

# Are There Gray Areas In Ethics and How to Address This Concept ?

## Ethics in Professional Engineering- Panel

American Nuclear Society  
Winter Meeting November 18, 2009  
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# Background

- ▶ ANS has a code of Ethics
- ▶ We subscribe to it when we join
- ▶ It is on our website

# Ethics

- ▶ Ethics, and Morals – can be philosophized forever
- ▶ They really mean “Doing what is right”
- ▶ All the world’s great religions have versions of the “Golden Rule” - Do to others what you want done to you.”
- ▶ The Sam Levenson test “How would you like it if they did it to you?”
- ▶ The Thanksgiving dinner table test “Would you be proud to explain to your family what you did?”

# The Four Questions

- ▶ Is my decision a truthful one?
- ▶ Is my decision fair to everyone affected?
- ▶ Will it build good will for the organization?
- ▶ Is the decision beneficial to all who have an interest in the outcome?

# What is a Gray Area?

- ▶ It is Gray when you are not sure what is right
- ▶ How do you balance competing values?
- ▶ A gray area can be legally, technically or morally gray, or all together

# WHO Believes it is Gray?

- ▶ You believe an area is gray
- ▶ Others may not believe it, or may believe it gray in a different way
- ▶ Management, legal staff, Regulators, Intervenors and public all may believe differently
- ▶ Consider other's viewpoints

# Resolving

- ▶ Read
- ▶ Study the Regulations
- ▶ Discuss with colleagues, supervisors, management

# What if a “wrong” decision is made?

- ▶ What is the effect on the public? Public harm? What are the odds?
- ▶ Resolving depends on where you are. If you are in an organization that “shoots the messenger” it isn’t easy.
- ▶ Go on record.
- ▶ Worst case: become a whistleblower. Hire a lawyer.

# Case studies

- ▶ BWR Scram Discharge Volume: seismic or not? The issue: only seismic damage severe enough to block water discharge stops scram. Water on the floor with rods scrambling is OK. Finally resolved by taking to the company President.
- ▶ Manufacturing management. Groups have different financial goals from management.
- ▶ End