

THE ENGINEER'S ROLE IN PROTECTING HUMAN HEALTH — LEGAL ASPECTS

Today's engineer shares with management
the legal and moral responsibility to
minimize project risks

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We live in a litigious society. Today, there are 625,000 lawyers in the U.S. and nearly 6 million cases are brought before the courts each year. At a time when professional judgments are being second-guessed by courts sympathetic to aggrieved plaintiffs, engineers have historically been rarely named as defendants in law suits except, of course, those clearly arising from some breach of a contractual obligation. This article examines the legal and economic reasons for the increased exposure of engineers to litigation and what practitioners might do to better protect themselves from what can be an expensive and unpleasant experience.