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Ethics Training for Safety Practitioners

In an imperfect world full of conflicting interests between individuals, organizations, and systems, making the right decisions requires an individual to understand ethics. Ethics is the study of what makes certain actions good or bad. By studying ethics, an individual can gain an understanding of how to decide on the best course of action and have the confidence to take that action.

It is important that safety professionals be committed to ethical practice. Hazard mitigation may come with up-front costs that conflict with economic imperatives, safe procedures may conflict with the operational expediency desired by workers or management, and so on. To best protect people, property, and the environment, safety practice requires an understanding of ethics.

The Ethics Requirement

BCSP safety certifications' value is not only based on the safety, health, and environmental (SH&E) knowledge and skills they measure, but also the conduct they require. BCSP credential holders are bound to uphold the [BCSP Code of Ethics](#) and required to complete ethics training to maintain certification.

Recertification requires the completion of 0.5 points, or five (5) hours, of ethics courses every recertification cycle (beginning with those cycles that have a start date of July 1, 2023). To meet the requirement, the courses combined length must equal or exceed five hours and credential holders must be able to provide proof of the course's completion, such as a certificate, if audited.

Full details on the requirement can be found in the [BCSP Recertification Guide](#).

Sources of Ethics Training

How a safety professional fulfills the ethics requirement is up to them. Organizations may provide ethics training through human resources that could be used if you request them. Courses might also be found through membership organizations, colleges or universities, or online.

Membership Organizations

There are a variety of membership organizations for safety professionals that provide ethics training.

The National Safety Council (NSC) offers [several online courses](#), including those on ethics. The ethics courses teach individuals how to identify and resolve ethical issues and concerns, as well as how to get help when you are unsure as to the best course of action.

The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) is another organization that [provides courses](#), including ethics courses designed specifically for safety professionals. These review professional codes of conduct for

occupational safety and health (OSH) professionals, cover various approaches for resolving ethical issues, and include exercises on the practical application of ethical principles using real-life scenarios.

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) hosts webinars throughout the year. Available on demand, [several of these webinars](#) cover the challenges facing SH&E professionals in making ethical decisions, tools or methods that can be used to overcome dilemmas, and several practice scenarios.

These course offerings will likely be updated and added to throughout a credential holder's five (5) year recertification cycle. There may also be webinars on ethics added to [The Hub](#) in that time, so check all frequently.

Colleges and Universities

Another option for ethics courses is those provided by colleges and universities.

Most traditional college ethics classes are more accessible to those enrolled in a university. If you are a current student, consider enrolling in an ethics course as part of your degree's general education requirements. For the majority of safety practitioners, who are not currently students, colleges may offer online micro-courses or micro-credentials for working professionals which include those on ethics.

Other Online Sources

Courses that cover general ethical practices, especially short-form webinars, can be found in many other places online via search or LinkedIn.

For example, LinkedIn Learning, formerly Lynda.com, offers various general business ethics options, including a [course on leadership ethics](#). Look for those that provide a certificate upon completion.

However you choose to study ethics, consider its application to your work. As once stated by powerful safety advocate Paul O'Neill of Alcoa, safety comprises an "ethics and morality about how we care about human beings and our society." Dedicate yourself to upholding that ethic as part of your safety practice.

Disclaimer: The Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) does not sponsor or endorse any specific ethics courses to satisfy the ethics recertification requirement. Any options included here are intended as illustrative examples to assist credential holders in best determining how they may each best meet the ethics portion of their recertification requirements.