



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Signing Off on Drawings (adapted from NSPE Cases No. 88-5)

Year

1999

Description

An example of why signing off on one's drawings is essential to responsible engineering.

Body

Putnam is an engineer employed by a computer manufacturer. He is responsible for the design of some computer equipment and signs off on the drawings. Although his design has been properly prepared, the manufacturing process is faulty, drives up cost, and suffers a mechanical breakdown. The manufacturing division suggests modifications to bring down costs, but Putnam analyzes the recommendations and finds that they would reduce the reliability of the product that would likely cost the company more through warranty claims. Putnam's supervisor asks him to sign off on the changes anyway. Although there is nothing to suggest that there is a safety problem, Putnam raises reliability concerns to his supervisor.

What are Putnam's professional responsibilities in this case? What are the supervisor's responsibilities? What should Putnam do?

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

Notes

See the original NSPE case at: [Signing of Drawings By Engineer In Industry - Case No. 88-5](#).

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

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Employer/Employee Relationships

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Discipline(s)

Engineering

Publisher

Online Ethics Center

Authoring Institution

Online Ethics Center