



Finish Your Office Move: Notify the State Education Department

02.25.2008

After years in your familiar office, your lease is expiring. Months earlier, you did a careful investigation and analysis of available office space with a reputable broker and ultimately decided to relocate. Knowing the natural disruption that such a change engenders, you try to mitigate the interruption. Doing so requires careful scheduling and coordination with your old landlord, the new landlord, and movers. Very importantly, you prepare change of address notices, both via mail and electronically, advising all clients, consultants and friends of your new location. Care is taken to ensure that all of your vendors, banks, and suppliers are also apprised of this important news. When the move is complete, hopefully you have a party to celebrate your new and beautiful office space. After the chaos of the last year of implementing an office change, you can finally relax and settle into a long tenancy in the new space.

While one would naturally feel that you have discharged all responsibilities concerning your move, one omission has commonly occurred which has caused great difficulties to New York design professionals. The majority of licensed architects and engineers have registered their office address as the location for license renewals to be sent. Consequently, when the license renewal forms are sent out by the State Education Department ("SED"), they are sent to the address on file, i.e. the old office address. Unless one is extremely vigilant as to the expiration date of their architectural or

engineering license, they will be completely unaware of the license expiration. In these circumstances, the design professional continues to practice architecture or engineering blissfully unaware that they are practicing without a valid license. In the last two years, I have had to advise a number of architects and engineers who discovered that their licenses have expired due to a failure to notify the SED of their change of office address.

While this situation is usually rectified by contacting the SED, there are definite drawbacks. First, you must execute forms which acknowledge the temporary practice of your profession without a valid license. Moreover, license renewal will not be granted without first establishing compliance with the requirements of continuing education units. Finally, applicable fees, and potential penalties, are imposed. This unfortunate situation can be avoided by simply providing timely notice to the SED of the change of your office address. Doing so will avoid having to execute embarrassing documents that will remain in your SED file and could potentially comeback to haunt you in the event of a future investigation on other charges or offenses. (If your residence is the address on file with the SED, you must similarly provide notice in the event of a move).

ATTORNEYS

Raymond T. Mellon