PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Right or Wrong: You Decide

Presented by:
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KSPE Annual Conference
June 24, 2021
Objectives

• Highlight need for ethics
• Introduce/refresh NSPE Ethics resources
• Have fun and learn by exploring real ethics cases
I pledge:
To give the utmost of performance;
To participate in none but honest enterprise;
To live and work according to the laws of man and the highest standards of professional conduct;
To place service before profit, the honor and standing of the profession before personal advantage, and the public welfare above all other considerations.
New London School Explosion

Example of Engineering Failure with Ethical Issues
EXAMPLE OF ENGINEERING FAILURE WITH ETHICAL ISSUES

New London School Explosion
A world where the public can be confident that the engineering decisions affecting their lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals.
In 1946, NSPE released its Canons of Ethics for Engineers and Rules of Professional Conduct, which evolved to the current Code of Ethics, adopted in 1964.
Preamble – Answers the question “Why have a Code of Ethics?”

Fundamental Canons – Describe the “bedrock” principles of Professional Engineers.

Rules of Practice – Describe the fundamental rules that govern the professional practice of engineering.

Professional Obligations – Describe the standards of professional conduct for Professional Engineers.
Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people.

Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.
Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:

1. Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
2. Perform services only in areas of their competence.
3. Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
5. Avoid deceptive acts.
6. Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.
While these statements of general principles served as a guide, many engineers requested interpretations of how the Canons and Rules would apply to specific circumstances. These requests ultimately led to the creation of the BER in 1954.
The Board of Ethical Review (BER) is a panel of engineering ethics experts that has served as the profession's guide through ethical dilemmas.

The board consists of seven licensed members who are appointed by the NSPE president.

The purpose of the BER is to render impartial opinions pertaining to the interpretation of the NSPE Code of Ethics, develop materials, and conduct studies relating to ethics of the engineering profession.
Continuing the Legacy of Providing Guidance

NSPE's Board of Ethical Review has over 67 years of service to the profession, and it continues to be a place where engineers openly discuss tough questions and provide guidance to others.

- Nearly 700 opinions published
- 12 cases published annually
- Searchable on-line database
BER Cases

• Open Access
• Searchable Database
  • Key Words
  • Code Section
• Subject
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• Should David speak at the conference?
• Discuss with Zach first
• Zach should communicate with the engineering association regarding David’s speaker status
• Was it ethical for Luke to seek to rescind the building department’s approval because he was not paid?
**BER Conclusions 17-6**

- Not ethical
- Promoting self-interest at the expense of the dignity and integrity of the profession

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<tr>
<th>NSPE Code of Ethics References</th>
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BER Case 17-3

• Did Sadie fulfill her ethical obligations under the NSPE Code of Ethics?
• Contrary to Board’s advice, Sadie did not fulfill her ethical obligations as a PE.
• She should take additional steps including, contacting building officials, homeowners, HOAs, community civic associations, etc.

NSPE Code of Ethics

References
BER Case 17-7

• What are Benjamin’s obligations under the circumstances?
Further report the situation to local, state and/or federal authorities to ensure relevant engineering standards are consistent with health, safety and welfare.

NSPE Code of Ethics

References

- I.1
- II.1.f
- II.3.a
- II.3.b
- III.2.a
- III.2.c
BER Case 18-11

- What are Carlos’s obligations under the circumstances?
• Carlos took appropriate actions with the DOT.
• While the BER believes Carlos fulfilled his ethical responsibility, since this is a matter of public safety, Carlos should also notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

NSPE Code of Ethics References
II.1
II.1.f
II.3.a
II.4
III.3.a
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