

By Jeannette Gauthier, Eng., Syndic

NEW FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SYNDIC

Ethics telephone line and on-line web tools for engineers

The report prepared by Montreal's auditor general on water meters, contributions made to political parties by employees of consulting engineering firms, corruption in the construction industry, government contracts awarded without invitations to tender, false invoices issued by engineers ...

These matters all made the headlines during the last two years and had a direct impact on the public's confidence toward our profession. As a result, requests for inquiries have increased and engineers are faced with more and more questions regarding their ethical obligations. The Ordre des ing nieurs du Qu bec (hereafter the "Ordre") had to act...

In February 2010, in connection with its strategic agenda, the Ordre's Board of Directors adopted an action plan relating to ethics and professional conduct made up of two important components. The first one aims to qualify the nature and scope of ethical problem in engineering; the second focuses on implementing support tools for engineers.

1 877  THIQUE IS LISTENING...

In this context, the Office of the Syndic increased its efforts with respect to prevention and information. Recently, a new advisory telephone line was activated to help members faced with ethical questions. When calling 1 877  THIQUE (384-4783), you will find qualified personnel who can point you in the right direction or propose lines of thought, identify pertinent sections in the Code of ethics, refer you to relevant articles published in PLAN or provide jurisprudence relating to cases similar to yours. We can also receive your requests for inquiries.

When requesting information, you can remain anonymous. However, you will be invited to identify yourself in order to allow us to record your concerns in our database, easing future communications as well as follow-up.

Please note that the Syndic's office will not, under any circumstances, provide legal advice. Should you require such advice, you should contact a lawyer in private practice. The Office of the Syndic must remain impartial in order to conduct its inquiries. What's more, a brief exchange of information between you and the Syndic's office would not yield all the facts which are relevant to your situation; that being the case, any advice relating to such exchange might be incomplete or inadequate.

The Office of the Syndic provides improved access to information relating to ethical questions.

THE OFFICE OF THE SYNDIC, WEB VERSION

In order to benefit from the services offered by the Syndic's office, you can use our new on-line web tools. (The forms will be available in English in February.) For example, you can now submit a request for information by filling out a **form** published on the Ordre's website in the "Contact" section.

Given that each of us has a duty to ensure compliance with the Engineers Act and the Code of ethics of engineers, and to report any violation thereto to the Ordre, the Syndic's office also prepared an online form for inquiry requests relating to engineers conduct. This document is in addition to the form entitled "Reporting an irregularity" for unlawful practice by non-engineers which is already online (www.oiq.qc.ca, section "Lodging complaints").

Furthermore, over the course of the next few months, the Ordre's website will be revamped and you will be able to find more answers in the newly updated and detailed section on frequently asked questions (FAQs).

VARIOUS CONFERENCES

The Syndic's office offers conferences either through the Ordre's regional sections or directly within your workplace. These conferences cover such diverse issues as conflicts of interests, the role of the Syndic's office, or the latest disciplinary decisions and lessons to be learned therefrom. Call us to reserve at 514-845-6141, extension 3201.

In closing, the new telephone line and online forms will soon be available to the public. This will prove to be another occasion to uphold our commitment to fulfilling our mission, namely protecting the public.