

# CODE OF ETHICS

THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS

KNOWLEDGE  
EXPERIENCE  
COMMITMENT  
EXCELLENCE

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# Summary

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Technology and science are strongly intertwined within our society. In their role as creators and managers of technology, engineers bear a particular responsibility for the public, society and the environment. In support of the professional practice of it's members, the Royal Netherlands Society of Engineers (KIVI) has established a code of ethics. With this code of ethics, KIVI aims to provide support to members and assist them in it's application if needed. A KIVI-advisor can optionally act as counsel here.

As members of KIVI, we are deeply aware of the major impact that technology has on the quality of society, and consequentially on the responsibility of our profession. In this, we strive for high levels of professional and responsible behaviors in our professional activities. To this end, we agree to the following:

1. We shall take into account how our technical decisions influence the health and safety of people and their surroundings. We will not hide any factors that influence the safety of society and the environment.
2. We shall alert stakeholders where real or perceived conflicts of interest may occur.
3. We shall contribute to clear communication in reference to technical products and technologies with regard to the application and possible negative effects.
4. We shall reject bribery and all forms of corrupt behaviour.
5. We shall base our conclusions, recommendation and deals on the most current and available information.
6. We shall maintain and enhance our technical competence. We are familiar with our own limitations and we shall make others aware of these limitations of our services.
7. We shall mention the resources that have contributed to our publications, reports, and all other components of our engineers work. We are open to feedback and recommendations of others.
8. We shall respect the cultural values and inhabitants of the countries we work in.
9. We shall promote a professional environment where everyone feels safe, and where diversity and inclusion in all its forms are embraced and where our differences are valued and respected.
10. We shall strive for a healthy development and practice of the engineering work in all it's components through loyal and open co-operation.

For the purpose of the readability of the KIVI code of ethics, the engineer is expressed in the 'he' form. However, the word 'he' can also be read as 'she'. The same applies for 'his' and 'her'.

# KIVI's Code of Ethics

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## **1. We shall take into account how our technical decisions influence the health and safety of people and their surroundings. We will not hide any factors that influence the safety of society and the environment.**

- 1.1. The engineer acknowledges that the lives of individuals, as well as the safety and the well-being of society, partly depend on technical considerations, human decisions, actions and behavior, and that these are reflected in processes, products, machines, and structures.
- 1.2. The engineer will not approve or conceal plans, specifications or recommendations that do not meet current safety rules and standards or that bring risk to the collective welfare in any way.
- 1.3. When circumstances that may bring the welfare and/or the safety of society to any harm, overrule professional consideration of the engineer, he will inform his customer or client.
  - 1.3.1. The engineer will thoroughly evaluate the safety and the reliability of the systems for which the engineer is responsible, before giving his approval.
  - 1.3.2. The engineer will provide instructions (with relevant standards and quality norms) that offer the user the opportunity to safely use the products and systems for which the engineer is responsible.
  - 1.3.3. In relation to the practice of his profession, the engineer will inform the designated authorities about circumstances that endanger safety, health or the environment.
- 1.4. If an engineer has justifiable grounds to believe that a person or company behaves at variance with the code of conduct and that this endangers the safety, health or the environment, then the engineer will first inform the company about this issue. Only in the case that he receives no reply, the engineer will notify the authorities, in writing, and including the necessary relevant information.

## **2. We shall alert stakeholders where real or perceived conflicts of interest may occur.**

- 2.1. The engineer will actively avoid conflicts of interest and their semblances, and he will therefore not accept any work in which it is foreseeable that there will be a conflict of interest for himself, the client or the employer of the engineer.
- 2.2. The engineer will not accept or accredit payments, reimbursements, or compensations (financial or otherwise) of or to third parties without prior consent received from all stakeholders on a project.

- 2.3. The engineer will not search for or gain income for the specification of goods and services (or their suppliers) for a project without disclosure to the client and the employer.
- 2.4. The engineer will separate the public interest in his business from personal interests, and he will act in a manner that is transparent to stakeholders.
- 2.5. If the engineer concludes that the project will not succeed during the practice of his profession, the engineer will accordingly inform and advise his employer / client.
- 2.6. The engineer will treat information that belongs to a project confidentially, and he will not use this information for personal gain or in a way that is detrimental to the client, employer or the public interest.
  - 2.3.1. The engineer will not disclose project information that is confidential without the consent of the parties, unless maintaining the confidentiality is contrary to the law or the good order.
  - 2.3.2. The engineer will treat (sensitive) information or knowledge gained in committees or boards confidentially.
  - 2.3.3. Designs and constructions of clients will not be reproduced or distributed without the client's permission.
- 2.7 The engineer will only use equipment, inventory, laboratory-, or other facilities of the employer after receiving his permission for private purposes.
- 2.8 When the engineer also conducts overlapping / competing activities for third parties, besides the activities that he carries out on payroll, he will inform the employer or ask him for permission in advance, if the law requires.
- 2.9 In the execution of activities in which the modification, alteration, application, or the renewal of structures or designs can lead to the application for a new patent or copyright, the engineer will inform its client beforehand to clarify the implications with regard to intellectual property rights.

### **3. We shall contribute to clear communication in reference to technical products and technologies with regard to the application and possible negative effects.**

- 3.1. The engineer will be complete, objective and instructive in all professional reports, depositions, and testimonies, and he will not conceal or withhold any relevant information.
- 3.2. The engineer is willing to clarify or explain the meaning and the scope of his profession and its application in various social contexts, networks, discussions, and publications, and in this way to contribute to the training of others.
- 3.3. Both on his own as well as in association, the engineer considers himself obliged to indicate social risks or consequences in the application of products, processes, or theories in his profession, and to strive for a correction of possible misunderstandings and misstatements in that regard.

#### **4. We shall reject bribery and all forms of corrupt behaviour.**

- 4.1. The engineer will not accept gifts, exemptions or extras, directly or indirectly, in relation to the outcome of the work for which he is responsible.
- 4.2. The engineer will not cooperate on the manipulation of outcomes or reports as a result of direct or indirect payments, exchange rates, bonuses or any other form of gain.

#### **5. We shall base our conclusions, recommendation and deals on the most current and available information.**

- 5.1. The engineer will build a professional reputation on personal merits.
- 5.2. The engineer will search for or accept work, projects and contracts on the basis of qualities and qualifications that are relevant to that work.
- 5.3. The engineer will not accept or attract work under conditions that compromise the professional judgments and estimates.
- 5.4. The engineer will not bring out misleading representations of the own work or of that of others, and he will sustain a reasonable level of effort in order to combat or correct misrepresentation by others.
- 5.5. The engineer will not lend his reputation, name and/or trading name to individuals or companies engaged in fraudulent or dishonest practices.
- 5.6. The engineer will not hide behind secrecy, other persons, or companies to conceal errors or unethical behaviors. As far as he is contractually bound to confidentiality, he will first discuss the errors or behaviors internally with the employer or client. If the engineer deems it necessary, he will go public, without involving classified information for as far as possible.
- 5.7. The engineer will acknowledge his own mistakes and will report them by himself, whenever this is necessary to avoid possible consequential damage.
- 5.8. The engineer will not recruit any employees or sell products under false pretenses.

#### **6. We shall maintain and enhance our technical competence. We are familiar with our own limitations and we shall make others aware of these limitations of our services.**

- 6.1. The engineer will maintain his professional development throughout his career and he will create opportunities for the professional and ethical development of employees.
- 6.2. As an expert witness, the engineer will only give his opinion when it is based on his own expertise and competence and when this opinion is based on facts. In case he does draw on the knowledge or the opinions of others, he will clearly indicate this in a testimony.
- 6.3. The engineer will accurately reflect his own achievements or responsibilities in

his current or previous work. Brochures or other publications to attract or search for jobs will be accurate with regard to facts, employees, employers, associations, joint ventures and acquisitions.

- 6.4. The engineer will not criticize, express his opinion, or make a report without mentioning underlying financial bonds.
- 6.5. The engineer will explain activities properly and will avoid unwarranted utterances, for example, utterances to the detriment of third parties or to the integrity of his profession.

### **7. We shall mention the resources that have contributed to our publications, reports, and all other components of our engineers work. We are open to feedback and recommendations of others.**

- 7.1. In the writing of technical scientific publications, the engineer will underpin it by arguments and facts, clearly separated from speculations and prepositions.
- 7.2. Technical publications (dissertations, articles, books) that are based on research by more than a single individual, should include all significant contributions. Co-authors should have given their consent for publication unless otherwise agreed or where copyright law prescribes.
- 7.3. The engineer will not engage in plagiarism.
- 7.4. The engineer will strive for openness and transparency and will respect and pursue the freedom of expression of others.

### **8. We shall respect the cultural values and inhabitants of the countries we work in.**

- 8.1. The engineer will show respect for local values through appropriate clothing, and in his behavior with regard to sacred places and rites.

### **9. We shall promote a professional environment where everyone feels safe, and where diversity and inclusion in all its forms are embraced and where our differences are valued and respected.**

- 9.1. The engineer will not criticize the work of others in a way that is unnecessary or unfounded.
- 9.2. The engineer will not undertake work or apply techniques in an unlawfully direct or indirect way that cause harm to individuals, their properties, or the operation of their possessions.
- 9.3. The engineer will not engage in intimidation, harassment, exclusion or the creation of an atmosphere in which these are accepted.

- 9.4. The engineer will pursue an equal treatment and evaluation of all employees and does not engage in the benefit or disadvantage of others on the basis of favors or services that are not related to work.
- 9.5. To create a safe environment and to treat fairly all persons regardless of gender, race, background or engage in any other act of discrimination or disrespect, and addressing others if they should do so.

**10. We shall strive for a healthy development and practice of the engineering work in all it's components through loyal and open co-operation.**

- 10.1. The engineer follows developments in his own profession, and he expects and encourages the same practice of his employees.
- 10.2. The engineer is aware of the necessity of collaboration with multiple disciplines in the application of new technologies, technical knowledge and expertise, including methods and models, and of its required mutual openness and loyalty.
- 10.3. The engineer supports his employees in the analysis of technical and social difficulties by offering flexible solutions that allow for later adjustments on the basis of insights.