper copies of any electronic document be submitted as part of the review or approval process.
- If a paper plan set is submitted as the record set, then each sheet must have the original inked signature. Copying and pasting electronic images of signatures is not allowed.¹

This memorandum applies to and authorizes the submittal of electronic documents signed using digital signatures. It does not disallow the submittal of traditional paper documents signed and sealed by hand per existing standards.

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November 2, 2015
Effective Date

JWK

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File:PC/JWK

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¹First Revision on October 19, 2016