

## Ethical Dilemma Response: Misuse of Licensed Software

### Scenario:

As an IT Supervisor, I discovered that a few members of my team were using our organization's licensed software — specifically a paid design tool — for personal freelance work outside business hours. Additionally, a junior employee suggested temporarily installing a cracked version of similar software on a non-production system to speed up internal testing on a tight project deadline.

### Ethical Issue:

This scenario raises two serious concerns:

1. **Unauthorized use of licensed software** for non-business purposes
2. **Proposing the use of pirated or unlicensed software** to meet internal deadlines

Both actions violate our organization's software usage policies, vendor license agreements, and potentially copyright law. More importantly, they conflict with core ethical principles of **integrity, accountability, and professional responsibility**.

### My Decision:

I immediately decided to escalate the situation through proper internal reporting channels while initiating a confidential team-wide review of software use and licensing compliance. I privately met with the employees involved to explain why such behavior is unethical and exposes both them and the company to legal risk. I declined the request to use pirated software and insisted that all testing be performed using approved tools, even if it meant adjusting the project timeline.

### Ethical Principle Applied:

This decision is guided by the principle of **integrity**—doing what is right even when it is inconvenient. As a supervisor, I must model ethical behavior and uphold company policy. Bending the rules or tolerating misuse of company resources sends a dangerous message and erodes team trust.

### Justification as a Leader:

Allowing the unauthorized use of licensed software could set a precedent that policy violations are acceptable under pressure. My role is not only to protect the company from legal and reputational harm but to mentor employees in responsible decision-making. I used this moment as a learning opportunity, reinforced ethical standards in our team, and worked with HR and procurement to explore cost-effective alternatives for future tool needs.