

NSPE Board of Ethical Review (BER)

The first engineering ethics standards were drafted at the end of the 19th century by a few newly created technical societies. NSPE created standards of conduct early in its history which developed to a “Canon of Ethics for Engineers and Professional Conduct” by 1946. The BER was created in 1954 consisting of a panel of professional engineers that serve as the profession’s guide through ethical dilemmas. The Canon of Ethics developed over time to become the current Code of Ethics which was adopted in 1964. The code has been refined into the current version over the past 50+years. The board consists of seven licensed members who are appointed by the NSPE president with the purposes of rendering impartial opinions pertaining to the interpretation of the NSPE Code of Ethics.

For more details on the history of the NSPE as an organization, see <https://www.nspe.org/membership/about-nspe/heritage>

Root Principle behind the the Code

“Every calling has its mile of compulsion: Its round of tasks and duties, its prescribed man-to-man relationships, which one must traverse daily if one is to survive. Beyond that is the mile of voluntary effort where one strives for special excellence, seeks self-expression more than material gain, and gives that unrequired margin of service to the common good which invests work with a wide and enduring significance. The best fund of life and most of its durable satisfaction lies in this second mile and it is only here that a calling can attain the dignity and distinction of a profession.”

Dr. William E Wickenden, former president of Case Institute of Technology

- **Note** the expression ‘**higher duty**’. ‘**voluntary effort**’, the ‘**second mile**’.
- It is the spirit behind these ideals that gives the life of the Code of Ethics and root principle of ethics, in general.

And again.....

“Honesty, justice and courtesy from the moral philosophy which, associated with mutual interest among mankind, constitute the foundation of ethics. The engineer should recognize such a standard, not in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding the engineer’s conduct and way of life. It is the engineer’s duty to practice according to these Canons of Ethics.”

extracted from the Foreword of the 1947 ECPD Canons of Ethics

The idea of a “higher duty” reiterated in the following:

“Professional status and recognition must be based upon public service under a **higher duty** than **mere compliance with the letter of the law**. Ethics provides the framework within which engineers may travel the ‘second’ mile’.....”

extracted from the Foreword of the NEPS- Ethics Reference Guide

Engineers' Creed –

a concise summary of what the Code of Ethics represents

As a Professional Engineer, I dedicate my professional knowledge and skill to the advancement and betterment of human welfare.

I pledge:

- **To give the utmost of performance;**
- **To participate in none but honest enterprise;**
- **To live and work according to the laws of man and the highest standards of professional conduct;**
- **To place service before profit, the honor and standing of the profession before personal advantage, and the public welfare above all other considerations.**

In humility and with need for Divine Guidance, I make this pledge.

Adopted by National Society of Professional Engineers, June 1954

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.