



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

# Engineer's Dispute With Client Over Design (adapted from NSPE Case No. 84-4)

## Year

1999

## Description

This is an open-ended scenario for discussion based on a case from the NSPE Board of Ethical Review. A client believes an engineer's designs are too costly, but the engineer fears that anything less may endanger the public.

## Body

Campbell hires D. J., an engineer, to design a certain project. D. J. develops a design and meets with Campbell to discuss it. The two disagree over the ultimate success of the project. While Campbell feels that the design could be simplified, D. J. believes that a simpler solution could endanger the public. Campbell demands that D. J. turn over the drawings, so that he can present them to Antonopoulos, an engineer who has agreed to complete the project as Campbell wishes. Campbell is willing to pay D. J. for the drawings and the work completed thus far, but D. J. refuses to give Campbell the drawings.

Is D. J. obligated to give Campbell the drawings? Does D. J. have any other obligations or responsibilities that conflict with giving Campbell the drawings? As an ethical matter, should Antonopoulos accept the job of revising the plans to meet Campbell's demand? Would having additional information change your assessment

of the situation? If so, what kind of information? How would it be useful?

[NSPE Code of Ethics](#) An earlier version may have been used in this case.

## **Notes**

See the original NSPE case at: [Engineer's Dispute With Client Over Design - Case No. 84-4](#).

## **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

## **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

## **Parent Collection**

Professional Ethics in Engineering Practice: Discussion Cases Based on NSPE BER Cases

## **Topics**

Public Health and Safety

Public Well-being

Safety

## **Discipline(s)**

Engineering

## **Publisher**

Online Ethics Center

Authoring Institution

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