

DOING THE RIGHT THING
ETHICS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

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Air & Waste Management Association

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DEFINITION

Ethics means *the right thing to do*, not what you have *the right to do!*

Morals: The standards of conduct established by society

Ethics: Principles that define behavior as right, good and proper

Principles provide a means of decisionmaking.

Ethics are the principles that govern the conduct of an individual or group.

Morals + Ethics = Character

CHALLENGE

“The hole in our moral ozone is getting bigger.” Michael Josephson, 1996

“The problem with the rat race is, even if you win the race, you’re still a rat.” Lily Tomlin

OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness level
- Suggest priorities
- Offer a value system
- Relate to ethical obligations
- Demonstrate an approach for solving ethical dilemmas

A&WMA CODE OF ETHICS

Air & Waste Management Association
Bylaws

Article XIV – Professional Practice

Section 1 – Code of Conduct

It is the duty of every member to adhere to a Code of Conduct as may be adopted by the Board of Directors, such code shall include the Code of Ethics set forth below. The Code of Conduct shall be published periodically by the Association and shall be provided to new members.

PREAMBLE

In the pursuit of their profession, environmental professional must use their skills and knowledge to enhance human health and welfare and environmental quality for all. Environmental professionals must conduct themselves in an honorable and ethical manner so as to merit confidence and respect, as well as to maintain the dignity of the profession. This code is to guide the environmental professional in the balanced discharge of his or her responsibilities to society, employers, clients, coworkers, subordinates, professional colleagues, and themselves,

PLEDGE

As an environmental professional, I shall regard my responsibility to society as paramount and shall endeavor to:

1. Direct my professional skills toward conscientiously chosen ends I deem to be of positive value to humanity and the environment; decline to use those skills for purposes I consider to conflict with my moral values.
2. Inform myself and others, as appropriate, of the public health and environmental consequences, direct and indirect, immediate and remote, of projects in which I am involved, consistent with both standards of practice in industry and government, as well as laws and regulations that currently exist.
3. Comply with all applicable statutes, regulations that currently exist.
4. Hold paramount the health, safety, and welfare of the public, speaking out against abuses of the public interest that I may encounter in my professional activities, as deemed appropriate per professional standards and existing laws and regulations.
5. Inform the public about technological developments, the alternatives they make feasible, and possible associated problems wherever known.
6. Keep my professional skills up to date and endeavor to be aware of current events, as well as environmental and societal issues pertinent to my work.
7. Exercise honesty, objectivity, and diligence in the performance of all my professional duties and responsibilities.
8. Accurately describe my qualifications for proposed projects or assignments.
9. Act as a faithful agent or trustee in business or professional matters, provided such actions conform to other parts of this code.
10. Keep information on the business affairs or technical processes of an employer or client in confidence while employed and later, as required by contract or applicable laws, until such information is properly released and provided such confidentiality conforms with legal requirements and other parts of this code.
11. Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose those known that cannot be avoided.
12. Seek, accept, and offer honest professional criticism, properly credit others for their contributions, and never claim credit for work I have not done.
13. Treat co-workers, colleagues, and associates with respect and respect their privacy.
14. Encourage the professional growth of colleagues, co-workers, and subordinates.
15. Report, publish, and disseminate information freely, subject to legal and reasonable proprietary or privacy restraints, provided such restraints conform to other parts of this code and do not unduly impact public health, safety, and welfare.
16. Promote health and safety in all work situations.

17. Encourage and support adherence to this code, never giving directions that could cause others to compromise their professional responsibilities.

Section 2

The association shall, in all professional and business relations, be governed by the Code of Conduct above and by these Bylaws.

Section 3

Charges that any member has been guilty of violation of these Bylaws or of the Code of Conduct shall be detailed in a letter addressed to the Board and signed by not less than 3 members. Any member who has been so charged shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board, where the member may testify in his or her own defense. If two-thirds of the Board vote that the member is guilty as charged, the member shall be expelled, immediately after such a vote, from the Association.

A&WMA PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

- Workshops
- Speakers
- Ethics Moments
- Articles
- Dialogue

What is your first responsibility as an environmental professional?

ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

Six pillars of character (Michael Josephson)

Framework of principles

Consensus ethical values to guide our choices

Six core ethical values:

- **Trustworthiness**
- **Respect**
- **Responsibility**
- **Justice and fairness**
- **Caring**
- **Civic virtue and citizenship**

* **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

- Be honest.
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal.
- Be reliable – do what you say you'll do.
- Have the courage to do the right thing.
- Build a good reputation.
- Be loyal – stand by your family, friends, country.

* **RESPECT**

- Follow the Golden Rule.
- Be tolerant of differences.
- Respect the dignity of others.
- Value the knowledge and experience of people in other disciplines.

* **RESPONSIBILITY**

- Pursue excellence - do your best.
- Maintain a high degree of competence.
- Accept responsibility for your actions.
- Avoid the appearance of impropriety.
- Preserve the dignity of the profession.

* **JUSTICE and FAIRNESS**

- Pursue justice, equality and tolerance.
- Give due credit to coworkers.
- Be willing to admit error and change your position
when wrong.
- Be open-minded.

* **CARING**

- Be aware of all stakeholders.
- Care about and avoid harming others.
- Show kindness, generosity, and compassion.

* **CIVIC VIRTUE and CITIZENSHIP**

- Be a responsible and law abiding citizen.
- Use knowledge and talent to support beneficial legislation.
- Oppose unjust laws.
- Volunteer for civic duties.
- Protect the environment.

➤ **ETHICAL DECISIONMAKING**

Three core “dispositions” (Michael Josephson)

- Compassion
- Fairness
- Truthfulness

We have the power to decide what we do and what we say.

We are morally responsible for the consequences of our choices.

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE

Framework of principles → Procedure to apply them.

- ❖ Protect public health and the environment.
- ❖ Be responsible for your actions.
- ❖ Seek advice and counsel.
- ❖ Understand the policies of your employer and your clients / customers.
- ❖ Apply the Six Pillars of Character.
- ❖ Study, discuss, and establish your own standard of conduct.

“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.” Edmund Burke

ETHICAL DILEMMAS

1. Stop and think.
2. Clarify the issues and your goals.
3. Determine the facts.
4. Develop options
5. Consider the consequences.
6. Choose your response.

RATIONALIZATIONS

- If it's necessary, it's ethical.
- If it's legal, it's okay.
- It's my job.
- It doesn't hurt anyone.
- Everyone does it.

CONCLUSION

Ethical decision making requires more than a belief in the importance of ethics.

- Choices and their implications
- Evaluation of complex and ambiguous situations
- Implementation of ethical decisions

REFERENCES

A&WMA Code of Ethics (Bylaws Article 14)

A&WMA **EM** magazine, bi-monthly articles on ethics by
Hal Taback

Josephson Institute of Ethics

www.JosephsonInstitute.org

Making Ethical Decisions, by Michael Josephson

www.CharacterCounts.org

Ethical Dilemma 1: Repairs Postponed Due to Budget

You are the Environmental Manager of a non-ferrous metal foundry, which is across the street from a Middle School. You have just returned to work after a 2-week vacation, and you notice a visible discharge from the melter stack at the plant.

Back in your office, you learn that the state air pollution control inspector just issued a notice of violation (NOV) to the foundry based on a complaint from the school after it reported the emission for several days. In talking with the operators, you learn that the emission control blowers burned out about a week ago. The maintenance manager bypassed the control system without notifying the production supervisor or the plant manager.

You are now in a meeting with the plant manager, maintenance manager, and production supervisor. The plant manager starts chewing out the maintenance manager. The maintenance manager defends himself: “But boss, you told me I had 2 primary responsibilities – keep the plant running and don’t exceed my maintenance budget. The last time I overran my budget, you said I could get fired if it happened again. My budget is at the limit. The new fiscal year starts next month. I was going to fix the blower motors then. Besides, it was beyond my control – the motors blew out after the power surge we had 10 days ago.”

The production supervisor claims she was too busy and did not notice the emissions or lack of air pollution control, even though it was clearly visible from the plant parking lot.

You know that the plant manager is under a lot of pressure to reach profitability goals, and that his bonus, and the bonus of the production supervisor, are tied to plant profits. You believe that this event is a serious offense, possibly a felony.

After the production supervisor and maintenance manager leave the office, the plant manager asks you what to do.

Ethical Dilemma 2: Regulator Skews Data

You are the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) of a county air pollution control agency. Your Board of Directors has just promulgated a new emission standard for a hazardous air pollutant (HAP) based on exposure research and epidemiological data developed by the Technical Affairs Manager of your agency. The Manager led the research project for two years, working a lot of overtime, to develop the new standard. The new standard will significantly increase operating costs for 3 major industries (employers) in your county.

A month after the new standard was promulgated, a disgruntled engineer in the Technical Affairs Division reports to you that the Manager suppressed some data that would have caused the recommended standard to be 3 times less stringent.

You meet to discuss this allegation calmly with the Manager. She reports that the data she ignored contained many outliers, and she felt justified in throwing them out. Besides, she claimed, it led to a standard more protective of human health.

How do you proceed?

Ethical Dilemma 3:

Consultant Finds Illegal Discharge

You are a Project Manager at Ace Environmental Consulting. Ace was hired by the Corporate Environmental Manager at Zebra Manufacturing Company, a Fortune 500 firm, to audit 22 of its manufacturing plants. You are the project manager in charge of the audit project.

At the third plant audit, one of your staff members discovers an illegal wastewater discharge that could contaminate the local drinking water. You meet with the plant manager to discuss the discharge. The plant manager promises to discontinue the discharge immediately, and asks you to leave the discharge finding out of your audit report. He offers to arrange to have your contract revised to exclude the section of the plant where the discharge originates from your audit responsibility.

What do you do?

Values Checklist for Ethical Dilemmas

| VALUE | | ISSUE | ACTION |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Trustworthiness | Honesty | | |
| | Reliability | | |
| | The right thing | | |
| | Reputable | | |
| | Loyal | | |
| Respect | Golden Rule | | |
| | Tolerant | | |
| | Dignity | | |
| | Value diversity | | |
| Responsibility | Excellence | | |
| | Competence | | |
| | Responsible | | |
| | Proper | | |
| | Dignified | | |
| Justice and Fairness | Justice, equality, tolerance | | |
| | Due credit | | |
| | Admit error; open to change | | |
| | Open-minded | | |
| Caring | Awareness | | |
| | Care | | |
| | Kindness, generosity, compassion | | |
| | | | |
| Civic Virtue and Citizenship | Responsible and law abiding | | |
| | Use knowledge and talent | | |
| | Oppose unjust laws | | |
| | Volunteer | | |
| | Protect the environment | | |