



**Testimony of  
Beth Easterday, President  
American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio  
to the  
House State and Local Government Committee  
regarding House Bill 121  
May 9, 2017**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley and members of the committee. I am Beth Easterday, President of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio. We are here today to offer testimony regarding our concerns with House Bill 121.

For the record, my association is made up of 130 engineering firms, located all over the state of Ohio, many of which are engaged in the design of our public water and wastewater systems, in addition to bridges, highways, building structures and systems and environmental projects.

In order to offer engineering services in the state of Ohio, engineering firms must be licensed by the state and they must carry professional liability insurance to protect the public against any potential malpractice that might occur in the design of a public works project.

The role of a consulting engineer is to provide sound engineering judgement and expert advice based on the best interest of the client for each project worked. They are ethically required to do so by the cannons of a professional engineer, outlined in OAC 4733-35 and National Society of Professional Engineers Code of Ethics which state for every project the Engineer shall:

- Be a faithful agent of the client
- Honest and impartial
- Serve the public with devotion

Many factors go into choosing the correct type of pipe, including soil type, the pressure the pipe will be under, the ease of connection with other types of pipe, expected service life and installation cost, just to cite a few. We rely on the professional engineers employed by our local governments, and the independent consulting engineers who work with them to design our underground utility networks to assess the myriad of factors and determine suitable piping materials. This bill is repetitive, why codify what is already current practice outlined in the OAC?

This bill requires a public authority to evaluate “all” piping material on a state funded water/wastewater project. This is unrealistic, what is the definition of “all” in this day and age of technological advances and what public client wants to pay a design engineer to evaluate every possible pipe material for their projects. In addition, how would the Engineer prove that “all” piping material was reviewed during the design of the project, think of the additional costs for an Engineer to put together a “bullet-proof” case regarding why they made a specific selection or recommendation. Ultimately, this may increase the cost of a public water project, which I don’t believe is the goal of this bill.

ACEC Ohio has met with both Representative Edwards and Senator Terhar (the Sponsor of the Senate companion bill, SB 95) and requested that the design engineer be removed from the center of this bill. We have asked specifically that the word “all” be removed in line 14 which states “a public authority shall consider all piping materials...” and we have asked the bill end after the word “project” in line 18. This would allow engineering specifications to be met but remove the reference of design engineer and continue to let the professional engineer follow the cannons of serving the public with devotion, being honest and impartial and a faithful agent of the client.

In our opinion, the legislation is redundant with current practice and licensure requirements of a professional engineer and therefore not needed.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I will be happy to try to answer any questions you might have.



Home



Ohio.gov



Search



Menu

<http://www.bens.ohio.gov/BoardInformation.aspx>**Professional Engineers  
Professional Surveyors**<http://www.peps.ohio.gov/BoardInformation.aspx>Find us on  
**Facebook**<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Board-of-Engineers-Surveyors/147937978642327>

## Ohio A.C. section 4733-35

< A.C. 4733-33 ([4733/4733\\_33.aspx](http://www.peps.ohio.gov/4733/4733_33.aspx)) | A.C. 4733-37 ([http://www.peps.ohio.gov/4733/4733\\_37.aspx](http://www.peps.ohio.gov/4733/4733_37.aspx)) >

### Code of Ethics for Engineers and Surveyors

#### 4733-35-01 Preamble.

In order to safeguard the life, health, property and welfare of the public and the state of Ohio, to maintain integrity and high standards of skills and practice in the professions of engineering and surveying, the following rules of professional conduct, promulgated in accordance with Chapter 4733. of the Revised Code, shall be binding upon every person holding a certificate of registration as a professional engineer or as a professional surveyor.

The engineer or surveyor, who holds a certificate of registration from the Ohio state board of registration for professional engineers and surveyors, is charged with having knowledge of the existence of the reasonable rules and regulations hereinafter provided for his or her professional conduct as an engineer or surveyor, and also shall be deemed to be familiar with their several provisions and to understand them. Such knowledge shall encompass the understanding that the practice of engineering, or of surveying, is a privilege, as opposed to a right, and the registrant shall be forthright and candid in statements or written responses to the board or its representatives on matters pertaining to professional conduct.

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 05/09/2014 and 05/09/2019

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 4733.07

Rule Amplifies: 4733.20

Prior Effective Dates: 10/01/1970, 11/01/2003, 11/24/2008

#### 4733-35-02 Integrity.

The engineer or surveyor is obligated to act with complete integrity in professional matters for each client or employer as a faithful agent; shall be honest and impartial, and shall serve the public, client and employer with devotion.

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 05/09/2014 and 05/09/2019

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 4733.07

Rule Amplifies: 4733.20

Prior Effective Dates: 10/01/1970, 11/01/2003

## 4733-35-03 Responsibility to the public.

The engineer or surveyor shall:

(A) Protect the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of professional duties. Should the case arise where the engineer or surveyor faces a situation where the safety, health and welfare of the public is not protected, the engineer or surveyor shall:

- (1) Sever the relationship with the employer or client;
- (2) Refuse to accept responsibility for the design, report or statement involved;
- (3) Notify the proper authority if, in his or her opinion, the situation is sufficiently important.

(B) Undertake to perform assignments only when the registrant's consulting support are qualified by training and experience in the specific technical fields involved. In the event a question arises as to the competence of an engineer or surveyor to perform an engineering or surveying assignment in a specific technical field of engineering or surveying which cannot be otherwise resolved to the board's satisfaction, the board, either upon request of the engineer or surveyor or by its own volition, may require the engineer or surveyor to submit to an appropriate inquiry by or on behalf of the board;

(C) Be completely objective in any professional report, statement or testimony and shall include all relevant and pertinent information in the report, statement or testimony when the result of omission would, or reasonably could, lead to a fallacious conclusion;

(D) Express an opinion as a technical or expert witness before any court, commission or other tribunal, 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 his or her testimony.

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 05/09/2014 and 05/09/2019

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 4733.07

Rule Amplifies: 4733.20

Prior Effective Dates: 10/15/1970, 11/01/2003

## 4733-35-04 Public statements and certifications.

(A) The engineer or surveyor will issue no statements, criticisms or arguments on engineering or surveying matters connected with public policy which are inspired or paid for by an interested party, or parties, unless the engineer or surveyor has prefaced his or her remarks by explicitly identifying himself or herself, by disclosing the identities of the party, or parties, on whose behalf the engineer or surveyor is speaking, and by revealing the existence of any pecuniary interest he or she may have in the instant matters.

(B) The engineer or surveyor will publicly express no opinion on an engineering or surveying subject unless 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 his or her testimony.

(C) The engineer or surveyor shall decline to sign and/or seal any form of certification, warranty, or guaranty that

- (1) Relates to matters beyond his or her technical competence,
- (2) Involves matters which are beyond the scope of services for which he or she was retained, or



(3) Relates to engineering or surveying work for which he or she does not have personal professional knowledge and direct supervisory control and responsibility.

"Certification" shall mean a statement signed and/or sealed by an engineer or surveyor representing that the engineering or surveying services addressed therein have been performed, according to the engineer or surveyor's knowledge, information and belief, in accordance with commonly accepted procedures consistent with applicable standards of practice, and is not a guaranty or warranty, either expressed or implied.

Effective: 08/01/2014

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 05/09/2014 and 08/01/2019

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 4733.07

Rule Amplifies: 4733.20

Prior Effective Dates: 10/15/1970, 05/01/1995, 11/01/2003, 11/24/2008

### **4733-35-05 Conflict of interest.**

(A) The engineer or surveyor shall conscientiously avoid conflict of interest with the employer or client, but, when unavoidable, the engineer or surveyor shall forthwith disclose the circumstances to the employer or client.

(B) The engineer or surveyor shall promptly inform the client or employer of any business association, interests, or circumstances which could influence his or her judgment or the quality of services to the client or employer.

(C) The engineer or surveyor shall not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, or for services pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to, and agreed to, by all interested parties or their duly authorized agents.

(D) The engineer or surveyor shall not solicit or accept financial or other valuable considerations from material or equipment suppliers for specifying their products.

(E) The engineer or surveyor shall not solicit or accept gratuities, directly or indirectly, from contractors, their agents or other parties dealing with his client or employer in connection with work for which he or she is responsible.

(F) As an elected, retained or employed public official, an engineer or a surveyor (in the capacity as a public official) shall not review or approve work that was performed by himself, or under his direction, on behalf of another employer or client.

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 05/09/2014 and 05/09/2019

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 4733.07

Rule Amplifies: 4733.20

Prior Effective Dates: 10/15/1970, 11/01/2003

### **4733-35-06 Solicitation of employment.**

(A) The engineer or surveyor shall not pay, solicit nor offer, directly or indirectly, any bribe or commission for professional employment with the exception of payment of the usual commission for securing salaried positions through licensed employment agencies.

(B) The engineer or surveyor shall seek professional employment on the basis of qualifications and competence for proper accomplishment of the work.





# *Code of Ethics for Engineers*

## **Preamble**

Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.

## **I. Fundamental Canons**

Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:

1. Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
2. Perform services only in areas of their competence.
3. Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
5. Avoid deceptive acts.
6. Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.

## **II. Rules of Practice**

1. Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
  - a. If engineers' judgment is overruled under circumstances that endanger life or property, they shall notify their employer or client and such other authority as may be appropriate.
  - b. Engineers shall approve only those engineering documents that are in conformity with applicable standards.
- c. Engineers shall not reveal facts, data, or information without the prior consent of the client or employer except as authorized or required by law or this Code.
- d. Engineers shall not permit the use of their name or associate in business ventures with any person or firm that they believe is engaged in fraudulent or dishonest enterprise.
- e. Engineers shall not aid or abet the unlawful practice of engineering by a person or firm.
- f. Engineers having knowledge of any alleged violation of this Code shall report thereon to appropriate professional bodies and, when relevant, also to public authorities, and cooperate with the proper authorities in furnishing such information or assistance as may be required.
2. Engineers shall perform services only in the areas of their competence.
  - a. Engineers shall undertake assignments only when qualified by education or experience in the specific technical fields involved.
  - b. Engineers shall not affix their signatures to any plans or documents dealing with subject matter in which they lack competence, nor to any plan or document not prepared under their direction and control.
  - c. Engineers may accept assignments and assume responsibility for coordination of an entire project and sign and seal the engineering documents for the entire project, provided that each technical segment is signed and sealed only by the qualified engineers who prepared the segment.
3. Engineers shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
  - a. Engineers shall be objective and truthful in professional reports, statements, or testimony. They shall include all relevant and pertinent information in such reports, statements, or testimony, which should bear the date indicating when it was current.
  - b. Engineers may express publicly technical opinions that are founded upon knowledge of the facts and competence in the subject matter.
  - c. Engineers shall issue no statements, criticisms, or arguments on technical matters that are inspired or paid for by interested parties, unless they have prefaced their comments by explicitly identifying the interested parties on whose behalf they are speaking, and by revealing the existence of any interest the engineers may have in the matters.
4. Engineers shall act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
  - a. Engineers shall disclose all known or potential conflicts of interest that could influence or appear to influence their judgment or the quality of their services.
  - b. Engineers shall not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, or for services

pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed and agreed to by all interested parties.

- c. Engineers shall not solicit or accept financial or other valuable consideration, directly or indirectly, from outside agents in connection with the work for which they are responsible.
- d. Engineers in public service as members, advisors, or employees of a governmental or quasi-governmental body or department shall not participate in decisions with respect to services solicited or provided by them or their organizations in private or public engineering practice.
- e. Engineers shall not solicit or accept a contract from a governmental body on which a principal or officer of their organization serves as a member.
5. Engineers shall avoid deceptive acts.
  - a. Engineers shall not falsify their qualifications or permit misrepresentation of their or their associates' qualifications. They shall not misrepresent or exaggerate their 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 venturers, or past accomplishments.
  - b. Engineers shall not offer, give, solicit, or receive, either directly or indirectly, any contribution to influence the award of a contract by public authority, or which may be reasonably construed by the public as having the effect or intent of influencing the awarding of a contract. They shall not offer any gift or other valuable consideration in order to secure work. They shall not pay a commission, percentage, or brokerage fee in order to secure work, except to a bona fide employee or bona fide established commercial or marketing agencies retained by them.

## **III. Professional Obligations**

1. Engineers shall be guided in all their relations by the highest standards of honesty and integrity.
  - a. Engineers shall acknowledge their errors and shall not distort or alter the facts.
  - b. Engineers shall advise their clients or employers when they believe a project will not be successful.
- c. Engineers shall not accept outside employment to the detriment of their regular work or interest. Before accepting any outside engineering employment, they will notify their employers.
- d. Engineers shall not attempt to attract an engineer from another employer by false or misleading pretenses.
- e. Engineers shall not promote their own interest at the expense of the dignity and integrity of the profession.
2. Engineers shall at all times strive to serve the public interest.
  - a. Engineers shall seek opportunities to participate in civic affairs; career guidance for youths; and work for the advancement of the safety, health, and well-being of their community.
  - b. Engineers shall not complete, sign, or seal plans and/or specifications that are not in conformity with applicable engineering standards. If the client or employer insists on such unprofessional conduct, they shall notify the proper authorities and withdraw from further service on the project.
  - c. Engineers shall endeavor to extend public knowledge and appreciation of engineering and its achievements.
3. Engineers shall avoid all conduct or practice that deceives the public.
  - a. Engineers shall avoid the use of statements containing a material misrepresentation of fact or omitting a material fact.
  - b. Consistent with the foregoing, engineers may advertise for recruitment of personnel.
  - c. Consistent with the foregoing, engineers may prepare articles for the lay or technical press, but such articles shall not imply credit to the author for work performed by others.
4. Engineers shall not disclose, without consent, confidential information concerning the business affairs or technical processes of any present or former client or employer, or public body on which they serve.
  - a. Engineers shall not, without the consent of all interested parties, promote or arrange for new employment or practice in connection with a specific project for which the engineer has gained particular and specialized knowledge.



- b. Engineers shall not, without the consent of all interested parties, participate in or represent an adversary interest in connection with a specific project or proceeding in which the engineer has gained particular specialized knowledge on behalf of a former client or employer.
- 5. Engineers shall not be influenced in their professional duties by conflicting interests.
  - a. Engineers shall not accept financial or other considerations, including free engineering designs, from material or equipment suppliers for specifying their product.
  - b. Engineers shall not accept commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from contractors or other parties dealing with clients or employers of the engineer in connection with work for which the engineer is responsible.
- 6. Engineers shall not attempt to obtain employment or advancement or professional engagements by untruthfully criticizing other engineers, or by other improper or questionable methods.
  - a. Engineers shall not request, propose, or accept a commission on a contingent basis under circumstances in which their judgment may be compromised.
  - b. Engineers in salaried positions shall accept part-time engineering work only to the extent consistent with policies of the employer and in accordance with ethical considerations.
  - c. Engineers shall not, without consent, use equipment, supplies, laboratory, or office facilities of an employer to carry on outside private practice.
- 7. Engineers shall not attempt to injure, maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects, practice, or employment of other engineers. Engineers who believe others are guilty of unethical or illegal practice shall present such information to the proper authority for action.
  - a. Engineers in private practice shall not review the work of another engineer for the same client, except with the knowledge of such engineer, or unless the connection of such engineer with the work has been terminated.
  - b. Engineers in governmental, industrial, or educational employ are entitled to review and evaluate the work of other engineers when so required by their employment duties.
  - c. Engineers in sales or industrial employ are entitled to make engineering comparisons of represented products with products of other suppliers.
- 8. Engineers shall accept personal responsibility for their professional activities, provided, however, that engineers may seek indemnification for services arising out of their practice for other than gross negligence, where the engineer's interests cannot otherwise be protected.
  - a. Engineers shall conform with state registration laws in the practice of engineering.
  - b. Engineers shall not use association with a nonengineer, a corporation, or partnership as a "cloak" for unethical acts.
- 9. Engineers shall give credit for engineering work to those to whom credit is due, and will recognize the proprietary interests of others.
  - a. Engineers shall, whenever possible, name the person or persons who may be individually responsible for designs, inventions, writings, or other accomplishments.

- b. Engineers using designs supplied by a client recognize that the designs remain the property of the client and may not be duplicated by the engineer for others without express permission.
- c. Engineers, before undertaking work for others in connection with which the engineer may make improvements, plans, designs, inventions, or other records that may justify copyrights or patents, should enter into a positive agreement regarding ownership.
- d. Engineers' designs, data, records, and notes referring exclusively to an employer's work are the employer's property. The employer should indemnify the engineer for use of the information for any purpose other than the original purpose.
- e. Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers and should keep current in their specialty fields by engaging in professional practice, participating in continuing education courses, reading in the technical literature, and attending professional meetings and seminars.

As Revised January 2003

"By order of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, former Section 11(c) of the NSPE Code of Ethics prohibiting competitive bidding, and all policy statements, opinions, rulings or other guidelines interpreting its scope, have been rescinded as unlawfully interfering with the legal right of engineers, protected under the antitrust laws, to provide price information to prospective clients; accordingly, nothing contained in the NSPE Code of Ethics, policy statements, opinions, rulings or other guidelines prohibits the submission of price quotations or competitive bids for engineering services at any time or in any amount."

#### **Statement by NSPE Executive Committee**

In order to correct misunderstandings which have been indicated in some instances since the issuance of the Supreme Court decision and the entry of the Final Judgment, it is noted that in its decision of April 25, 1978, the Supreme Court of the United States declared: "The Sherman Act does not require competitive bidding."

It is further noted that as made clear in the Supreme Court decision:

1. Engineers and firms may individually refuse to bid for engineering services.
2. Clients are not required to seek bids for engineering services.
3. Federal, state, and local laws governing procedures to procure engineering services are not affected, and remain in full force and effect.
4. State societies and local chapters are free to actively and aggressively seek legislation for professional selection and negotiation procedures by public agencies.
5. State registration board rules of professional conduct, including rules prohibiting competitive bidding for engineering services, are not affected and remain in full force and effect. State registration boards with authority to adopt rules of professional conduct may adopt rules governing procedures to obtain engineering services.
6. As noted by the Supreme Court, "nothing in the judgment prevents NSPE and its members from attempting to influence governmental action . . ."

#### **Note:**

In regard to the question of application of the Code to corporations vis-a-vis real persons, business form or type should not negate nor influence conformance of individuals to the Code. The Code deals with professional services, which services must be performed by real persons. Real persons in turn establish and implement policies within business structures. The Code is clearly written to apply to the Engineer, and it is incumbent on members of NSPE to endeavor to live up to its provisions. This applies to all pertinent sections of the Code.



1420 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2794  
703/684-2800 • Fax: 703/836-4875  
www.nspe.org

Publication date as revised: January 2003 • Publication #1102