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SHOULD ENGINEERING SCHOOLS ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ISSUES?

By Dennis J. Paustenbach¹

Abstract: Over the past 15 years, society has developed an expectation that engineers, as practitioners and managers, are aware of those activities over which they have control and which could adversely affect the public's well-being. Specifically, due to incidents such as Love Canal, Times Beach, Bhopal, and Chernobyl, and the pollution of groundwater, the public now recognizes that technology, which is within the control of others, can, if mishandled, jeopardize the health and well-being of thousands of innocent people. This realization will undoubtedly place increasing pressures on engineers to be more aware of the potential adverse consequences of their work. This paper discusses why schools of engineering have a responsibility to prepare engineers to meet these expectations and recommends an approach to meeting this challenge. An undergraduate engineering course applicable to all disciplines, which would help fill this gap, is discussed.