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Ethical Dilemma Report

The Compromised Concrete Mix

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1. Introduction

On a government hospital construction project, the engineer found that the concrete supplier provided a mix that did not reach the required strength specifications. This could be a building safety hazard; however, if the concrete needs to be replaced, it would be time-consuming and financially costly to do so. Some of the project team members recommended that nothing be said about the problem because the financial penalties would be enormous while the others felt that this was a safety issue and must come first.

2. Problem Description

During the construction of a government-funded hospital, a project manager finds out that the concrete supplier delivered a concrete mix that is of a strength less than what was specified. The engineer reports the problem, but the site supervisor warns that fixing it will delay the project and increase costs. The supplier denies wrongdoing and offers a discount in secret if the issue is ignored.

2.2 What is the Ethical Issue?

The ethical dilemma is in whether to report and fix non-complying concrete to ensure safety and quality. OR ignore the problem to save time and avoid penalties.

This is a conflict between safety and honesty versus financial pressure and deadlines.

2.3 Who is Involved?

- Project Manager-decision Maker
- Site Engineer-who Identified the Problem
- Site Supervisor (Concerned About Delays)
- Concrete Supplier - Responsible for the Poor-quality Mix
- Government / Client
- Future Users of the Hospital: Patients, Doctors, And Visitors.

2.4 Who Might be Affected and How?

Patients And Hospital Workers: The risk of structural problems or unsafe building conditions.

Construction Company: Might lose future contracts or even face legal action.

Supplier: Could lose reputation or face penalties.

Project Workers: Safety risks when working with weak concrete.

Government/Public: Waste of public funds or future safety risks.

3. Options and Consequences

Option 1: Report the Issue and Fix the Concrete

Long-term Positive Outcomes

- Ensures That the Building Is Structurally Safe.
- Prevents Citizen Harm.
- Maintains Professional Ethics and Legal Compliance.
- Enhances Company Reputation for Integrity and Quality.

Short-term Bad Outcomes

- Delays The Project.
- Increases Costs.
- Potential Conflict with Supplier and Site Supervisor.

Who Benefits?

Public, government, workers, and future occupants of the hospital.

Who may be harmed?

Company: financial loss.

Supplier: penalties.

Option 2: Ignore the Problem and Continue Construction

Short-term Positive Outcomes

- No Immediate Delays.
- It Saves Money
- Avoids Penalties for Late Delivery.

Long-term Bad Outcomes

- Serious Safety Risk.
- Possible Structural Failure in the Future.
- Legal And Professional Consequences When Discovered Later.
- Damage To Company Reputation.

Who benefits?

Supplier, project supervisor, company in the short run.

Who may be Harmed?

Patients, workers, government, and the public. Company in the long term-lawsuits, failures.

4. What is the Right Course of Action? [Ethical Reasoning]

Deontology (Duty-Based Ethics)

This school of thought emphasizes adherence to professional rules and duties regardless of short-term consequences.

According to this approach:

- The Primary Duty Is to Ensure Structural Integrity.
- Ignoring A Defect Is a Direct Violation of Professional Rules and Integrity.
- Repairing And Reporting Any Defect Is the Most Ethical Action Because It Is in Line with Professional Laws and Standards, Regardless of The Material and Time Cost. (Frey And Wellman, 2003, P. 205)

5. Professional Rules

Confessional Rules and Responsibilities

The CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building) Code of Conduct States:

- Honesty And Integrity.
- Professional Competence
- Continuing Professional Development
- High Quality Service
- Respect, Equality and Inclusion
- Public Interest
- Sustainability
- Conflicts of Interest
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Whistleblowing
- Responsibility to the Profession

RICS also stipulates:

- Protecting The Public Interest.
- Prioritizing Safety Over Profit.
- Committing To Honesty and Integrity in All Dealings.
- These Rules Explicitly Prohibit Ignoring Problems Affecting Quality or Safety.

6. Decision

This decision is developed in line with the need to protect the public, ensure engineering standards are met, and preserve long-term integrity of the hospital structure. The corrective actions, as proposed, may lead to delay and costs; however, there is a pressing need to consider safety for future users of the hospital and the reputation of the project itself.

A formal report shall be forwarded to the client; the concrete supplier shall be liable to bear all the relevant expenses as per the contractual agreement.

How is this Decision Ethical and Professional?

- It Protects the Lives and Safety of Thousands of Future Hospital Users.
- It Avoids Future Disasters, Lawsuits, and Major Financial Losses.
- It Ensures Honesty, Trust, and Long-term Benefit for Society.

7. Conclusion

Using deontology, the best option is to report the problem and repair hold the supplier accountable. Because it protects the lives and safety of thousands of future hospital users. It avoids future disasters, lawsuits, and major financial losses. It ensures honesty, trust, and long-term benefit for society. That is why ethics are important in construction.

8. Reference:

R.G. Frey and C.H. Wellman, P. (2003) *A Companion to Ethics* Blackwell Pub, pp. 205-218.