



# CODE OF ETHICS OF ENGINEERS

## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

*Engineers uphold and advance the integrity, honor and dignity of the engineering profession by:*

- I. using their knowledge and skill for the enhancement of human welfare;
- II. being honest and impartial, and servicing with fidelity the public, their employers and clients;
- III. striving to increase the competence and prestige of the engineering profession; and
- IV. supporting the professional and technical societies of their disciplines.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL CANONS

1. Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of their professional duties.
2. Engineers shall perform services only in the areas of their competence.
3. Engineers shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Engineers shall act in professional matters for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, and shall avoid conflicts of interest.
5. Engineers shall build their professional reputation on the merit of their services and shall not compete unfairly with others.
6. Engineers shall act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity and dignity of the profession.
7. Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers and shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those engineers under their supervision.

*Approved by the Board of Directors, October 5, 1977*

**SUGGESTED  
GUIDELINES FOR USE WITH  
THE FUNDAMENTAL CANONS OF ETHICS**

1. Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of their professional duties.
  - a. Engineers shall recognize that the lives, safety, health and welfare of the general public are dependent upon engineering judgments, decisions and practices incorporated into structures, machines, products, processes and devices.
  - b. Engineers shall not approve nor seal plans and/or specifications that do not conform with accepted engineering standards and are not design safe, as it would endanger public health and welfare.
  - c. Should the Engineers' professional judgment be overruled under circumstances where the safety, health, and welfare of the public are endangered, the Engineers shall inform their clients or employers of the possible consequences and notify other proper authority of the situation, as may be appropriate.
    - (c.1) Engineers shall do whatever possible to provide published standards, test codes and quality control procedures that will enable the public to understand the degree of safety or life expectancy associated with the use of the design, products and systems for which they are responsible.
    - (c.2) Engineers will conduct reviews of the safety and reliability of the design, products or systems for which they are responsible before giving their approval to the plans for the design.
    - (c.3) Should Engineers observe conditions, which they believe, will endanger public safety or health, they shall inform the proper authority of the situation.
  - d. Should Engineers have knowledge or reason to believe that another person or firm may be in violation of any of the provisions of the Guidelines, they shall present such information to the proper authority in writing and shall cooperate with the proper authority in furnishing such further information or assistance as may be required.
    - (d.1) They shall advise proper authority if an adequate review of the safety and reliability of the products or systems has not been made or when the design imposes hazards to the public through its use.
    - (d.2) They shall withhold approval of products of systems when changes or modifications are made which would adversely affect its performance insofar as safety and reliability are concerned.
  - e. Engineers should seek opportunities to be of constructive service in civic affairs and work for the advancement of the safety, health and well being of their communities.
  - f. Engineers should be committed to improving the environment to enhance the quality of life.
2. Engineers shall perform services only in areas of their competence.
  - a. Engineers shall undertake to perform engineering assignments only when qualified by education or experience in the specific technical field of engineering involved.
  - b. Engineers may accept an assignment requiring education or experience outside of their own fields of competence, but only to the extent that their services are restricted to those phases of the project in which they are qualified. All other phases of such project shall be performed by qualified associates, consultants, or employees.
  - c. Engineers shall not affix their signatures and/or seals to any engineering plan or document dealing with subject matter in which they lack competence by virtue of education or experience, nor to any such plan or document not prepared under their direct supervisory control.
3. Engineers shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
  - a. Engineers shall endeavor to extend public knowledge, and to prevent misunderstandings of the achievements of engineering.
  - b. Engineers shall be completely objective and truthful in all professional reports, statements, or testimony. They shall include all relevant and pertinent information in such reports, statements, or testimony.
  - c. Engineers, when serving as expert or technical witnesses before any court, commission, or other tribunal, shall express an engineering opinion only when it is founded upon adequate knowledge of the facts in issue, upon a background of technical competence in the subject matter, and upon honest conviction of the accuracy and propriety of their testimony.
  - d. Engineers shall issue no statements, criticisms, nor arguments on engineering matters which are inspired or paid for by an interested party, or parties, unless they have prefaced their comments by explicitly identifying themselves, by disclosing the identities of the party or parties on whose behalf they are speaking, and by revealing the existence of any pecuniary interest they may have in the instant matters.
  - e. Engineers shall be dignified and modest in explaining their work and merit, and will avoid any act tending to promote their own interests at the expense of the integrity, honor and dignity of the profession.
4. Engineers shall act in professional matters for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, and shall avoid conflicts of interest.
  - a. Engineers shall avoid all known conflicts of interest with their employers or clients of any business association, interests, or circumstances, which could influence their judgment or the quality of their services.
  - b. Engineers shall not knowingly undertake any assignments, which would knowingly create a potential conflict of interest between themselves and their clients or their employees.
  - c. Engineers shall not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, nor for services pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to, and agreed to, by all interested parties.
  - d. Engineers shall not solicit nor accept financial or other valuable considerations, including free engineering designs, from material or equipment suppliers for specifying their products.
  - e. Engineers shall not solicit nor accept gratuities, directly or indirectly, from contractors, their agents, or

- other parties dealing with their clients or employers in connection with work for which they are responsible.
- f. When in public service as members, advisors, or employees of a governmental body or department, Engineers shall not participate in considerations or actions with respect to services provided by them or their organization in private or product engineering practice.
  - g. Engineers shall not solicit nor accept an engineering contract from a governmental body on which a principal, officer or employee of their organization serves as a member.
  - h. When, as a result of their studies, Engineers believe a project will not be successful, they shall so advise their employer or client.
  - i. Engineers shall treat information coming to them in the course of their assignments as confidential, and shall not use such information as a means of making personal profit if such action is adverse to the interests of their clients, their employers, or the public.
    - (i.1) They will not disclose confidential information concerning the business affairs of technical processes of any present or former employer or client or bidder under evaluation, without his consent.
    - (i.2) They shall not reveal confidential information or findings of any commission or board of which they are members.
    - (i.3) They shall not duplicate designs supplied by clients for others without permission from the client.
    - (i.4) While in the employ of others, Engineers will not enter promotional efforts or negotiations for work or make arrangements for other employment as principals or to practice in connection with specific projects for which they have gained particular and specialized knowledge without the consent of all interested parties.
  - j. The Engineer shall act with fairness and justice to all parties when administering a construction (or other) contract.
  - k. Before undertaking work for others in which Engineers may make improvements, plans, designs, inventions, or other records which may justify copyrights or patents, they shall enter into a positive agreement regarding ownership.
  - l. Engineers shall admit and accept their own errors when proven wrong and refrain from distorting or altering the fact(s) to justify their decisions.
  - m. Engineers shall not accept professional employment outside of their regular work or interest without the knowledge of their employers.
  - n. Engineers shall not attempt to attract an employee from another employer by false or misleading representations.
  - o. Engineers shall not review the work of other Engineers except with the knowledge of such Engineers, or unless the assignments or contractual agreements for the work have been terminated.
    - (o.1) Engineers in governmental, industrial or educational employment are entitled to review and evaluate the work of other engineers when so required by their duties.
    - (o.2) Engineers in sales or industrial employment are entitled to make engineering comparisons of their products with products of other suppliers.
    - (o.3) Engineers in sales employment shall not offer nor give engineering consultation or designs or advice that does not specifically apply to equipment, materials or systems being sold or offered for sale by them.
5. Engineers shall build their professional reputation on the merit of their services and shall not compete unfairly with others.
    - a. Engineers shall not pay nor offer to pay, either directly or indirectly, any commission, political contribution, or a gift, or other consideration in order to secure work, exclusive of securing salaried positions through employment agencies.
    - b. Engineers should negotiate contracts for professional services fairly and only on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications for the type of professional service required.
    - c. Engineers should negotiate a method and rate of compensation commensurate with the agreed upon scope of services. A meeting of the minds of the parties to the contract is essential to mutual confidence. The public interest requires that the cost of engineering services be fair and reasonable, but not the controlling consideration in selection of individuals or firms to provide these services.
      - (c.1) These principles shall be applied by Engineers in obtaining the services of other professionals.
    - d. Engineers shall not attempt to supplant other Engineers in a particular employment after becoming aware that definite steps have been taken toward the others' employment or after they have been employed.
      - (d.1) They shall not solicit employment from clients who already have Engineers under contract for the same work.
      - (d.2) They shall not accept employment from clients who already have Engineers for the same work that is not yet completed or not yet paid for. The only exception is if the performance or payment requirements in the contract are being litigated or the contracted Engineers' services have been terminated in writing by either party.
      - (d.3) In the case of termination of litigation, before accepting the assignment, the prospective Engineers shall advise the Engineers being terminated or involved in litigation.
    - e. Engineers shall not request, propose nor accept professional commissions on a contingent basis under circumstances under which their professional judgments may be compromised, or when a contingency provision is used as a device for promoting or securing a professional commission.
    - f. Engineers shall not falsify nor permit misrepresentation of their, or their associates' academic or professional qualifications. They shall not misrepresent nor exaggerate their degree of responsibility in or for the subject matter of prior assignments. Brochures or other presentations incident to the solicitation of employment shall not misrepresent pertinent facts concerning employers, employees, associates, joint ventures, or their past accomplishments with the intent and purpose of enhancing their qualifications and work.
    - g. Engineers may advertise professional services only as a means of identification and limited to the following:
      - (g.1) Professional cards and listings in recognized and dignified publications, provided they are consistent in size and are in a section of the publication regularly devoted to such professional cards and listings. The information displayed must be restricted to firm name, address, telephone number, appropriate

- symbol, names of principal participants and the fields of practice in which the firm is qualified.
- (g.2) Signs on equipment, offices and at the site of projects for which they render services, limited to firm name, address, telephone number and type of services, as appropriate.
  - (g.3) Brochures, business cards, letterheads and other factual representations of experience, facilities, personnel and capacity to render service, providing the same are not misleading relative to the extent of participation in the projects cited and are not indiscriminately distributed.
  - (g.4) Listings in the classified section of telephone directories, limited to name, address, telephone number and specialties in which the firm is qualified without resorting to special or bold type.
- h. Engineers may use display advertising in recognized dignified business and professional publications, providing it is factual, and relates only to engineering, is free from ostentation, contains no laudatory expressions or implication, is not misleading with respect to the Engineers' extent of participation in the services or projects described.
    - i. Engineers may prepare articles for the lay or technical press, which are factual, dignified and free from ostentations or laudatory implications. Such articles shall not imply other than their direct participation in the work described unless credit is given to others for their share of the work.
    - j. Engineers may extend permission for their names to be used in commercial advertisements, such as may be published by manufactures, contractors, material suppliers, etc., only by means of a modest dignified notation acknowledging their participation and the scope thereof in the project or product described. Such permission shall not include public endorsement of proprietary products.
  - k. Engineers may advertise for recruitment of personnel in appropriate publications or by special distribution. The information presented must be displayed in a dignified manner, restricted to firm name, address, telephone number, appropriate symbol, names of principal participants, the fields of practice in which the firm is qualified and factual descriptions of positions available, qualifications required and benefits available.
  - l. Engineers shall not enter competitions for designs for the purpose of obtaining commissions for specific projects, unless provision is made for reasonable compensation for all designs submitted.
  - m. Engineers shall not maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, injure the professional reputation, prospects, and practice of employment of another's work.
  - n. Engineers shall not undertake nor agree to perform any engineering service on a free basis, except professional services, which are advisory in nature for civic, charitable, religious or non-profit organizations. When serving as members of such organizations, engineers are entitled to utilize their professional engineering knowledge in the service of these organizations.
    - o. Engineers shall not use equipment, supplies, laboratory nor office facilities of their employers to carry on outside private practice without consent.
    - p. In case of tax-free or tax-aided facilities, engineers should not use student services at less than rates of other employees of comparable competence, including fringe benefits.
6. Engineers shall act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity and dignity of the profession.
    - a. Engineers shall not knowingly associate with nor permit the use of their names nor firm names in business ventures by any person or firm which they know, or have reason to believe, are engaging in business or professional practices of a fraudulent or dishonest nature.
    - b. Engineers shall not use association with non-engineers, corporations, nor partnerships as "cloaks" for unethical acts.
  7. Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers, and shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those engineers under their supervision.
    - a. Engineers shall encourage their engineering employees to further their education.
    - b. Engineers should encourage their engineering employees to become registered at the earliest possible date.
    - c. Engineers should encourage engineering employees to attend and present papers at professional and technical society meetings.
    - d. Engineers should support the professional and technical societies of their disciplines.
    - e. Engineers shall give proper credit for engineering work to those to whom credit is due, and recognize the proprietary interest of others. Whenever possible, they shall name the person or persons who may be responsible for designs, inventions, writings or other accomplishments.
    - f. Engineers shall endeavor to extend the public knowledge of engineering, and shall not participate in the dissemination of untrue, unfair or exaggerated statements regarding engineering.
    - g. Engineers shall uphold the principle of appropriate and adequate compensation for those engaged in engineering work.
    - h. Engineers should assign professional engineers duties of a nature which will utilize their full training and experience insofar as possible, and delegate lesser functions to sub-professionals or to technicians.
    - i. Engineers shall provide prospective engineering employees with complete information on working conditions and their proposed status of employment, and after employment shall keep them informed of any changes.