

Ethical Lessons from 2010 Engineering Scandals



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BP Macondo Well

- **May 28, 2010 – BP engineer testifies well design was sound**
- **March 23, 2011 – investigative report determines blowout preventer failed due to a faulty design**
- **Potential culprit: an emphasis on personal safety (such as reducing slips and falls) rather than process/design safety (avoiding a deadly explosion)**
- **Coast Guard Report targets safety management systems**
- **Potential criminal charges**
- **Mystery illnesses**
- **New law suit filed this week**



BP Macondo Well

Rules

- Decisions made to save time and money created unreasonable amounts of risk
- Don't rush through projects
- Don't risk others' health and safety



Hydraulic Fracturing

- EPA and environmentalists assert that fracking may contaminate drinking water and cause other health concerns
- Various E&P companies dispute the negative effects of fracking while refusing to divulge the confidential trade secrets involved in the process
- E&P companies claim the process is designed to be safe
- Rules
 - Don't reveal confidential information
 - Don't risk others' health and safety





- **April 11, 2011: A new study by Cornell University was released that finds that hydraulic fracturing is actually more harmful to the environment than burning coal.**
- **According to the study, the amount of methane gas discharged by fracturing essentially negates any advantage natural gas holds over oil and coal as a cleaner energy source.**
- **The study concludes that shale gas developed through fracturing carries a higher greenhouse gas footprint because the "fugitive" methane emissions at the fracturing sites are greater than releases from conventional gas wells.**
- **In essence, the Cornell study argues that methane emissions from these shale gas projects mean that shale gas ultimately brings climate consequences comparable to coal over a century, and worse than coal over two decades.**
- **The Cornell findings are a blow to the industry, which has spent liberally on ads to MSNBC to tout natural gas as a greener alternative to oil, coal and nuclear power.**

Duke University Study

- May 9, 2011 study released finding gas in drinking water near drilling sites in Pennsylvania
- Scientists did not find chemicals in New York wells
- Study did not show fracking itself caused the methane to enter the water sources

Nuclear Power Plants

- Fukushima Daiichi - Japan's government admits safeguards were insufficient
- Fukushima Daiichi - Engineer's warning in 2007 of 10% chance of tsunami causing catastrophic damage was ignored
- United States – 56 safety violations at U.S. nuclear power plants in past 4 years
- Engineers actions after the accident were honorable.
- Rules
 - Don't risk other's health and safety
 - Don't break the law



Use Ethical Self-Talk

- Would the final action be legal?
- Would stakeholders see the act as responsible?
- Would I mind the decision being Exhibit A?
- Have I consulted with peers/others regarding decision and ramifications?
- How would the public view the act with respect to my profession?

The Rotary Four Way Test

- 1. Is it the TRUTH?
- 2. Is it FAIR to all Concerned?
- 3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- 4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

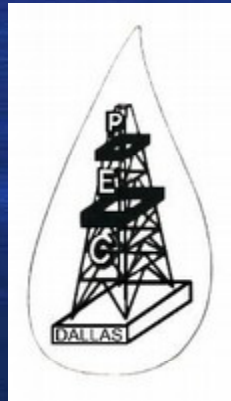
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"Make sure everything is done ethically. Within reason, of course."

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