

Statement of Principles of Professional Conduct of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers

Adopted by the Board of Directors, August 4, 1950

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I. CANONS OF ETHICS FOR ENGINEERS

Being the statement developed and promulgated by the Engineers' Council for Professional Development, as a standard for all national engineering society groups.

Foreword

Honesty, justice, and courtesy form a moral philosophy which, associated with mutual interest among men, constitutes the foundation of ethics. The engineer should recognize such a standard, not in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding his conduct and way of life. It is his duty to practice his profession according to these Canons of Ethics.

As the keystone of professional conduct is integrity, the engineer will discharge his duties with fidelity to the public, his employers, and clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all. It is his duty to interest himself in public welfare, and to be ready to apply his special knowledge for the benefit of mankind. He should uphold the honor and dignity of his profession and also avoid association with any enterprise of questionable character. In his dealings with fellow engineers he should be fair and tolerant.

Professional Life

Sec. 1. The engineer 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. He will not advertise his work or merit in a self-laudatory manner, and he will avoid all conduct or practice likely to discredit or do injury to the dignity and honor of his profession.

Relations with the Public

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

Sec. 4. He 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 he is responsible.

Sec. 5. He will express an opinion only when it is founded on adequate knowledge and honest conviction while he is serving as a witness before a court, commission, or other tribunal.

Sec. 6. He 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 he indicates on whose behalf he is making the statement.

Sec. 7. He will refrain from expressing publicly an opinion on an engineering subject unless he is informed as to the facts relating thereto.

Relations with Clients and Employers

Sec. 8. The engineer will act in professional matters for each client or employer as a faithful agent or trustee.

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

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

Sec. 11. He will guard against conditions that are dangerous or threatening to life, limb, or property on work for which he is responsible, or if he is not responsible, will promptly call such conditions to the attention of those who are responsible.

Sec. 12. He will present clearly the consequences to be expected from deviations proposed if his engineering judgment is overruled by nontechnical authority in cases where he is responsible for the technical adequacy of engineering work.

Sec. 13. He will engage, or advise his client or employer to engage, and he will cooperate with, other experts and specialists whenever the client's or employer's interests are best served by such service.

Sec. 14. He will disclose no information concerning the business affairs or technical processes of clients or employers without their consent.

Sec. 15. He 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. 16. He will not accept commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from contractors or other parties dealing with his client or employer in connection with work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 17. He will not be financially interested in the bids as or of a contractor on competitive work for which he is employed as an engineer unless he has the consent of his client or employer.

Sec. 18. He will promptly disclose to his client or employer any interest in a business which may compete with or affect the business of his client or employer. He will not allow an interest in any business to affect his decision regarding engineering work for which he is employed, or which he may be called upon to perform.

Relations with Engineer

Sec. 19. The engineer will endeavor to protect the engineering profession collectively and individually from misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Sec. 20. He will take care that credit for engineering work is given to those to whom credit is properly due.

Sec. 21. He will uphold the principle of appropriate and adequate compensation for those engaged in engineering work, including those in subordinate capacities, as being in the public interest and maintaining the standards of the profession.

Sec. 22. He will endeavor to provide opportunity for the professional development and advancement of engineers in his employ.

Sec. 23. He will not directly or indirectly injure the professional reputation, prospects, or practice of another engineer. However, if he considers that an engineer is guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practice, he will present the information to the proper authority for action.

Sec. 24. He will exercise due restraint in criticizing another engineer's work in public, recognizing the fact that the engineering societies and the engineering press provide the proper forum for technical discussions and criticism.

Sec. 25. He will not try to supplant another engineer in a particular employment after becoming aware that definite steps have been taken toward the other's employment.

Sec. 26. He will not compete with another engineer on the basis of charges for work by underbidding, through reducing his normal fees after having been informed of the charges named by the other.

Sec. 27. He will not use the advantages of a salaried position to compete unfairly with another engineer.

Sec. 28. He will not become associated in responsibility for work with engineers who do not conform to ethical practices.

II. CODE OF BUSINESS PRACTICE

Being those principles contained in the original code of the Insti-

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tute not covered by the Canons of the Engineers' Council for Professional Development.

Character of Enterprise with Which the Engineer is Identified

Sec. 1. It is the duty of the engineer to satisfy himself to the best of his ability that the enterprises with which he becomes identified are of legitimate character. If after becoming associated with an enterprise he finds it to be of questionable character, he should sever his connection with it as soon as practicable.

Ownership of Engineering Data and Records

Sec. 2. It is desirable that an engineer undertaking for others work in connection with which he may make improvements, inventions, plans, designs, or other records, should enter into an agreement regarding their ownership.

Sec. 3. If an engineer uses information which is not common knowledge or public property, but which he obtains from a client or employer, the results in the form of plans, designs, or other records, should not be regarded as his property, but the property of his client or employer.

Sec. 4. If an engineer uses only his own knowledge, or information which by prior publication, or otherwise, is public property and obtains no engineering data from a client or employer, except performance specifications or routine information, then in the absence of an agreement to the contrary the results in the form of inventions, plans, designs, or other records, should be regarded as the property of the engineer, and the client or employer should be entitled to their use only in the case for which the engineer was retained.

Sec. 5. All work and results accomplished by the engineer in the form of inventions, plans, designs, or other records, that are outside of the field of engineering for which a client or employer has retained him, should be regarded as the engineer's property unless there is an agreement to the contrary.

Sec. 6. When an engineer or manufacturer builds apparatus from designs supplied to him by a customer, the designs remain the property of the customer and should not be duplicated by the engineer or manufacturer for others without express permission. When the engineer or manufacturer and a customer jointly work out designs and plans or develop inventions, a clear understanding should be reached before the beginning of the work regarding the respective rights of ownership in any inventions, designs, or matters of similar character, that may result.

Sec. 7. Any engineering data or information which an engineer obtains from his client or employer, or which he creates as a result of such information, may be considered confidential by the engineer; and while he is justified in using such data or information in his own practice as forming part of his professional experience, its publication without express permission is improper.

Sec. 8. Designs, data, records, and notes made by an employee and referring exclusively to his employer's work, should be regarded as his employer's property.

Sec. 9. A customer, in buying apparatus, does not acquire any right in its design but only the use of the apparatus purchased. A client does not acquire any right to the ideas developed and plans made by a consulting engineer except for the specific case for which they were made.

The Engineer's Relations to the Public and to the Engineering Profession

Sec. 10. It is desirable that the first publication concerning inventions or other engineering advances should not be made through the public press, but before engineering societies or through technical publications.

Sec. 11. It is unprofessional to give an opinion on a subject without being fully informed as to all the facts relating thereto and as to the purposes for which the information is asked. The opinion should contain a full statement of the conditions under which it applies.

Sec. 12. An engineer in responsible charge of work should not permit non-technical persons to overrule his engineering judgments on purely engineering grounds.

III. USE OF MEMBERSHIP DESIGNATIONS AND INSTITUTE INSIGNIA

Sec. 13. The use of a membership designation, such as Fellow, Member, Associate, or Honorary Member, is a purely personal privilege of the individual member. It may be used with the member's name on stationery and in any ethical professional advertising. But a corporation, association, or firm may not itself use any membership designation because of the individual membership status possessed by a representative of a corporation, association, or firm.

Sec. 14. Insignia of the Institute, that is, any symbol such as an imprint of the badge design, or a heading such as "American Institute of Electrical Engineers," should be used only for Institute business and publications. The personal use of Institute insignia by a member should be limited to wearing an officially issued badge of the appropriate grade.

HISTORY OF THE CANONS AND CODE

THE INSTITUTE CODE

At the Milwaukee convention in May 1906, Dr. Schuyler Skaats Wheeler delivered his presidential address on "Engineering Honor." It was the sense of the convention that the ideas contained in this address should be embodied in a Code of Ethics for the electrical engineering profession, and to this end the following committee was appointed in October 1906:

SCHUYLER SKAATS WHEELER, *Chairman*

H. W. BUCK

CHARLES P. STEINMETZ

In May 1907, the committee reported a code to the President and Board of Directors for discussion at the June convention at Niagara Falls. It was discussed and approved by the convention, and it was taken up by the Board of Directors on August 30, 1907, revised, printed, and submitted to the membership for suggestions to be sent to a new committee appointed by President Stott.

In June 1911, in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors, President Jackson reappointed a committee which was assisted by eighteen advisory members, as follows:

WILLIAM S. BARSTOW
LOUIS BELL
JOHN J. CARTY
FRANCIS B. CROCKER
DUGALD C. JACKSON
A. E. KENNELLY

JOHN W. LIEB, JR.
C. O. MAILLOUX
RALPH D. MERSHON
HENRY H. NORRIS
RALPH W. POPE
HARRIS J. RYAN

CHARLES F. SCOTT
SAMUEL SHELDON
WILLIAM STANLEY
LEWIS B. STILLWELL
ELIHU THOMSON
W. D. WEAVER

This committee's work was presented in a report to the Board of Directors on February 9, 1912, when the code was tentatively adopted and the title of the committee and of the code was changed from that of Code of Ethics to Code of Principles of Professional Conduct. After a month's careful analysis and consideration of numerous suggestions from the advisory members of the committee and others, the completed code was adopted at the meeting of the Board of Directors on March 8, 1912.

On March 17, 1922, the Board of Directors adopted resolutions re-affirming adherence to the code, and providing that it shall be the duty of the Committee on Code of Principles of Professional Conduct to advise inquirers respecting questions of proper professional conduct, and to investigate and report upon any practice of a member of this Institute which might be prejudicial to the welfare of the Institute, the engineering profession, or the community.

Since 1912 the following have served as members of the Committee on Code of Principles of Professional Conduct:

C. A. ADAMS
P. L. ALGER
R. E. ARGERSINGER
A. H. BARCOCK
HARRY BARKER
H. H. BARNES, JR.
C. R. BEARDSLEY
B. A. BEEREND
H. W. BUCK
H. V. CARPENTER
H. P. CHARLESWORTH
L. W. CHUBB
EDITH CLARKE
GANO DUNN
F. F. EVENSON
D. D. EWING
G. FACCIOLO
E. S. FIELDS
E. H. FLATH
J. C. FORSYTHE
N. E. FUNK

H. B. GEAR
HAROLD GOODWIN, JR.
CARL A. HEINZE
F. B. JEWETT
JOHN F. KELLY
W. B. KOUWENHOVEN
W. S. LEE
JOHN W. LIEB
H. P. LIVERSIDGE
A. M. MACCUTCHEON
R. D. MAXSON
A. S. McALLISTER
R. D. MERSHON
E. B. MEYER
W. E. MITCHELL
L. F. MOREHOUSE
E. L. MORELAND
S. H. MORTENSEN
H. N. MULLER
FARLEY OSGOOD
JOHN C. PARKER

M. PENN
W. M. PIATT
H. T. PLUMB
HARRIS J. RYAN
H. R. SARGENT
A. M. SCHOEN
R. F. SCHUCHARDT
GEORGE F. SEVER
C. E. SKINNER
HAROLD B. SMITH
WALTER CHARLES SMITH
R. W. SORENSON
C. E. STEPHENS
L. B. STILLWELL
JOHN B. TAYLOR
G. A. WATERS
JAMES S. WATERS
SCHUYLER SKAATS WHEELER
J. B. WHITEHEAD
W. E. WICKENDEN
H. S. WYNKOOP

THE CANONS OF THE ENGINEERS' COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A project for a uniform statement of ethics to be formally adopted in the American engineering world was first organized under the auspices of the American Engineering Council, with Dugald C. Jackson as Chairman of a special committee. The Council was dissolved in 1940 but the Engineers' Council for Professional Development had come into existence and took on the responsibility for this committee which continued with Dr. Jackson as Chairman down to 1948. This committee was made up of a representative of each one

of the eight constituent societies of the Council plus the American Institute of Consulting Engineers.

The committee in 1942 came to agreement on a formulation of Canons of Ethics consisting of 31 items. This was approved by the Council and forwarded to the constituent societies with the request that each society through its Board should give the Council its views of the Canons. The American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the National Council of State Boards of Engineering Examiners approved the Canons in principle. The Council of the American Institute of Consulting Engineers advanced changes in phraseology and in arrangement of items, which statement was then referred to as the Alternative Draft. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers accepted the Canons in principle with a preference for the Alternative Draft. The American Society of Civil Engineers approved in principle a committee draft similar to the Alternative. The Engineering Institute of Canada approved a draft largely founded on the alternatives. In April 1947, the Committee of the Council adopted the statement of the Engineering Institute of Canada (which society had the benefit of the preceding years of discussion before making its formulation) with some slight modifications. The Executive Committee of the Council approved this

statement and recommended to its constituent societies that it be adopted. The Council in October 1947, in accordance with the assent of seven of the eight constituent societies adopted the revised Canons as the official formulation for the engineering field, and recommended its adoption by the separate societies.

The Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers adopted the revised Canons on November 5, 1947, advising its Committee on Principles of Professional Conduct to revise the Institute's old Code to accord with such action.

The "Statement of Principles of Professional Conduct," as above printed, was recommended to the Directors by the 1949-1950 Institute Committee embodying the Canons and supplementing them with certain rules of business practice from the old code not embodied in the Canons. The Statement was adopted by the Directors on August 4, 1950.

The "Canons of Ethics for Engineers," Part I of this statement, printed on rag paper in a size, 9 inches by 14 inches, suitable for mounting, may be purchased from Engineers' Council for Professional Development, 29-33 West 39th Street, New York 18, N. Y., at a price of 50¢ each—35¢ in lots of ten or more. Please include remittance with order.