



Ontario Association of  
**Landscape Architects**

## **POLICY FOR USE OF A PHYSICAL SEAL IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

### **1. DEFINITIONS**

**By-Laws** means the By-Laws of the OALA.

**Personal Signature** means the handwritten, personal signature of a Member.

**Physical Seal** means an ink seal, which is not digital, but which is imprinted onto documents using a stamp and which:

- confirms the identity of the OALA member who affixed the Physical Seal.
- confirms that the OALA member who affixed the Physical Seal is an OALA member with seal (as opposed to an OALA member with certificate only);
- confirms the OALA member is in good standing with the OALA; and
- serves as evidence that the OALA member who affixed the Physical Seal is a landscape architect in Ontario and that the document so sealed was prepared in its entirety under the personal supervision and direction of the member who affixed the Physical Seal.

**Member** means an OALA member with seal or an OALA member with certificate only (as applicable).

**OALA** means the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects.

**Document** includes but is not limited to, landscape plans, drawings, cost estimates, certification letter, any documents produced by a Landscape Architect requiring a seal.

**OALA member with seal** means an individual who can legally use the title Landscape Architect in Ontario and who has completed requirements for licensure in Ontario as prescribed in Section 6.1 of OALA By-laws and described in Section 7.2 of the OALA Handbook and including all sections of the Landscape Architectural Registration Exam.

**OALA member with certificate only** means an individual who can legally use the title Landscape Architect in Ontario and who has completed requirements for licensure in as prescribed in Section 6.1 of OALA By-laws and described in Section 7.2 of the OALA Handbook but has only completed three sections of the Landscape Architectural Registration Exam. Members with certificate only are not granted use of the Association's seal.

### **2. PURPOSE OF POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to set out OALA's professional standards on:

- the use of a Physical Seal by OALA members with custody of a seal.
- the use of a Personal Signature by OALA members with custody of a seal and for those members with certificate only; and

- the interpretation of Section 8 of the By-Laws regarding use of professional Seal and section 5.4 of the OALA Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice.

### 3. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy applies only to original documents produced in a hard-copy, paper form. If a member decides to finalize and produce electronic original documents, then the member should refer to the *Use of Digital Seal in Professional Practice*.

### 4. USE OF A PHYSICAL SEAL

**Appearance of Physical Seal.** The imprint of the Physical Seal shall be clear and legible on all copies of the documents or drawings to which it has been affixed.

**Use of Physical Seal Together with a Signature.** Where a Member chooses, or is asked by others, to sign their work it is recommended that the Personal Signature of the Member and date of said Personal Signature be clearly displayed within or adjacent to the Physical Seal (where a Physical Seal is affixed to the applicable drawings or documents).

*Please Note:* The use of initials without a surname, as a Personal Signature, is not appropriate.

**Use of Physical Seal in Reports.** The Physical Seal need not be applied to individual documents where they are bound into reports that have been dated and have the seal already affixed thereto.

**Use of Physical Seal in Draft Documents.** The Seal shall not be applied to preliminary or draft documents, drawings, specifications, reports and other work unless otherwise required by a regulatory agency. In either case these works should be clearly marked "PRELIMINARY", "DRAFT", and/or "NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION".

**Use of Physical Seal in Revised Documents.**

**Revisions to a Member's own Work.**

- Where a Member makes revisions to their own original documents (to which they originally affixed a Physical Seal) such revisions should be noted on the document or drawings in the revisions tracking title block on the document.

**Revisions to Another Member's Work is not permitted.**

- The use of a seal serves as evidence that the OALA member who affixed the Digital Seal is a landscape architect in Ontario and that the document so sealed was prepared in its entirety under the personal supervision and direction of the member who affixed the Digital Seal. If a Landscape Architect is hired to complete or continue the work started by another Landscape Architect, they must follow the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice section 5.4.9.