

CANONS OF ETHICS FOR ENGINEERS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Adopted by resolution October 31, 1962
Amended June 1979; June 1989; October 2017

Foreword

Honesty, justice, and courtesy form a moral philosophy which, associated with mutual interest among people, constitutes the foundation of ethics. Engineers should recognize such a standard, not in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding their conduct and way of life. It is their duty to practice the profession according to these Canons of Ethics. As the keystone of professional conduct is integrity, engineers will discharge their duties with fidelity to the public, their employers, and clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all. It is the engineers' duty to interest themselves in public welfare, and to be ready to apply their special knowledge for the benefit of humankind. Engineers should uphold the honor and dignity of the profession and also avoid association with any enterprise of questionable character. In their dealings with fellow engineers, they should be fair and tolerant.

Professional Life

Sec. 1. Engineers will cooperate in extending the effectiveness of the engineering profession by interchanging information and experience with other engineers and students and by contributing to the work of engineering societies, schools, and the scientific and engineering press.

Sec. 2. Engineers will not advertise in a false or deceptive manner.

Relations with the Public

Sec. 3. Engineers will endeavor to extend public knowledge of engineering and will discourage the spreading of untrue, unfair, and exaggerated statements regarding engineering.

Sec. 4. Engineers will have due regard for the safety of life and health of the public and employees who may be affected by the work for which they are responsible.

Sec. 5. Engineers will express opinions only when they are founded on adequate knowledge and honest conviction while serving as witnesses before a court, commission, or other tribunal.

Sec. 6. Engineers will not issue ex parte statements, criticisms, or arguments on matters connected with public policy which are inspired or paid for by private interests, unless they indicate on whose behalf they are making the statement.

Sec. 7. Engineers will refrain from expressing publicly an opinion on an engineering subject unless they are informed as to the facts relating thereto.

Relations with Clients and Employers

Sec. 8. Engineers will act in professional matters for each client or employer as faithful agents or trustees.

Sec. 9. Engineers will act with fairness and justice between their client or employer and the contractor when dealing with contracts.

Sec. 10. Engineers will make their status clear to their client or employer before undertaking an engagement if they may be called upon to decide on the use of inventions, apparatus, or any other thing in which they may have a financial interest.

Sec. 11. Engineers will present clearly the consequences to be expected from deviations proposed if their engineering judgment is overruled by nontechnical authority in cases where they are responsible for the technical adequacy of engineering work.

Sec. 12. Engineers will engage, or advise their client or employer to engage, and they will cooperate with, other experts and specialists whenever the client's or employer's interests are best served by such service.

Sec. 13. Engineers will disclose no information concerning the business affairs or technical processes of clients or employers without their consent.

Sec. 14. Engineers will not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one interested party for the same service, or for services pertaining to the same work, without the consent of all interested parties.

Sec. 15. Engineers will not accept commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from contractors or other parties dealing with their client or employer in connection with work for which they are responsible.

Sec. 16. Engineers will not be financially interested in the bids as or of a contractor on competitive work for which they are employed as engineers unless they have the consent of their client or employer.

Sec. 17. Engineers will promptly disclose to their client or employer any interest in a business which may compete with or affect the business of their client or employer. Engineers will not allow an interest in any business to affect their decision regarding engineering work for which they are employed or which they may be called upon to perform.

Relations with Engineers

Sec. 18. Engineers will endeavor to protect the engineering profession collectively and individually from misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Sec. 19. Engineers will take care that credit for engineering work is given to those to whom credit is properly due.

Sec. 20. Engineers will endeavor to provide opportunity for the professional development and advancement of engineers in their employ.

Sec. 21. Engineers will not directly or indirectly injure the professional reputation, prospects, or practice of other engineers. However, if they consider that another engineer is guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practice, they will present the information to the proper authority for action.

Sec. 22. Engineers will exercise due restraint in criticizing other engineers' work in public, recognizing the fact that the engineering societies and the engineering press provide the proper forum for technical discussions and criticism.

Sec. 23. Engineers will establish financial relationships with clients and with other engineers based on an obligation to discharge their duties with fidelity to the public, to their clients, to their employers and to their employees. At no time shall their impartiality or dedication to safety and service be compromised in the interest of financial gain.

Sec. 24. Engineers may review the work performed by another engineer for the same client, or for a different client, only after notification is given to the other engineer.

Sec. 24a. Engineers need not notify the other engineer that they are reviewing the work when:

(1) The review is conducted by government regulatory bodies, such as building inspection departments, agency staff engineers, etc., as part of the regular procedure in design and construction.

(2) The case is in litigation and the other engineer is one of the parties involved.

(3) The competency of the other engineer is under investigation by a duly authorized government agency and where an independent confidential review by another engineer is required.

Sec. 24b. Except when engineers are not required to inform the other engineer, they shall inform the other engineer of any differences of opinion in the reviewed work in all cases where their review is not required to be confidential due to the expressed stipulation by their clients and/or on advice of counsel, in which case they shall so inform the other engineer.

Sec. 25. Engineers will not become associated in responsibility for work with engineers who do not conform to ethical practices.