



OTC 18402

## PANEL: DECISION MAKING, ETHICS, AND PROFESSIONALISM

### In New Horizons and At New Depths: Where are the Ethical Boundaries and Potential Liabilities Facing the Offshore Energy Industry?

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#### Abstract

As organizations point the way to a safer and pollution wary maritime industry and demand going beyond simple compliance with government rules and regulations, the offshore energy industry should now further examine the evolving decision making, ethics and professionalism boundaries and potential liabilities surrounding current and future activities in the offshore energy industry. The contour of these boundaries may have a substantial impact on the profitability and direction of the progression of the offshore energy industry. This session will focus on how regulators, certification organizations and companies define the boundaries and potential liabilities via mindful decision making, ethical behavior and professionalism in the offshore energy industry. The panel will discuss this topic based on the regulatory environment, case studies and potential developments facing the new depths and new horizons in the industry.

#### INTRODUCTION

Individuals and companies in the offshore energy industry face many challenges. These challenges may seem to rest only on technical questions, but often the decision making process also includes concerns that center on ethics, professionalism and liability. An examination of these concerns demonstrates that ethics, professionalism and liability each provide different technical challenges in the offshore energy industry.

#### CODES OF ETHICS: PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

##### American Association of Petroleum Geologists

The American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) requires its members to follow a code of ethics. This

code of ethics includes obligations to the public, employers, clients, other members of the association and to the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. However, the following three general principles are at the core of AAPG's code of ethics:

- Geology is a profession, and the privilege of professional practice requires professional morality and professional responsibility.
- Honesty, integrity, loyalty, fairness, impartiality, candor, fidelity to trust, and inviolability of confidence are incumbent upon every member as professional obligations.
- Each member shall be guided by high standards of business ethics, personal honor, and professional conduct....

##### Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists

The Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists (AEG) is an international, non-profit, scientific and technical association whose members include geoscientists specializing in engineering geology, environmental geology, and ground-water geology as well as other professionals in affiliated fields such as civil and mining engineering, land-use planning, public policy and education.

AEG promotes the value and importance of geologic practice in: (1) detecting, containing, and remediating contaminated soil and ground water; (2) recognizing and mitigating hazardous geologic processes to promote public safety and welfare, and (3) planning, designing, constructing and maintaining engineered works.

The mission of AEG is to provide leadership in the development and application of geologic principles and knowledge to serve engineering, environmental, and public needs. The goals of this association is to advance engineering geology and to promote public safety and welfare and public understanding and acceptance of the field of geology.

##### National Society of Professional Engineers

Most engineering societies have adopted a code of ethics. The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) has a code of ethics that is often used as the basis for licensing of professional engineers by the states. One of the fundamental canons of ethics by the NSPE states: "Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the