

Greenhill County employs individuals to perform building inspections in the county. Dissatisfied with the services provided by in-house inspectors and, as part of an effort to "contract out" certain county functions, the county decided to retain a private consulting engineering firm to perform building inspections. Greenhill County selects and retains Engineer A's firm. One of Engineer A's responsibilities is to inspect a building project developed by Enterprise Inc., a company for which she has regularly performed services in the past. Although she did not provide any services in connection with the building project in question, Engineer A and Enterprise Inc., anticipate that they will continue to work together in the future. In contract negotiations with the County, Engineer A discloses this relationship with Enterprise Inc., and it becomes a matter of public record.

Would it be unethical for Engineer A to perform building inspection services for the county in connection with the project developed by Enterprise Inc.?

ANSWER: It would not be unethical for Engineer A to perform building inspection services for the county in connection with the project developed by Enterprise, Inc. Engineer A is being asked to perform basic inspection services in connection with a building which she has never previously been involved, but which was developed by a former and possibly future client. To prohibit Engineer A from providing building inspection services would be an unrealistic intrusion into her practice and would inhibit the county from utilizing a flexible method of delivering services consisted with the public health and safety.

Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Case, 1994.

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