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Profession



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Engineering

Ethics in Engineering

An engineer may come across a lot of cases and issues during their working life. Moreover engineers need to take certain ethical decisions while working on such cases and issues. One of the most intriguing issues may arise on refusing to sign or seal construction documents.

An engineer (A) resigned from the current organization to work for a rival firm. Prior to leaving the firm, the engineer did not sign or seal the construction documents for the project he was accountable for (Anonymous, 1). Also the project was incomplete at the time he left. Later on, a principal (B) from his previous organization approached him and requested to sign and seal the construction documents. The case presents two ethical issues. First, whether the defecting employee (here the engineer A) is obliged to sign and seal the construction documents. Second, whether the defecting employee concerned is entitled to any payments after signing and sealing the construction documents.

After hearing pertinent opinions of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), the board of ethical review may arrive at a sound judgement. Professional engineers are required by the NSPE code of ethics section II. 4. b to act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees. According to this ethical code, an engineer is not permitted to receive any compensation from diverse firms working on the same project. Compensation may be given to the engineer only after the circumstances pertaining to the case is disclosed and all parties concerned come to a consensus. Professional ethical obligations require an engineer not to accept

external employment if it is harmful to the interests of the current employer. Also an engineer has to give a prior notice, under section III. 1. c, before taking up external employment. According to these ethical codes of conduct, the engineer A has defected and needs to sign and seal the construction documents. However the engineer should sign and seal documents in the presence of his current employer and his previous employer. This way, the engineer can get additional compensation. The board of ethical review should support this procedure and ensure that no parties stand at a loss. There is negligible difference between the original and the hypothetical case. The original case presented a scenario wherein engineer B approached the employer of engineer A (Anonymous, 2) and displayed unethical behaviour by using derogatory language. Engineer A also behaved unethically as he directly confronted engineer B without bothering to go for available professional options to solve the issue. The original case presents itself with unique facts. Despite this, the engineer A in the hypothetical case, cannot claim full compensation because he is obliged to sign and seal the construction documents.

Work cited:

Anonymous. Confronting former employee for improper misconduct. NSPE Board of Ethical Review, 21 Feb. 2001. Web. 25 Nov 2012.

Work cited:

Anonymous. Confronting former employee for improper misconduct. NSPE Board of Ethical Review, 21, Feb. 2001. Web. 14 October 2012.

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