Canons of Ethics for Engineers:
Constituting a Standard of Professional Conduct for Members of the American Welding Society

Approved by the Board of Directors, AMERICAN WELDING SOCIETY, June 20, 1946

Foreword

Justice, courtesy, honesty and sincerity, associated with mutual interest between men, make the foundation of ethics. Ethics should be more than passive observance of a code of "Don'ts" in the life of an engineer. They should be recognized as dynamic principles guiding his conduct and his way of life. The principles are briefly set forth in what follows.

Professional Life and Employment

Sec. 1.—The Engineer will cooperate in building up the engineering profession by interchanging information and experience with other engineers and students and by contributing to the work of engineering societies, schools and the scientific and engineering press.

Sec. 2.—He will carry on his work in a spirit of fairness and loyalty to clients or employers, to associates, subordinates and employees, fidelity to the public interest and devotion to high ideals of courtesy and personal honor.

Sec. 3.—He will not advertise his work or merits in a self-laudatory manner and he will avoid all other conduct or practices likely to discredit or do injury to the dignity and honor of his profession.

Sec. 4.—He will not associate himself or allow his name to be associated with any enterprise until he has satisfied himself that it is of unquestionable and legitimate character.

Relations with Other Engineers

Sec. 5.—The Engineer will endeavor to protect the engineering profession collectively and individually from misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Sec. 6.—He will take care that credit for engineering is attributed to those who, in so far as his knowledge goes are the real authors of the work.

Sec. 7.—He will maintain the principle that undue low compensation for engineering work or employment tends toward impairing the quality of the results and is not in the public interest and is to the disadvantage of the individual engineer and to his profession.

Sec. 8.—He will not intentionally, directly or indirectly, injure the reputation or business of another engineer.

Sec. 9.—He will not try to supplant another engineer in a particular employment after becoming aware that definite steps have been taken toward the employment of the latter.

Sec. 10.—He will not compete with another engineer on the basis of charges for work by underbidding, through reducing his normal fees after having been informed of the charges named by the other.

Sec. 11.—He will not use personally the advantages of a salaried position to compete unfairly with another engineer.

Sec. 12.—He will not review the work of another engineer, for the latter's client or employer, without the other engineer's knowledge unless the latter's connection with the work has terminated.

Sec. 13.—He will not become associated in responsibility for work with engineers who do not conform to ethical practices.

Relations with Clients and Employers

Sec. 14.—The Engineer will act in professional matters for each client or employer as a faithful agent or trustee.

Sec. 15.—He will act in an attitude of fairness and justice between his client or employer and the contractor when dealing with contracts.

Sec. 16.—He will make his status clearly understood to his client or employer before undertaking an engagement if he may be called upon to decide on the use of inventions, apparatus, or any other thing in which he may have a financial interest.

Sec. 17.—He will regard it his duty to guard against dangerous elements on apparatus, structures, or plant or dangerous conditions of operation therein, and upon observing such conditions in work with which he is associated he will call them to the attention of his client or employer. He will not permit unsafe conditions to exist on work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 18.—He will present clearly the consequences to be expected from deviations proposed if his engineering judgment is overruled by nontechnical authority in cases where he is responsible for the technical adequacy of engineering work.

Sec. 19.—He will engage or advise his client or employer to engage and he will cooperate with other engineering experts and specialists whenever the client's or employer's interests are best served by such service.

Sec. 20.—He will treat as confidential his knowledge of the business affairs or technical processes of clients or employers when their business so require.

Sec. 21.—He will not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one interested party for the same service, or for services pertaining to the same work, without the consent of all interested parties.

Sec. 22.—He will not accept commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly from contractors or other parties dealing with his client or employer in connection with work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 23.—He will not be financially interested in the bids as a contractor on competitive work for which he is employed as an engineer unless he has the consent of his client or employer.

Sec. 24.—He will not, without the full knowledge and consent of his client or employer, have an interest in any business which may bias his judgment regarding engineering work for which he is employed or which he may be called upon to perform, or have an interest in a business which may compete with the business of his client or employer.

Relations with the Public

Sec. 25.—The Engineer will interest himself in the public welfare and be ready to apply his special knowledge, skill and training for the benefit of mankind.

Sec. 26.—He will assist public officials and others in attaining a fair and correct general understanding of engineering matters, extend the public knowledge of engineering and discourage untrue, unfair and exaggerated statements regarding engineering.

Sec. 27.—He will recognize the fact that meetings of engineering societies and the engineering press provide a proper forum for technical discussions and criticisms, and also that statements of facts relating to engineering enterprises are sometimes of value to the public when they are prepared for laymen's understanding and released by competent authority through the public press.

Sec. 28.—He will make provisions for the safety of life and health of the public and employees who may be affected by the work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 29.—He will express no opinion which is not founded on adequate knowledge and honest conviction while he is serving as a witness before a court, commission or other tribunal.

Sec. 30.—He will not issue exparte statements, criticisms or arguments on matters connected with public policy which are inspired or paid for by private interests, unless he indicates on whose behalf he is making the statement.

Sec. 31.—He will refrain from expressing publicly an opinion on an engineering subject without being informed as to the facts relating thereto.

*A uniform standard developed by the Engineers' Council for Professional Development for adoption by all engineering societies.*