

Ethics for the Occupational Health and Safety Professional

April, 2024

Final Case Study

Think about the below case study. Write an analysis that states whether or not you believe doing the tests and reporting the results is ethical. You must state why you reached your decision.

Having reached a decision about what you believe, reanalyze the case study and describe how someone might come to the opposite decision.

Note: You must present **BOTH** sides of the case study, not just what you think should be done.

Although you can write as much as you want, your complete submission must be at least 100 words.

Return your completed submission to us at newwaveohs2016@gmail.com

Case Study

Your company has a comprehensive occupational health and safety audit done at the same time every year. The audit is mandated by the international headquarters. There is no flexibility in scheduling. A poor mark on an audit would severely hamper the promotional opportunities for management.

Your supervisor asks to repeat a series of air tests as an integral part of these audits. He further asks you to duplicate the methodology that has been used in each of the previous seven years.

You know that most of the tests either:

- Measure irrelevant parameters; or
- Measure relevant parameters in a way that means the results cannot be compared to any relevant standards.

Neither the management nor the auditors have ever questioned the test methodology or the results in the past. The management though is extremely interested in continuity and not disrupting the audit. They fear that if the sampling methodologies were to suddenly change, previous test results would be discredited. This could make the

auditor take a much more critical approach to at all aspects of the occupational health and safety program.

By some tests you have done outside of the audits using the proper ways, and through your own research, you know that the chances that the air contaminants present any significant danger is essentially zero.

You also know that any results from using the improper methods would not actually be wrong. They would just contain irrelevant information.

Talking to your supervisor, he is willing to consider changing the methodology once the annual audit is done and the changeover to the proper methods can be communicated and approved more gradually. However, he insists that the audit tests be done this week to align with the overall audit.

Question: Is it ethical to perform the tests for the annual audit using methods you know to be improper?

You must take a Yes or No position. You cannot suggest any intermediate options.