

# Week 3- Module 4

Engineering Ethics

Law, Ethics and Professional Practice -

ENGI3500

WINTER 2025



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# Introduction

- Each of Canada's provinces and territories has enacted legislation to govern the practice of professional engineering. The professional engineer should become acquainted with applicable legislation in the province in which they practice.
- As discussed in Module 2, Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) has a defined code of ethics that practitioners must follow.
- *You first written essay will focus on ethical assessments on real-world engineering applications.*

# Importance of Engineering Ethics

- The Code of Ethics under the Professional Engineers Act of Ontario and endorsed by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers establishes high standards of duty, conduct, and integrity for engineers.
- These standards are vital for maintaining **public safety**, and engineers must uphold them in their duties to the public, employers, clients, colleagues, the profession, and themselves.
- The Code emphasizes **fairness, loyalty, public welfare, confidentiality, disclosure of conflicts, and cooperation with colleagues.**

# Code of Ethics for Professional Engineers in Ontario

- **Section 77** of the regulations outlines the Code of Ethics for the Professional Engineers Act of Ontario, setting standards for professional conduct to protect the public.
- Duties include acting with fairness, loyalty, and competence, prioritizing public welfare, and disclosing conflicts of interest.
- The Code underlines the importance of maintaining professional honor, integrity, and co-operating with other professionals.

# Professional Misconduct and Responsibilities

- **Section 72** of the regulations defines professional misconduct, encompassing negligence, failure to safeguard public welfare, breach of statutes, and conflicts of interest.
- Professional misconduct includes conduct harmful to the profession's reputation and failure to disclose interests that could influence professional judgment.
- Compliance with technical standards, vigilance against conflicts, and adherence to the Code of Ethics are crucial to avoiding professional misconduct.

# Law vs. Ethics

- **Engineering Law** encompasses the statutory and regulatory frameworks established by governmental bodies to regulate the engineering profession. It includes enforceable rules and regulations, covering aspects such as licensing, qualifications, safety standards, and liability. Non-compliance with these legal requirements can lead to legal consequences, including fines or suspension of licenses.

# Law vs. Ethics

- **Engineering Ethics** is rooted in moral principles and voluntary commitments that guide the behavior and decision-making of professional engineers. Ethical considerations are not legally binding, but they are articulated in professional codes of ethics developed by engineering organizations. These codes emphasize principles such as honesty, fairness, and prioritizing the public welfare.

# Section 77 of the Professional Engineers Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.28.

- Through the Code of Ethics, professional engineers have a clearly defined duty to society, which is to regard the duty to public welfare as paramount, **above their duties to clients or employers**. Their duty to employers involves acting as faithful agents or trustees, regarding client information as confidential and avoiding or disclosing conflicts of interest (PEO, 2023).
- Their duty to clients means that professional engineers must immediately disclose any direct or indirect interest that might prejudice (or appear to prejudice) their professional judgment (PEO, 2023).



# Section 77 of the Professional Engineers Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.28.

The code states that "it is the duty of a practitioner to the public, to the practitioner's employer, to the practitioner's clients, to other licensed engineers of the practitioner's profession, and to the practitioner to act at all times with,

1. Fairness and loyalty to the practitioner's associates, employers, clients, subordinates and employees;
2. Fidelity to public needs;
3. Devotion to high ideals of personal honour and professional integrity;
4. Knowledge of developments in the area of professional engineering relevant to any services that are undertaken; and,
5. Competence in the performance of any professional engineering services that are undertaken (PEO, 2023).

# Review of Section 77 of the Professional Engineers Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.28.

See BB for a digital copy

# Homework Before Next Class

- Complete assigned chapter readings in the Critical Path.
- Study Section 77 (Code of Ethics) of the Professional Engineers Act. We will be reviewing and discussing a Case Study at the beginning of next weeks class.
- Read “Guideline on Human Rights in Professional Practice” published by Professional Engineers Ontario.

# THANK YOU.



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# References

Marston, Donald L. 2019. *Law for Professional Engineers: Canadian and Global Insights*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Professional Engineers Ontario. (2023). *Code of Ethics*.  
Professional Engineers Ontario.  
<https://www.peo.on.ca/licence-holders/code-ethics>