CONNECTIONS

January 2026 Volume 25 Issue 2

Newsletter of the Structural Engineers Association of Oregon

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SEAO has a LinkedIn account and can be followed at SEAO LinkedIn Page.

Upcoming SEAO Meetings and Events:

Tuesday, January 13, 2026: SEAO Chapter Meeting
Topic: ACI Tilt-up Wall Design Provisions—Behind the Scenes
Speaker: Trent Nagele, VLMK Engineering + Design
Location: The Old Spaghetti Factory, 715 S Bancroft Street, Portland, OR
Time: 11:30 am Check-In & Lunch, Program at Noon
See page 2 for registration information.

Wednesday, January 28, 2026: SEAO Young Member Forum (YMF) Happy Hour
Location: Rontoms, 600 E Burnside Avenue, Portland, OR
Time: 5:30 pm—8:30 pm
Visit the website to signup: https://www.seao.org/events/jan2026/ymf-happy-hour
If you would like to be added to the YMF mailing list: Email Preferences Form

FINAL ANNUAL DUES REMINDER

Annual dues for SEAO membership were due by October 20, 2025. The SEAO website is open for paying dues. Visit: https://www.seao.org/ to login and pay your dues. Please contact Jane at jane@seao.org if you'd like to pay an alternate way. Renewal rates are as follows:

- Member (licensed PE in Oregon): $125
- Affiliate Member (unlicensed): $110
- Student Member (full-time student in Civil or Structural Engineering): $20
- Retired Members/Affiliates, or Professors: $25
- Life Members: Free

CONNECTIONS is a monthly publication of the Structural Engineers Association of Oregon, published to disseminate current news to our membership and others involved in the profession of structural engineering. The opinions expressed reflect those of the author and, except where noted, do not represent a position of SEAO.

Send membership inquiries to:

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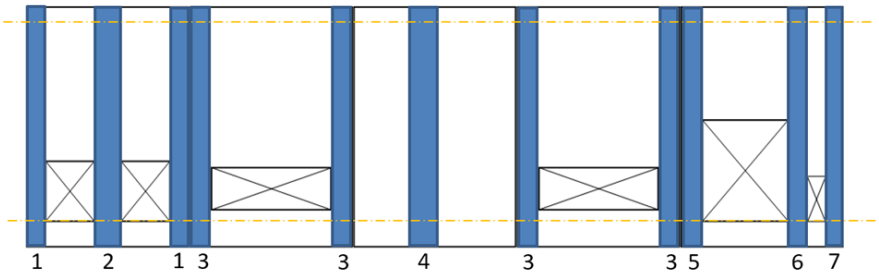
SEAO JANUARY CHAPTER MEETING
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Topic: ACI Tilt-up Wall Design Provisions—Behind the Scenes

The slender wall design provisions in ACI 318 Section 11.8 are used for the vast majority of tilt-up wall designs. However, they are presented as an "alternate" design method and can often be somewhat of an enigma to new or even experienced designers. This presentation will take a closer look at the provisions, and touch on historical background, calculation basis, pitfalls, best practices, and recent literature applicable to tilt-up/slender wall design and tilt-up buildings in general.



Speaker: Trent Nagele, VLMK Engineering + Design

Trent Nagele is a Structural Engineer and Senior Principal with VLMK Engineering + Design. He is one of the primary authors and contributors to ACI 551 Committee's recently published PRC-551.3-21 Tech Note, CI's "Tilt-up Design Pitfalls" article and is currently helping edit the 551.R2 Design Guide updates. Trent has an MS degree in structural engineering and 30 years of design practice experience with a broad range of project and construction types. He has been part of the review committee for several tilt-up documents including FEMA P1026, and the Tilt-up Concrete Association's Engineering Tilt-up and Limit Design of Tilt-up publications.

Location: The Old Spaghetti Factory, 715 S Bancroft Street, Portland, OR 97239

Time: 11:30 am—Noon — Check-in & Lunch
Noon—1 pm — Program

Cost: $35 Prepaid Members
$45 Prepaid Non-Members
$20 Student Members

Reservations: Pre-registration is required for all. **You can register and pay online at:** https://www.seao.org/events/jan2026/aci-tilt-wall-design-provisions-behind-scenes before end of day, Friday, January 9. You can also register with Jane Ellsworth via phone at (503)753-3075 or via email: jane@seao.org. It is expected that this event will sell out so **register early**.

PDH Credit: One (1) PDH will be available for this program.

Questions: Contact Jane Ellsworth at jane@seao.org.

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PRESIDENT'S JANUARY MESSAGE
By: Kylean Gunhus, PE

Dear SEAO Members:

SEAO would not be where it is today without the hard work from all of the past and current board members, committees, and members at large who have volunteered their time educating, collaborating, and improving the structural engineering and design community of Oregon. It is an honor to serve you all as President for the coming year.

For the many of you I have not had the opportunity to meet, here's a little bit about me. I grew up in Beaverton where I was fascinated by two things: baseball and how things were built. My dad recognized my affinity for math, science, and creating and encouraged me to pursue a degree in engineering. I enrolled at Oregon State University as a civil engineering undergrad where I found myself most interested in statics and material sciences, both of which are key to our careers in structural engineering. While at OSU I participated in the CECOP program where I was afforded the opportunity for two six month internships. My first internship was with PBOT's Bridge and Structures group where I helped with construction administration of the Thurman Street Bridge Rehabilitation and conducted hundreds of evaluations of City owned assets like retaining walls, pedestrian bridges, and stairs. My second internship was with GeoDesign where most of my time was spent in the field conducting soils testing and observations.

After graduating, I found myself at Miller Consulting Engineers where I've been the last 9 1/2 years. I've had the pleasure of working a variety of projects including dams, bridges, multi-family housing, seismic retrofits, and many others. One of my goals for 2026 is to obtain my SE license.

I hope you all had a successful 2025 and I wish you all the best in 2026.

Cheers!

Kylean Gunhus
2025/2026 SEAO President

NEW MEMBERS
January 9, 2025–November 5, 2025

Welcome to our new members who joined SEAO in 2025:

Nick Slavin – Holmes US
Aime Nacoulma – Catena Consulting Engineers
Teague Sizemore – DeWalt
Catherine Brockner – KPFF Consulting Engineers
Dane Hyatt – Sherman Engineering
James Meese – Sherman Engineering
Justin Elliott – VLMK Engineering + Design
Dustin Selby – JAS Engineering
Jason Bernal Azamar – OSU Student
Scott Dawson – PACE Engineers
Mason McCracken – Green Mountain Structural Engineering
Katie Young – Grummel Engineering
Khanh Doan – OSU Student
Jose Sanchez – Equilibrium Engineers LLC
Philip Boultinghouse – Coffman Engineers
Scott Walker – WDY Engineers
Michael Gritzmacher – Fortis Structural LLC
Michael Ginsbach – Certerra
Otto LaPointe - Akana

WELCOME TO SEAO!

NWCMA NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The Northwest Concrete Masonry Association (NWCMA) is lobbying to continue masonry courses at Oregon State University. If you would like to support them in the continuation of this coursework, please reach out to the OSU School of Civil and Construction Engineering.

Email: cce@engr.oregonstate.edu
Phone: 541-737-4934

CITY OF PORTLAND
Temporary Code Suspensions

The City of Portland has approved temporary code suspensions to improve permitting.

The four code amendment recommendations that were approved by the Portland City Council temporarily suspends certain rules that apply to projects that add to or alter existing developments. The temporary code suspensions will not apply to new developments. The suspensions would last until January 1, 2029, to review the impact and consider permanent adoption.

The four upgrade requirements subject to the first proposal from the Code Alignment Project are:

1. Street Tree Planting: The adopted ordinance will temporarily exempt additions and alterations, not new building construction. The street tree planting requirement would also still apply to sites where sidewalk improvements are already required by the Portland Bureau of Transportation.
2. Street improvements for significant alterations: The adopted ordinance suspends frontage improvements for most alterations to existing buildings that do not increase occupancy, but some uses will not be exempt. Frontage improvements will continue to be assessed for site improvements that increase the daily trips to a site.
3. Seismic evaluation report: Currently, buildings built before 1974 require seismic evaluation reports when proposing additions and alterations with a project value of more than $362,000. The ordinance suspends the requirement of a seismic evaluation during the pause.
4. Site upgrades: Currently, the City's zoning code requires certain types of upgrades (bike parking, improvements to pedestrian connections, etc.) to additions and alterations with a project value of more than $356,000. The ordinance extends the pause for these kinds of upgrades on residential projects to all projects until January 1, 2029.

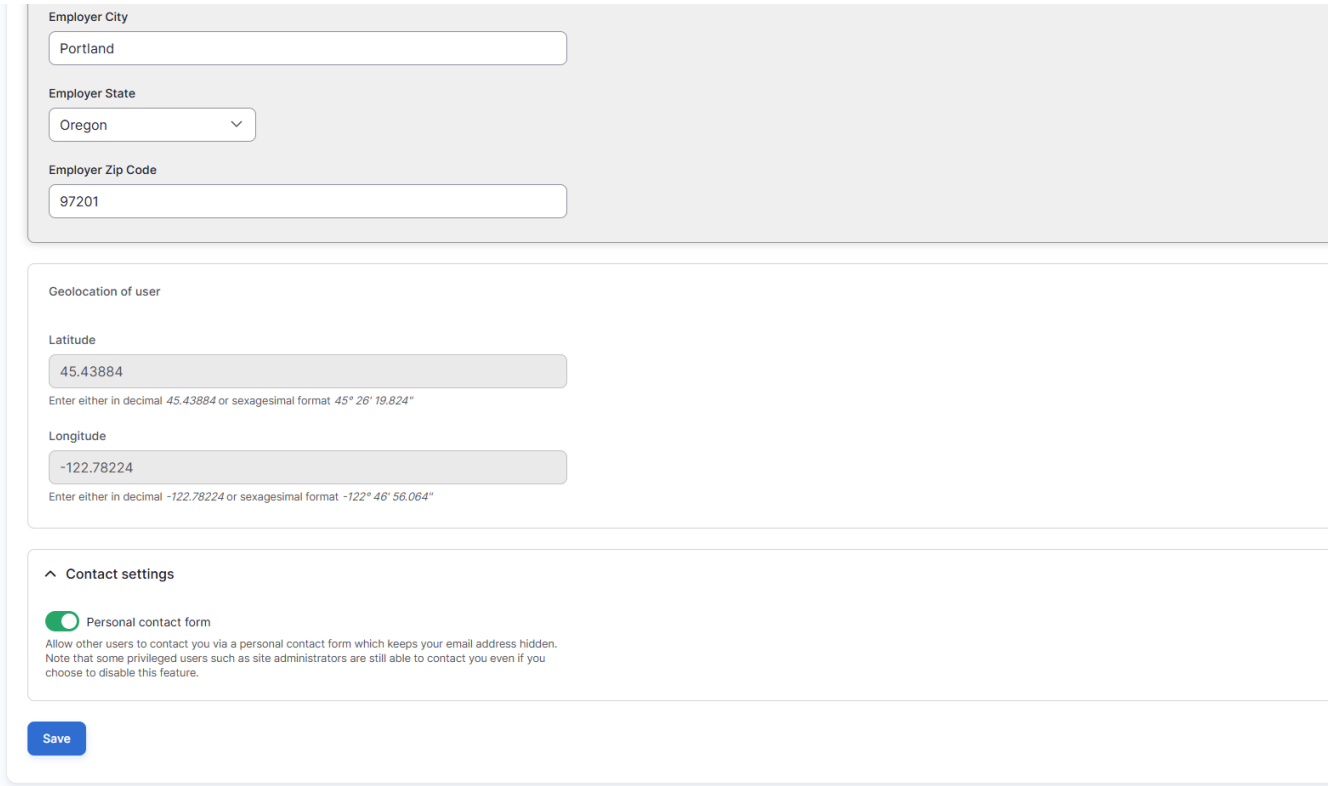
The temporary exemptions are intended to apply to building permits that are in the permit or inspection process and the temporary pause started October 24, 2025. More information can be found at:

https://www.portland.gov/community-economic-dev/news/2025/9/24/portland-city-council-approves-temporary-code-suspensions-0?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

SEER UPDATE
By: David Tarries, PE, SE

NCSEA SEER has been working to provide a channel for local jurisdictions to reach out for Building Safety Evaluators (BSE) where they do not have a state program in place. This will not likely be applicable on the west coast but could be an avenue for some areas of the country to reach out for help in the future. Oregon engineers that are interested in getting a call out to be deployed when requests come to NCSEA SEER will need to be registered on the Disaster Response Alliance website at: https://www.disasterresponse.org.

This is a joint venture between NCSEA and ICC to catalog professionals that can be deployed as safety evaluators after a disaster. The DRA website does not credential or vet any evaluators, they only provide a place to catalog resources. Please consider creating a login if you have taken training such as ATC 20, ATC 45, OrSAP, Cal OES SAP, WAsafe, etc. and are interested. There is currently not a specific Disaster Response Training item set up on the DRA website for OrSAP, but it can be added under the "Other Formal Disaster Inspection Training" box. If members have already created an account on the DRA website, please consider logging in and updating personal information. One key issue NCSEA discovered in the last year is that emails can't be sent out to request deployment if the account does not have the "Contact Settings" button for Personal contact form set to "on". The default setting is "off" so many possible evaluators have not been receiving notices from the DRA website. Below is a screenshot of the DRA account interface with the Contact Settings button shown for reference:



Deployment is a service to society and can be a great learning experience. Evaluators would almost certainly need to provide their own travel to the deployment location, which would need to be considered before accepting a deployment (employers may be able to assist with travel expenses without affecting liability protection). This deployment would be outside of OrSAP or any state entity so evaluators would need to confirm liability issues with the local government where they are being deployed.

If there are any questions about creating a DRA account, please email seer@seao.org.

SE3-OR: STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING ENGAGEMENT AND EQUITY OF OREGON 2023 TRANSPARENCY SURVEY REPORT

RESULTS ARE IN!!

The SE3-OR Committee, under SEAO (Structural Engineers Association of Oregon), conducted its first state-wide survey of structural engineers in the State of Oregon - primarily in the Portland metro area from July to August 2023. The survey report summarizes key results from the 2023 SE3-OR Transparency Survey. The survey is intended to provide Oregon and Southwest Washington structural engineers and their employers with information to better understand the current professional climate. The Oregon-based survey report was inspired by the NCSEA 2020 SE3 Survey and is intended to provide a more targeted insight into the profession specifically in Oregon.

The complete report can be accessed on the SEAO website **after** January 6, 2026. Please visit www.seao.org to review the entire report after January 6, 2026.

To collect responses, a survey link was published to the SEAO newsletter and additionally circulated to the structural engineering community through the SE3-OR email list. A high majority of respondents worked in Oregon rather than Southwest Washington, so geographical reference to the results herein will only reference Oregon.

The report is an effort to identify trends, to understand the underlying factors, and to initiate conversations on engagement and equity within the profession. The 2023 SE3-OR Survey focuses on three key study topics pertaining to work-life balance: compensation, work flexibility, and work satisfaction.

Acknowledgement of Limitations:

- Participation: There were a total of 85 respondents from 17 different firms. For reference, the 2020 NCSEA survey collected 164 respondents from Oregon, and SEAO has approximately 300 members.

- Demographics: While most responses are included throughout the report, identity-based responses with few individuals were excluded from correlations to protect individual identities and improve statistical significance. We value all responses and hope to include more diverse data in future surveys.

- Compensation: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator, as of November of 2025 (about 2.5 years after the survey was launched), inflation has risen 6.0%. Please keep that in mind when reviewing data related to salary. [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm]

- Report Creation: This report was created over months (well, years) by SE3-OR members volunteering their time to provide this information for free to the community. If you have any comments, questions, or would like to get involved with SE3-OR, please reach out to us at se3.seao@gmail.com with the subject line "Transparency Survey".

NCSEA UPCOMING LIVE WEBINARS

Register At: https://www.ncsea.com/education-events/calendar/

January 14, 2026, 10 am to 11 am Pacific Time (FREE)

Advanced Materials and Smart Tools for Designing Next-Generation Structural Retrofit on Existing Concrete Building by MAPEI - Free STRUCTURE Sponsored Webinar

Speaker: Luca Albertario, Regional Product Line Manager at MAPEI, based on Milan, Italy.

Aging buildings, congested infrastructure, and rising performance demands are increasing the need for reliable, efficient strengthening solutions. This presentation highlights a modern retrofit approach for reinforced concrete structures that combines high-performance FRP composites with thin UHPC overlays to boost flexural, shear, and confinement capacity with minimal thickness, rapid installation, and high durability. Built around an intuitive three-step framework—Assessment → Strengthening → Validation—the session reviews key design principles from ACI 440, 562, and 318 and introduces MAPEI Structural Design (MSD), a cloud-based tool for streamlined, code-aligned FRP and UHPC calculations. Real-world case studies, including UHPC column jacketing, FRP beam strengthening, and composite bridge girder rehabilitation, demonstrate design rationale, construction sequencing, and performance outcomes, offering engineers practical insight into delivering reliable, durable, and low-disruption retrofit solutions. (No continuing education credit being provided for this webinar.)

January 15, 2026, 10 am—11:30 am Pacific Time (Fee for Webinar/ Included in Webinar Subscription Package)

Code Compass: Navigating IBC, IRC, IFC & IEBC for Structural Engineers

Speakers: John "Buddy" Showalter, P.E., ICC; Sandra Hyde, P.E., ICC; and Rob Neale, CFPS, Integra Code Consultants

Which code applies—and when? Structural engineers often face the challenge of determining which building code governs a particular project. This webinar demystifies the scoping and application of the International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code (IRC), International Fire Code (IFC), and International Existing Building Code (IEBC). Whether you're designing a new commercial structure, modifying a residential home, or assessing an existing building, understanding the intent and scope of each code is critical. Join us for a practical, engineer-focused session that clarifies code boundaries and highlights common pitfalls to guide your decision-making. (1.5 PDH)

January 20, 2026, 10 am to 11 am Pacific Time (Fee for Webinar/Not Included in Webinar Subscription Package)

HSS Design Wall Thickness Requirements

Speaker: Kyle Tousignant Ph.D., P.E., Dalhousie Univ., Halifax, NS

The design wall thickness for ASTM A500 hollow structural section (HSS) is currently taken as 0.93 times the nominal wall thickness, as set by the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) in the United States; however, in Canada, the factor used is 0.90. This creates a cognitive barrier, leads to confusion, and impacts the viability of some members. In this session, Dr. Tousignant will investigate design wall thickness requirement for ASTM A500 HSS using modern dimensional data from producer quality control records. of required documentation. (1 PDH)

January 22, 2026, 10 am—11 am Pacific Time (Fee for Webinar/ Included in Webinar Subscription Package)

A Practical Guide to Reviewing Rebar Shop Drawings

Speaker: Nelly R Sanchez, P.E., STV, Inc.

Reviewing rebar shop drawings is a critical yet often challenging task for structural engineers, particularly those early in their careers. This webinar offers a practical, structured approach to reviewing rebar shop drawings effectively. Attendees will learn about the different type of shop drawings encountered in practice, how to identify essential information, and verify compliance with design intent and applicable codes. Through clear guidance and real-world insights, the session equips young engineers with the tools to perform more confident, consistent, and effective rebar shop drawing reviews. By the end of the webinar, attendees will be able to:

- Navigate and interpret rebar shop drawings efficiently, recognizing key information and common pitfalls that can impact constructability and design intent.
- Apply a structured review process to identify critical details and verify compliance with design drawings.
- Understand key code provisions and industry standards that influence rebar detailing, placement, and review requirements.
- Develop practical strategies and checklists to streamline the review process. (1 PDH)

January 27, 2026, 10 am to 11 am Pacific Time (Fee for Webinar/Not Included in Webinar Subscription Package)

Bolted HSS Column Splices

Speaker: Kyle Tousignant Ph.D., P.E., Dalhousie Univ., Halifax, NS

This webinar will feature a case study that highlights a common challenge faced by designers of bolted HSS column splices in the US. First, the AISC 341 requirements for column splices in moment resisting frames (MRFs) will be reviewed; then, the common design procedure (in accordance with AISC 360) will be demonstrated; and, finally, a key limitation will be brought to light. Dr. Tousignant will give his perspective on this limitation and demonstrate how new research form Dalhousie University could provide a solution. (1 PDH)

There are also recorded webinars that can be purchased for professional development hours (PDHs) online at https://www.ncsea.com/education-events/calendar/

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

VAK ENGINEERING
Structural Engineer
Oregon

VAK Construction Engineering Services is a Contractor-Focused engineering firm looking for candidates to fill an engineering position. VAK offers a range of contractor services, including design and drafting work in temporary structures associated with: bridge falsework, marine falsework, access structures and crane trestles, cofferdams and shoring, crane and heavy lift engineering, erection, demolition, equipment seismic/wind anchorage, and more. Candidates will ideally have passed their E.I.T., P.E., or S.E. exams and be eager to learn. Construction or Construction Engineering experience a plus, but an educational background in Civil or Structural engineering is a must. Depending on experience mechanical or CEM educational backgrounds may be acceptable. Those candidates with experience with RISA, Visual Analysis and/or SolidWorks Simulation are desired but not required. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit our website at:
www.vakengineering.com for more information, and submit resumes to akoiv@vakengineering.com

ASK A QUESTION, GET AN ANSWER

Do you have a code question you would like to ask the Wind Committee or Snow Committee?

SEAO is pleased to provide a simple way for Q&A's with technical committees. Email questions to jane@seao.org, and SEAO will direct your question to the appropriate committee chair for a response. Questions and their answers will be made anonymous and available to the membership on the website www.seao.org. Committees include: Seismic, Wind, Snow, Code, Vintage Building, and Special Inspections.

ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE

SEAO is pleased to provide full page advertising to members for $500 and to non-members for $600. That is the price to run the ad the entire year from September to August. If you'd like to advertise, please contact Jane at jane@seao.org.