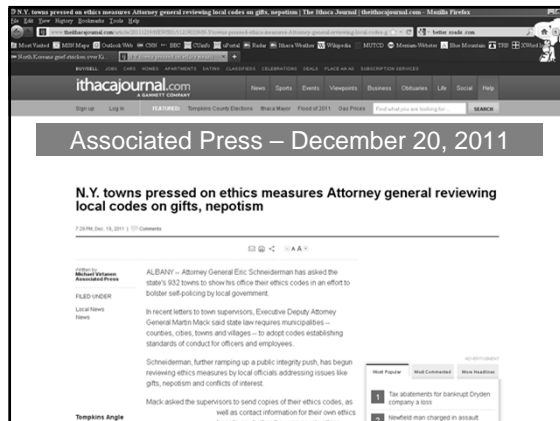


## What Would You Do? Ethical Choices

David P. Orr, PE  
Cornell Local Roads Program



## Resources

- NYS Office of the State Comptroller  
Local Government and School  
Accountability
  - <http://osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/ethics.htm>

## NYS Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE)

- [www.jcope.ny.gov](http://www.jcope.ny.gov)
- 14 appointed members
  - 6 - Governor and Lieutenant Governor  
(3 from the other major party)
  - 3 - Senate Majority Leader
  - 3 - Assembly Speaker
  - 1 - Senate Minority Leader
  - 1 - Assembly Minority Leader

## Resources

- American Society of Civil Engineers: Ethics
  - <http://www.asce.org/Leadership-and-Management/Ethics/>
- National Society of Professional Engineers
  - <http://www.nspe.org/Ethics/index.html>
- National Institute for Engineering Ethics
  - <http://www.niee.org/murdoughCenter/>

## Books – Actual Books

- *The Ethical Engineer*,  
Eugene Schlossberger, 1993
- *Engineering Ethics Concepts and Cases*,  
Harris, Pritchard, & Rabins, 2009
- *Ethical Issues in Engineering*,  
Deborah Johnson, 1991

### The Ethical Engineer - Notice

- "... provided there is no legal duty to do otherwise."



### Code of Ethics Fundamental Canons

Engineers 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.

### Ethics Policies

- All agencies (& private companies) need to have a policy
  - Best Policies are
    - Self-enforcing
    - Transparent
    - Flexible
    - Accountable

You need to know what you would do before the ethical incident happens – Floyd Slate

### SCENARIOS



### Scenarios

- I will read an ethical problem
- Think about what you would do
- I will show you up to 5 choices
- Choose the answer closest to your original thought

### Using the iClickers

- Your votes are anonymous
- Single vote A-E
- Single choice
- Critical choice



### Critical Points

- There may be times when an ethics policy is more restrictive
  - (hopefully it is never less restrictive)
- Think about what you feel is ethical, not what is your agency's policy
- These scenarios are simplistic
  - The real world is not always as well defined

### Single Choice Question



- I work for:
  - A. County
  - B. State
  - C. Engineering Consultant
  - D. Other Vendor
  - E. The Weekend

### Critical Choice Question



- What swag have you picked up at a conference:
  - A. Candy
  - B. Key ring
  - C. Pen
  - D. Coaster
  - E. Recycling bag

### The Retired Engineer



- You see a retiree from the Department at the local gym roughhousing with a 10-year old in the shower.
- What would you do?
  - A. Stop the roughhousing
  - B. Call the cops
  - C. Report the incident to gym management
  - D. Walk away and say nothing
  - E. Talk to the retiree later one-on-one

### The Retired Engineer

- Actually, you are Mike McQueary
- At least 25% of trained professionals would have failed to report at all



### Hitching a Ride



- You are the County Highway Superintendent and you are attending a meeting with representatives from NYSDOT at a site 50 miles away. You both need to arrive and leave at the same time.
- What would you do?
  - A. Drive separately
  - B. Drive together
  - C. Drive together, but promise to not discuss the meeting in either direction

### Attending Highway School

- You are registered for the Highway School in Ithaca, but have an opportunity to discuss a road problem during the morning with a vendor while the general session is being held.
- What would you do?
  - A. Attend the session & ask vendor to reschedule
  - B. Do not attend the session & talk with the vendor
  - C. Attend the session & ask vendor to attend also
  - D. Do not attend nor talk with the vendor

### Caps & Mugs

- A local vendor who is doing work with your agency offers you a cap or coffee mug with their company logo on it.
- What would you do?
  - A. Accept and keep the swag
  - B. Refuse the swag
  - C. Ask for a cap or mug for the entire crew
  - D. Accept the swag, but give it to another employee

### Coffee & Donuts

- Another vendor brings coffee & donuts for a crew in the field.
- What would you do?
  - A. Accept the coffee and donuts
  - B. Offer to pay for the coffee and donuts
  - C. Offer to split the costs of the coffee and donuts
  - D. Offer to pay and refuse the coffee and donuts if your offer is rejected

### Gotta Get Those PDHs

- You get a critical phone call from a client during the middle of a PDH class.
- What would you do?
  - A. Ignore the call and earn those PDHs
  - B. Take the call and forfeit the PDHs
  - C. Step out, explain the need to earn the PDHs, and go back in in a couple of minutes (and earn the PDHs)
  - D. Take the call and go back in after to get credit for the PDHs

### The Winning Raffle

- Your name is selected to win a big prize at a conference paid for by your employer. The raffle was part of the conference fee.
- What would you do?
  - A. Accept the prize and take it home
  - B. Accept the prize and give it to work
  - C. Refuse the prize
  - D. Accept the prize if you can pay for it
  - E. Accept the prize publicly, but turn it back in later

### Stopping to Pick Up Milk

- You have a fleet vehicle assigned for your use and are authorized to take it home. You need some milk and there is a grocery store  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile out of your direct way home. The closest store is 3 miles from home.
- What would you do?
  - A. Drive home & use your own car to go back
  - B. Stop on the way home
  - C. Stop on the way home, but tell the boss
  - D. Stop at a parking spot on the direct route and walk over to the store

### At What Price Safety?

- You are asked to design safety improvements in a busy urban area. You come up with four alternatives that show similar cost/benefit ratios. Public support varies.
- What would you do?

	Alternative	Agency Cost	~Lives Saved	Public Support
A	New signs	\$10,000	2-5	Opposition
B	Traffic light	\$175,000	5-10	Negative
C	Roundabout	\$500,000	10-20	Strong opposition
D	New bypass	\$3,000,000	15-25	Positive support

### Meet Mr. Hobson

- You find a crew member falsifying records for maintenance of the gas tanks. You determine that the records could be fixed and there were no violations except for the falsified records. If you report this to the DEC, the County will face a big fine and you will likely have the entire crew against you for years to come.
- What would you do?
  - A. Report the violation to DEC
  - B. Make sure the crew starts reporting properly from this point forward
  - C. Discipline the crew member
  - D. Fix the records

### Is He a Sexist?

- You attend an Association dinner with Dick & Jane. They talk about everything from engineering to current events and ignore you. At the end, Dick turns to you and apologizes for ignoring you during dinner, but Jane was "better looking?"
- What would you do?
  - A. Ignore the comment
  - B. Give back some similar banter
  - C. Apologize to Jane for Dick's comment
  - D. Report Dick to his boss
  - E. Berate Dick for his boorish behavior

### The Home Office at Work

- You run a small craft supply shop out of your house when your computer breaks. The local computer guy says he can fix, or get a new computer in a week. You could work off a thumb drive for one week. During the week, ...
- What do you do?
  - A. Use paper and pencil
  - B. Ask to use the office computer and stay late
  - C. Use the office computer quietly
  - D. Try to borrow a friend's computer for the week

### Error in the Bridge Design

- You arrive on a bridge site and the contractor lets you know he found a possible design flaw by your engineering firm. After looking at the plans, you agree there should have been more steel connecting the wingwall to the abutment. The wingwall is just about ready to be poured.
- What do you do?
  - A. Shut down the job until the plans are changed
  - B. Make a field change
  - C. Notify the engineer
  - D. Fire the engineering firm and hire another firm
  - E. Let the pour proceed

### Contractor not Following Specs

- You are inspecting a job and notice the contractor is not following the specifications. What he is doing is actually alternative work that will save the County money in the long run.
- What would you do?
  - A. Ignore the difference
  - B. Document the change, but keep quiet
  - C. Talk to the contractor about meeting the spec
  - D. Prepare a change order
  - E. Inform the engineer

### The Vendor's Specs

- The local truck dealer provides you with a set of specifications for use with your upcoming bid for a new dump truck. Your whole fleet is the same brand. You would like to keep it that way and standardize on a single brand.
- What would you do?
  - A. Go ahead and bid with the vendor's specs
  - B. Get the elected board to agree to standardizing
  - C. Prepare specs with multiple vendors in mind and hope the local vendor will win
  - D. Be sure to include vendors from out of the area to get competition for the bid

### Curses, FOILED Again

- You receive another request for records from a citizen who is always fishing for 'dirt' on the Highway Department. The request is proper, but you know it is going to just be a waste of time since there is nothing in the request that will put the Department in a bad light.
- What do you do?
  - A. Fill the request
  - B. Try to talk to the citizen to drop the request
  - C. Have your boss talk to the citizen

### The RFP is Due

- A junior engineer provides you with a set of plans and notes for a project due at the end of the day. You have time to review the engineering calculations or the financial numbers, but not both.
- What would you do?
  - A. Review the engineering
  - B. Review the financials
  - C. Skim both and hope the numbers are OK
  - D. Decide your firm cannot meet the deadline
  - E. Find another engineer to review a section

### Stamping Plans

- A carpenter friend that you trust would like you to stamp some plans for a small barn he is building. He is required to have a PE stamp before starting.
- What would you do?
  - A. Stamp the plans after a cursory look
  - B. Stamp the plans after checking the design
  - C. Ask him to find another engineer to stamp the plans
  - D. Offer to review the plans and find another engineer to stamp them

### Selling Surplus Equipment

- You have an old backhoe that has very little value and may not even break even at auction. You know there is a crew member who would like to have the old machine.
- What would you do?
  - A. Go to auction
  - B. Sell as scrap
  - C. Sell to crew member

### Everybody is Surfing

- You see a coworker surfing on the internet during work hours. The sites are benign, but not work related. After 15 minutes, ...
- What would you do?
  - A. Ignore the issue
  - B. Talk to coworker
  - C. Talk to the boss
  - D. Go surfing yourself

### Flying Mailboxes



- One of the snow plows has knocked over a mailbox with the wing (not just the snow). You just started and there is no policy for the agency that you can find. You would like to see a policy, but are getting pressure to replace.
- What would you do?
  - A. Do not replace
  - B. Replace with inexpensive model
  - C. Replace in-kind
  - D. Provide a stipend for replacement



### The Steel Inspector



- You have been asked to inspect a steel frame by a contractor. You know he has had several other engineers look at the job before and none of them would certify the work. After review, you also feel the work is not acceptable.
- What would you do?
  - A. Walk away
  - B. Talk to the contractor about the problems
  - C. Send a letter to the contractor
  - D. Send a letter to the owner
  - E. Send a letter to the Town Building Inspector

### Conclusions

1. You need to know what you would do before the ethical incident happens
2. Even simple problems may have multiple answers
3. Safety, health and welfare come first

### Thank You

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