

Prior Approval Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is “Prior Approval” and why do I/my firm need to sign a form?

A: The Federal Election Commission (FEC) requires our political action committee to obtain written approval from ACEC members before it may solicit and accept contributions from employees of the member firm.

Granting Prior Approval does not obligate the firm or its employees to support the PAC – it simply gives ACEC permission to communicate in much greater detail about the PAC to certain employees (a member’s owners/principals, managers, professional engineers, and other salaried, exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act) and the role it plays in advancing and protecting the industry’s interests in Washington.

Q: Can anyone from the firm sign the Prior Approval form?

A: Prior Approval may be granted by anyone so authorized by the firm. This includes the firm’s chief executive or the owner/principal, but may also include those designated to represent the firm at ACEC state and national meetings.

Q: Do I have to sign a Prior Approval form every year? Can I withdraw approval?

A: Prior Approval may be granted for up to five (5) consecutive years by the firm and may be withdrawn at any time. Only one approval form is required per firm.

Q: Will ACEC/PAC directly solicit employees at my firm?

A: That’s up to you. By signing a Prior Approval form, you could allow ACEC to solicit all principals and senior executives in your firm, or only certain individuals in the firm. You could also give ACEC approval, but request that no solicitations be made to firm employees, and ACEC will honor the request.

Q: Our firm has our own Federal PAC; can we still contribute to ACEC/PAC?

A: Yes. Even if your firm has a federally registered PAC, your employees can still contribute up to \$5,000 each year to ACEC/PAC. The same holds true for Federal PACs that give a “PAC-to-PAC” contribution to ACEC/PAC.

Q: If our firm signs a Prior Approval form, can firm members contribute to other PACs?

A: Yes, when a firm signs an ACEC/PAC Prior Approval form, it does not preclude firm employees from contributing to a state PAC, candidate PAC, corporate PAC, or an ideological PAC (i.e. National Rifle PAC, AARP, etc). The only restriction is that a firm cannot give approval to more than one trade association PAC. For example, a firm could not give Prior Approval to both ACEC/PAC and a connected corporate trade association PAC like ARTBA PAC for the same calendar year.

Q: Why should a firm sign a Prior Approval form?

A: In practical terms, granting Prior Approval allows firm employees who wish to support ACEC/PAC the ability to do so, since ACEC/PAC cannot accept contributions without a signed Prior Approval form. Because ACEC/PAC is the engineering industry’s biggest and most effective tool for helping to elect House and Senate members that support policies favorable to the industry. We need the support of every member to ensure the industry’s voice is heard on Capitol Hill.

If you have any questions, please contact ACEC/PAC Director, Elizabeth Coit, 202-682-4322 or ecoit@acec.org.