

Sexual Harassment — An Issue We Can't Avoid

More than half of all women chemical engineers canvassed have suffered sexual harassment on the job, according to a new *CEP* survey (see page 12), and much more often than not the harassment occurred several times or on an on-going basis. The main culprits in offices were the women's professional peers, while at plants supervisors and nonprofessional staff vied for worst place.

The most frequent problems for women respondents were demeaning attitudes on the part of coworkers, followed by an offensive work environment. Certainly, the amorphous definition, or really lack of one, of what constitutes sexual harassment accounts for some of this. Perhaps many men will find revealing and instructive what women engineers consider to be sexual harassment.

For instance, women told us they chafe at being addressed by familiar terms that never would be used for male coworkers, and feel that this represents a not-so-subtle way of undercutting their professional stature. Others said that they got clear signals that challenging assignments were reserved for male engineers because women couldn't handle them.

On the other hand, trying to treat a woman engineer as "one of the guys" poses another danger. What one woman might consider playful but innocent office banter may offend another.

Unfortunately, a significant number of women chemical engineers suffered more aggressive forms of harassment. Indeed, the number of complaints in the survey about

deliberate touching and requests for sexual favors together rivalled that for offensive work environment. Some women detailed horror stories of rape, sex for job advancement, and other incidents that would be on page one if this were a supermarket tabloid.

Dealing with the problem poses a problem in its own right. Indeed, slightly more women reported that the harassment situation was not settled to their satisfaction than said it was.

Many of these women resented that their complaints were not taken seriously. Supervisors dismissed the problem merely by excusing the conduct with something along the line "That's just the way 'Old Henry' is," or "Alan couldn't really be like that," and took no substantive action. Other times, the women themselves wound up labelled as troublemakers. Nor were a company's Human Resource personnel much of a help in many instances.

Given such attitudes, it is not surprising that about as many women let an incident pass or ignored it as confronted it. Only two respondents filed a formal complaint, while about 10% of the women changed jobs to escape the harassment.

What worked for the women, or at least how would they now recommend addressing such a situation? The consensus, if there is one, is first to directly confront the individual, to stop the problem before it gets worse.

Male chemical engineers can do their part by appreciating how pervasive and substantial the problem is, and by showing sensitivity and support.



Mark Rosenzweig
Editor-in-Chief

It Shouldn't Happen

To the Editor:

The little sidebar, "It Happens," in the October article "Engineering Ethics: How ChEs Respond" (pp. 73-82) is very chilling. Technical professionals and the industries that employ them are under enough fire from the know-nothings and the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) activists without this kind of scenario being perpetrated on an innocent and unsuspecting public. The company responsible [for the clandestine release of toxic gas to the atmosphere] must be sought out by any means and the situation corrected immediately. The resulting brouhaha will have an unfortunate, negative ripple effect throughout the entire chemical processing industries. However, the day that engineers and/or managers begin ignoring regulations and violating implied public trust in the name of profitability is the last day any chemical manufacturer will be allowed to operate without severe government interference.

We need to develop a code of ethics that will protect chemical engineers faced with this kind of dilemma and we must be able to enforce it in a fashion similar to the way that the legal profession requires compliance with its Canons of Ethics. Failure to provide strong ethical guidelines for ourselves and our employers about safe, environmentally responsible practices puts us in the untenable position of condoning acts such as those described in the sidebar.

David H. Hurwitz
Netco Corp.
Everett, MA

Pipe Life

To the Editor:

In his article "Choose the Right Thermoplastic for High Purity Water Applications," (Oct., pp. 84-87), Drew Sinha reports the surprisingly large result of obtaining 160 $\mu\text{g/day}$ of total organic leaching (TOC)/ cm^2 of rigid PVC pipe, pre-

sumably over a prolonged period of time. A square centimeter of pipe wall 5 mm thick weighs less than 1 g. At the rate of 160 $\mu\text{g/day}$ of TOC (or 58 mg/year), the pipe would be completely dissolved in about 17 years. That is contrary to experience.

The data he cites must be short-term results obtained during the flush-out period. That misuse of data makes the rest of the article useless. Whatever happened to checking one's data to be sure it makes sense?

John T. Barr
Easley, SC

The author responds:

Thank you for bringing up your concern about the TOC leaching rate from the PVC pipe in contact with high purity water. The level of the abscissa in Figure 1 should be TOC in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^2/\text{day}$ instead of TOC in $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2/\text{day}$. This should eliminate your concern about total dissolution of PVC pipe within a reasonable time scale. This typing error, however, does not change the relative rate of organic leaching by various thermoplastics as indicated in the article. This is probably a more important determining factor for selecting plastic pipe for high purity water applications. Second, the length of the thermoplastic in Figure 2 is calculated from the data obtained in Figure 1. The results shown in Figure 2 are based on TOC leaching from the thermoplastics (shown in Figure 1) in units of TOC/ m^2/day .

Long-Form Resumés

To the Editor:

The article titled "Capture That Interview With a Great Resumé" (Oct., pp. 88-91) was well written and contained valuable advice. I must take issue with three points, however. First, the rules regarding resumé length are too general. Too many engineers contact us with that inflexible one-page rule in mind, and thus eliminate the very information that would have gotten

them the interview. Employers are interested in detail to separate one applicant from another. Given the choice of keeping my resumé at one page or including information on all the unit operations background I had, I would always choose the latter.

More importantly, the article did not include any comments regarding job titles, perhaps the most significant item on the resumé. Job titles frequently have nothing to do with job content. For example, many chemical engineers carry the internal title of "process engineer," yet their actual responsibilities (and maybe their job objectives) are purely in project engineering. Most employers looking for a project engineer will go no further than the "process" title, assuming incorrectly that the applicant's job responsibilities parallel the title itself. We always advise engineers we represent to use a functional job title, and to include comments related to the actual title in the body of the experience section, so there is no hint of deception.

Finally, I would never recommend that a more senior applicant use a combination functional/chronological resumé like the one pictured on p. 90. While it provides a nice summary of his 18 years of experience, it tells almost nothing about the depth of that experience. Reading this resumé, I can't tell how much management experience the applicant has. Was it only when he had a management title (four years), or did he have some prior supervisory experience, too? I'm forced to guess how much experience he had in managing maintenance functions, and I can't tell if his experience is *all* phosphates or if he has worked with other products, too. When did he do process design work? Was it 15 years ago, or just recently? Did he negotiate a labor contract only once, or is he someone I could count on to take care of my labor problems? Did he plan production for a 250 recipe batch pro-

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ANNUAL MEETING

Turnberry Isle
Yacht and Country Club
Biscayne Boulevard
at 199th Street
Miami, Florida 33163

May 20 and 21, 1987

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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
 Atrium Room (Country Club)
Presiding: Dr. Michael M. O'Mara,
 Chairman

12:00 noon
LUNCH (On own)

1:00 p.m.
GOLF TOURNAMENT
 Country Club
 Chairman: Guy E. Disch

1:00 p.m.
TENNIS TOURNAMENT
 Country Club
 Chairman: John L. Russ

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Disch,

WEDNESDAY, EVENING MAY 20, 1987

6:00 p.m.
RECEPTION AND DINNER
 Poolside/Monte Carlo Room (Yacht Club)

8:00 p.m.
PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
Presiding: Steven W. Schaefer,
 Chairman, Executive Board

Third Annual Vinyl Institute Safety Award
 Recipients: John T. Barr and Air Products &
 Chemicals, Inc.
 Presentation of Award: W.C. Holbrook
 Chairman, Health, Safety
 & Environment Committee

**Recognition Certificates for Lowest OSHA
 Recordable Incidence Rates**
 Presentations by Roy T. Gottesman
 Executive Director

**Recognition Certificates for Annual
 Environmental Achievement Awards**
 Presentations by H. Richard Flammer
 Vice Chairman, Executive Board

Golf and Tennis Awards
 Presentations by Guy E. Disch (Golf)
 John L. Russ (Tennis)

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1987

8:00 a.m.
ANNUAL MEETING
 Garden III (Country Club)
Presiding: Steven W. Schaefer,
 Chairman, Executive Board

12:00 noon
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
 Reception II (Country Club)
 (This is a closed session for members of the
 Executive Board of Directors, Committee Chair-
 men and others by invitation.)

12:15 p.m.
BUFFET LUNCHEON
 Garden I (Country Club)

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 1985

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(Agenda for individual meetings will be available in the meeting rooms.)

9:30 a.m.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Presidential Dining Room—Third Floor

Presiding: Dr. Michael M. O'Mara,
Chairman

9:30 a.m.

CODES & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

BF Goodrich Conference Room—Suite 929

Presiding: Donald H. Hunter,
Chairman

10:30 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

African Room—Third Floor

Presiding: George R. Snider, Jr.
Chairman

12:00 Noon
LUNCHEON

Mediterranean Room—Third Floor

For All Committee Meeting Participants

2:00 p.m.

LEGAL COMMITTEE

Sun Company Conference Room—Suite 820

Presiding: Harold J. Fast,
Chairman

2:00 p.m.

MANUFACTURING PRACTICES COMMITTEE

Goodyear Conference Room—Suite 800

Presiding: W.C. Holbrook,
Chairman

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 1, 1985

6:00 p.m.

RECEPTION AND DINNER

Abshire Conference Room

8:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Presiding: Dr. Bart A. DiLiddo,
Chairman, Executive Board

First Annual Vinyl Institute Safety Award to ICI Chemicals and Dr. John Stafford

Recognition of Recipients—Mr. John T. Barr,
Air Products & Chemicals

Presentation of Awards—Dr. Bart A. DiLiddo

Acknowledgement—Mr. Robert Walker, ICI
Dr. John Stafford, ICI

Recognition Certificates to Executive Board Officers and Committee Chairmen

Presentation by Dr. Bart A. DiLiddo

Special Presentation

Presentation by Mr. Guy E. Disch,
Vice Chairman, Executive Board

8:30 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Introduction—Mr. George R. Snider, Jr.

Hal and Marilyn Weiner, Screenscope

"Occupational Hazards in Producing Documentary Films"

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1985

9:00 a.m.

ANNUAL MEETING

Abshire Conference Room

Presiding: Dr. Bart A. DiLiddo,
Chairman, Executive Board

12:00 noon

LUNCHEON RECEPTION

Williamsburg Room

12:30 p.m.

LUNCHEON

Suite of the Americas

Guest

Speaker: Jack Gerard,
Washington Representative
National Fire Protection Ass'n.

"The Fire Service: Friend or Foe"

2:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Abshire Conference Room

(This is a closed session for members of the
Executive Board of Directors, Committee Chairmen
and others by invitation.)

Approval of Budget for FY '85-'86

Election of Officers

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Medical Subcommittee
The BFGoodrich Company

George R. Snider, Jr.
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The BFGoodrich Company

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

**International
Club**
1800 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20006

May 1 and 2, 1985