

Ethical Dilemma Response: Internship in Civil Engineering

Situation

At the construction firm as an intern in civil engineering for a highway expansion project, I noticed a subcontractor out failing the safety procedure into concrete pouring. They failed to carry out a mandatory safety check on the stability of the formwork just to meet a deadline, hence endangering the workers and the structural integrity of the concrete poured. Having never really worked before, I was confronted with this ethical issue and my limited authority as an intern made it even more difficult.

Decision-Making Process

Assess the Situation: I looked over the project safety policies and the ASCE Code of Ethics, in which public safety is at the highest level (ASCE, 2020). Upon observation, I confirmed violations of OSHA regulations by the subcontractor (OSHA, n.d.). When we discussed their acts, they brought up schedule pressure as an excuse.

Identify Stakeholders: The exclusive parties considered here included workers, highway users, subcontractors, the project team, and the firm involved. At stake were safety, the welfare of the public, and the reputation of the firm.

Analyze Ethics: Utilitarianism minus maximizing benefit and duty ethics oriented me toward self-awareness. Safety is pressed according to the ASCE Code of Ethics (ASCE, 2020). Ignoring violations was embedding danger that could lead to incidences; addressing the problem will restore the integrity of the job, albeit at the cost of some delay.

Explore Options: The choices are (1) ignore it, (2) report it to the supervisor, or (3) confront the subcontractor. Choice 1 is unsafe, and choice 3 is beyond my authority. Choice 2 allows for accountability.

Decide: I opted for Option 2 to report to my supervisor for implementation of safety checks, referring to OSHA Standards (OSHA, n.d.).

Implement: I presented findings, describing the risk, and offered that work be suspended while checks were being carried out. I helped with the documentation, and my supervisor then directed the compliance.

Reflect: I enrolled in OSHA training and suggested conducting safety audits to prevent future problems.

Conclusion

By addressing the subcontractor's safety violations, I upheld the ASCE Code of Ethics with worker and public safety at the utmost priority, despite my limited internship level of experience (ASCE, 2020). It cemented the need for ethical leadership in civil engineering, which protects and promotes safety and integrity as guiding principles for every decision that may be made, even under heavy schedule pressures upon stakeholders and within the framework of the professional code of ethics.

References

American Society of Civil Engineers. (2020). Code of ethics. <https://www.asce.org/career-growth/ethics/code-of-ethics>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (n.d.). Concrete and masonry construction. <https://www.osha.gov/concrete-masonry>