

# Business ethics caseassignment assignment

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Business Ethics Case Review Name: Chad Clinton Case Name: Exposing Workers to Plutonium Case Textbook Pages: 172-173 Facts: A U. S.

Government owned uranium plant exposed several thousand workers to plutonium and other radioactive materials and dumped radioactive contaminants into landfills during a period of several decades. Some of the plants contaminants eventually found its way into wildlife areas and private water wells.

The plant, located in Paducah, Kentucky kept records on plutonium contamination but never informed the workers of the plant of the potential health risks. Workers at the plant did not wear sufficient protection while working with the harmful contaminants. Recent studies on the workers and the surrounding environment have produced disturbing findings. The workers were found to have experience higher levels of cancer from radiation. In locations that were an entire mile away from the plant plutonium levels have been found to be 20 times maximally acceptable limit.

The federal government has maintained that the amounts of exposure were too small for the workers health to have been at risk, but the workers now maintain that even if their health was not jeopardized, the plants failure to disclose levels of pollution and monitor workers health were serious moral failures. The Government announced in 1999 that it would spend millions of dollars to compensate workers for health problems and for environmental cleanup in the region.

Ethical Issue: Should the plant have done more to protect workers such as monitor levels of exposure and screen workers for possible health problems

resulting from the exposure? Is it a moral failure to fail to disclose possible risk even if it is thought that the risks are not that significant? Outcome: After years of pollution and exposing workers to harmful contaminants, the workers at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant received a health plan from the federal government. The plan allowed workers to either receive a lump sum of \$100, 000 or to negotiate another package that covered lost wages, medical cost, and job retraining.

The department of Energy allotted \$21. 8 million in spending for environmental cleanup. Additional Comments: I think that this is a classic case of putting business interest first and adhering to policy that puts workers at risk in hopes of there being no consequences for the policies. When dealing with products that could have a devastating effect on life, human and environmental, I think it is smart to take all of the precautions necessary to avoid disasters that will possibly lead to lengthy and costly effort to correct mistakes.