

Signaling Professionalism: Using Your Seal

Update: On March 14, 2015, the College approved the use of digital signatures issued by the third-party service provider Notarius. Please visit the College's page on the Notarius website for information about purchasing an electronic signature kit: <http://notarius.com/cab/#overview>

WHEN YOU BECAME a member of the College you were issued a seal — a stamp of the College with your name and member number. The seal is an important component of the visual identify of the College that reinforces our role and the standards that the College upholds. Over time this can contribute to broader awareness of the professional standards to which members are held, as well as improved credibility for the College, its members, and the profession of applied biology.

The purpose of the seal is to certify documents prepared by College members in their professional capacity as a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) or as a Registered Biology Technologist (RBTech). The seal is not a warranty or a guarantee but can be considered an indication that others can rely on the opinions and judgements provided by a College member in the sealed document or work product and know that the member is held to a high standard of knowledge, skill and ethical conduct.

The seal signifies that the College member accepts professional responsibility for the work contained in the document or work product.

The College encourages all registered members (RPBios and RBTechs) to affix their seal to all publications, monographs, reports, special letters, plans and drawings: and all such other professional papers and items containing professional

opinion or work products that he/she prepares or are prepared under his/her supervision.

Do I have to use my seal?

Rule 13.2 of the College says that members “should” use their seal rather than “must”; therefore, at this time use of the seal is not mandatory.

What does it mean to the documents or work product if I don't use my seal?

All of your work in applied biology is held to the same professional standard, whether or not you use your seal. You are still held to the same expected level of competence and accountability.

Can I sign off on a document or work product not completed by me?

Yes, you may sign and seal a document prepared by another person if you are satisfied that the work detailed in the document has been carried out to a standard acceptable of a College member. You should be aware of the protocol stated in Rules 13.3.1 and 13.3.2:

13.3.1 Where he/she is a Professional Biologist, he/she may sign and seal the Document and shall add the certification statement which reads “I certify that the work described herein fulfills standards acceptable of a Professional Biologist.”

13.3.2 Where he/she is a Registered Biology Technologist, he/she may

sign and seal the Document and shall add the certification statement which reads “I certify that the work described herein fulfills standards acceptable of a Registered Biology Technologist.”

I need to send my documents electronically to my client. How do I use my seal under these circumstances?

At this time the College does not permit the electronic distribution of signatures and seals. The recommended approach is to submit the document electronically, with a notation of “original signed and sealed” (or whatever note is correct, depending on whether the seal is attached), and forward either a copy of a signed and sealed page, or whatever the contract calls for (some will want an original, others a facsimile). The content of the electronically transmitted document can be confirmed by referring to the original hard copy.

The College seal contains my name and membership number separated by a horizontal line. Should I use my name or initials when I use my seal?

The College does not have an established policy that sets out how the seal is to be signed. The member can use their full name, initial the line and/or include the date the seal was affixed. 