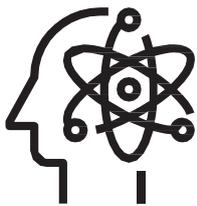




AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE  
OF MARINE SURVEYORS

# AIMS Code of Conduct

April 2024



Talent



Integrity



Excellence

## **Our Vision**

Excellence in marine surveying

Safe vessels, safe seas, safe surveyors

## **Our Mission**

Promote, maintain, and advance the specialised discipline of marine surveying in Australasia.

### **1) Purpose and Objectives**

#### **1.1) Purpose**

The Purpose is to improve national and international standards and advance the marine surveying industry.

#### **1.2) Objectives**

Working with government and industry at all levels to ensure the interests and livelihoods of those persons working within the marine surveying industry are protected.

Researching, improving, and promoting the discipline of marine surveying through the delivery of processes and resources to support our members.

Providing consumers with sufficient information to ensure that the marine survey industry itself is represented in the public decision-making process.

Providing educational resources for all people engaged in or wanting to join the profession to improve and enhance the future of the industry.

### **2) About the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct ('the Code') is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice.

The Code aims to improve marine survey outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of AIMS members. In conjunction with other aspects of AIMS objectives, the effective delivery of the Code will contribute to the realisation of our self-regulatory approach to the official formal certification of commercial marine surveyors.

The Code sets standards for practice rather than standards for results. It goes beyond the minimum standards required by government regulation and focuses on good marine surveying practice including integrity, leadership, and competency. Members are required to act in an ethical and professional manner and in doing so promote the AIMS as the professional body that it is.

The Code provides assurance to all AIMS Members' stakeholders by enabling high standards of practice and works in conjunction with our business compliance mechanisms as well as contributing to continuous improvement through guidance for good practice and a range of professional development opportunities.

### **3) Values**

The Code is underpinned by a set of values which are designed to inform the behaviours of all Members. The values are intended to be observable behaviours against which members can be held to account. Where necessary, the values will be used to assist in both the interpretation and application of the Code. These values are:

#### **3.1) Talent**

We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the talent of our surveyors by committing to ongoing professional development, developing, and delivering marine surveyor qualifications and certifying those members who achieve professional practice status.

#### **3.2) Integrity**

We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the integrity of our organisation and of our surveyors by encouraging and promoting adherence to our code of conduct. We act with honesty and are guided by ethical and moral principles in all that we do.

#### **3.3) Excellence**

We are committed to promoting excellence in all that we do as an organisation and by recognising those members who display excellence in their field of expertise, whether they be individuals or organisations, through our Awards for Excellence program.

#### **3.4) Accountability**

We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable to all our stakeholders for our performance and integrity,

#### **3.5) Transparency**

We openly share information about our organisations and our work to all our stakeholders and to the public.

#### **3.6) Respect**

We recognise the value and diversity of every person and are committed to treating others with due regard for their rights, dignity, and integrity.

#### **3.7) Equity**

We are committed to overcoming prejudices and disadvantage and promoting fair and just access to resources and opportunities.

#### **3.8) Cooperation**

We work with and alongside others in a spirit of mutuality, respecting diversity, and difference in the pursuit of common goals.

We promote our members as professional marine surveyors and require individual members to be properly qualified and experienced in the categories of survey services that they offer.

Every individual member holds the responsibility for our reputation, and it is a requirement of membership and certification to follow these standards and to remind others to do so as well.

The Code also includes our *Complaint Handling and Investigation Policy*. This is available to members who feel they have been unjustly or unfairly treated and will also allow them to make formal complaints about other members, company Board members, and employees.

This mechanism is also available to members of the public who use AIMS marine surveyor services.

Please read the Code and agree to them by completing the declaration at the back and sending it back to the office at [gm@aimsurveyors.com.au](mailto:gm@aimsurveyors.com.au) or to our mailing address – PO Box 2371 Wellington Point QLD 4160.

If you do not agree with the standards or understand them, please the AIMS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) know, and we will do our best to clarify any issues you may have.

If you have questions regarding the Code of Conduct, please contact the AIMS Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Your declaration will be filed with your membership documentation, and we will ensure that these documents are secured and always kept confidential. They will not be provided to a third party without your written consent.

#### **4) AIMS responsibilities under the Code of Conduct**

The AIMS Board and staff take responsibility to demonstrate integrity, exercise leadership and practice competently by ensuring that:

- The Code is used by all members and that staff of the AIMS abide by the guidelines as much as is practical.
- Employees and members abide by the accepted protocols for conflicts of interest.
- Policies and procedures for disciplinary action, grievances and complaints are developed and implemented.
- Encouraging, where applicable, members to hold appropriate insurance coverage.
- Confidentiality and privacy laws are adhered to.
- There is no bias against or for any member, employee, or office bearer.
- All complaints, grievances and disputes will be addressed promptly and within the guiding principles of transparency, fairness, respect and accountability.
- Appropriate training and guidance is provided to members, employees and the Board as required.
- The AIMS is free of harassment and bullying.
- Employees and volunteers are safe and have adequate WHS policies and procedures in place.
- Due diligence is implemented in all dealings with members and employees.
- That AIMS standards are aligned to any actual or implied international standards and protocols for the profession of marine surveying.
- Job descriptions and key performance indicators are provided, and the Board have clear roles and responsibilities.

The AIMS will not tolerate retaliation against any person who raises complaints regarding business practices or ethics in good faith.

## **5) Your responsibilities under the Code of Conduct**

The success of our industry is dependent on the trust and confidence we earn from everyone we deal with. Marine surveyors are 'independent' in their judgements and practice with integrity, objectivity, and competence. We expect our members to:

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Treat all contracts for work with honesty and integrity.
- Refuse improper payments or rewards in connection with the services offered.
- Make informed independent pricing and marketing decisions and refuse to collude on price.
- Avoid assignments or situations that would create a conflict of interest. Inform the client of any business connection, interest or affiliation that might influence your objectivity.
- Refuse any assignment that raises doubt on his ability to remain impartial.
- Remain impartial in business dealings with any Client, a contractor, a supplier, or any other party in relation with the client. Influences could come from brokers, agents, shippers, insurance companies, workshops, marinas or any other individual or business entity that may raise doubt on his ability to be impartial.
- Not engage in any boycott or any matter that would unfairly disadvantage a competitor and ensure that dealings with other surveyors are ethical and fair and promote best practice in dealing with competitors.
- Advertise services honestly and not make misleading statements to consumers.
- Abide with the use of stamp and identity card requirements.
- Always act in the interest of the principal or client and notify your client immediately if problems arise.
- Uphold the law and work in compliance with standards, legislation, and applicable marine orders.
- Respect the property rights and confidential information of your clients.
- Accept and offer only those business courtesies that conform to common and reasonable ethical practice.
- Be accountable for your performance.
- Respect your employer and their rights to maintain their business clients.
- Support new entrants to the industry wherever possible.
- Undertake only those surveys that they are qualified to undertake.
- Strive to receive instructions in writing and work to the instructions to the best of your ability.
- Prepare and present professional and honest survey reports.
- Keep accurate records.
- Update your knowledge regularly.

## **6) Breaches or Non-Compliance**

If the AIMS identifies non-compliances to standards or breaches of our Code of Conduct or the certification or accreditation schemes, you will be notified in writing of the non-compliance or breach and will be provided with up to 20 working days to submit evidence that you have:

- Identified the cause of the breach / non compliance;
- Rectified that breach / non compliance; and
- Put in place reasonable measures to prevent the breach / non-compliance occurring again.

The AIMS will then consider this evidence and form an opinion on whether you have submitted sufficient evidence of rectification and can assure the Board that a reoccurrence is unlikely.

Your membership/certification /accreditation may be suspended or paused during this phase and if further breaches / non compliances are identified during this phase the AIMS will decide about what actions to take next.

In making this decision, the AIMS will consider your history of compliance and the severity of breaches / the non-compliance and the likelihood of continued breaches or non-compliance to standards.

The AIMS provides a range of sanctions of increasing severity – escalating from placing additional conditions on your membership, such as removing categories through to suspending or cancelling your certification, accreditation, or membership.

Actions might include:

- Applying a sanction or condition to your certification, accreditation, or membership; and/or
- Rejecting your application or renewal for certification, accreditation, or membership; and/or
- Cancelling or suspending your current certification or accreditation, or membership.

## **7) Use of the AIMS Stamp and Logos**

The AIMS issues electronic stamps to all Certified and Full Members. Your membership number is displayed on your stamp. The stamp can be placed adjacent to your signature on reports and other correspondence. The stamps are issued to active financial Members only and on the following conditions:

- The stamp remains the property of the AIMS and must only be used by the member whose name appears on the stamp. The stamp cannot be used to endorse reports prepared by other persons who are not members of AIMS, as membership of the Institute and the recognition is conferred only upon the member and not to a company or other persons in the same organisation.
- The AIMS reserves the right to cancel the authority to use the stamp in the event of the member becoming non-financial, misusing the stamp, or for whatever other reasons the Board may consider warranting such action. Notice in this regard will be made in writing to the member advising that the stamp is no longer to be used and citing the reason for the decision.

Membership of AIMS is well recognised throughout the maritime industry and the stamp is to be looked upon as a seal of quality.

Members also have access to use the AIMS logo upon request. The logo can be used in correspondence, reports, and marketing materials.

The use of the logo is given at the discretion of the Institute on the following conditions:

- The AIMS logo remains the property of the Institute and must only be used by current financial members in accordance with the guidelines set out below. The AIMS logo cannot be used to endorse reports prepared by other persons who are not members of AIMS.
- If the AIMS logo or wording indicating AIMS Membership is used on a website or in marketing materials, all Marine Surveyors within the organisation must be members of AIMS. For example – *if company ABC has 3 Marine Surveyors as employees and only one is a member of the AIMS the logo or wording referencing membership cannot be used on company marketing materials including websites.*
- If any of the above conditions change, the AIMS logo and any reference to membership must immediately be removed from all materials and websites related to the organisation and its employees.
- The AIMS reserves the right to cancel the authority to use the AIMS logo, in the event of the member becoming non-financial, misusing the logo, or for whatever other reasons the Institute may consider warranting such action.

We encourage all members to report misuse of the AIMS Stamp or AIMS Logo by members or non-members.

## **8) Conflicts of Interest**

As the peak collective body for marine surveyors in Australasia, we believe the issues of Conflict of Interest for any commercial surveying activity is serious and requires careful definition.

Marine surveyors across the world accept that their role is to be independent, and conflicts of interest must be avoided at all costs.

A conflict of interest occurs where the surveyor has competing professional and/or personal interests which could make it difficult for them to be impartial and objective.

Section 37 of the National Law Regulation (which is the benchmark for conflicts of interest) explains it clearly and provides that a Marine Surveyor is related to a person if the surveyor: (a) is the person's spouse, de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew or cousin; or (b) has a contractual arrangement with the person that might reasonably be seen to give rise to a conflict between the surveyor's duties as a surveyor and the surveyor's interests under the arrangement; or (c) is an employer, partner or employee of the person; or (d) is employed by the same employer as the person.

Members commit to avoid undertaking surveys for persons they are related to or are employed by or with or for persons that own or occupy any part of the vessel or works on the vessel and must not work for any entity that owns, partially or in whole, any part of the marine surveyors' business or that has any involvement in the conduct of the marine surveyors' work.

Before accepting work ask yourself these 3 questions:

- Would you be able to defend your objectivity in a court or a tribunal if a dispute occurs?
- Can you concisely show in writing that you have no bias, and that the client has no bearing on your objectivity?
- Would your insurance cover you?

## **STEPS TO TAKE**

- Inform the AIMS if you are unclear on whether any situation is in doubt.
- Inform the client of any matter, relationship, business connection, interest or affiliation that might influence your judgment or be seen to bias your objectivity.
- Act only with the principal or client and do not take payment from more than one client for services you are delivering.

## **9) AMSA accredited surveyors**

AMSA accredited surveyors should be vigilant in their approach as conducting surveys where there is a conflict of interest is a breach of the conditions of accreditation and grounds for suspension or revocation of accreditation.

If an AMSA Accredited Surveyor undertakes a survey activity (e.g. initial or periodic survey) on a given vessel, they have exercised their duty as an accredited surveyor.

In the event that the accredited surveyor receives a further request to carry out a non-AMSA related survey on the same vessel which has survey currency based on the AMSA survey carried out – a conflict of interest situation exists, and this should be declared, and the instruction declined.

The conflict of interest in the vessel survey extends to employers or employees of the accredited surveyor. The conflict of interest would reasonably exist for the period of time that the survey remains valid for the certificate of survey. At such time that the subject AMSA survey activity is superseded by a survey by another un-related surveyor, the conflict of interest in the vessel could reasonably be seen as being released.

### **9.1) Commercial surveying activities where a conflict of interest may arise with an accredited AMSA survey**

Any commercial survey activity which is predicated upon the vessel being in current AMSA survey and in which an AMSA accredited surveyor has undertaken surveys for this to occur – a conflict of interest exists if the accredited AMSA surveyor is to undertake this survey. In short, the client is engaging a surveyor to independently evaluate at the least, the seaworthiness, condition, or suitability of a vessel for a given task.

An AMSA accredited surveyor cannot reach an unbiased independent opinion on a vessel he/she (or the surveying company) has previously deemed to be compliant and upon which a current AMSA Certificate has been issued or endorsed.

The following surveying activities (but not limited to these) have the potential for a conflict of interest for an accredited surveyor with a current survey relationship with the vessel:

- H&M Damage Survey.
- P&I Survey.
- Condition and Suitability Survey.
- Condition and Valuation Survey.
- Warranty Surveys.
- Pre-Purchase Survey.
- On-Hire/ Off-Hire Survey.
- Expert Witness.
- Offshore Vessel Inspection (OVID, CMID).

## **10) Legal tip on a common ethical problem**

No one really “owns” clients. Clients are free to be served by anyone they choose. But employer’s own two “aspects” of clients that employees simply cannot take with them: the first is client information. You simply cannot take client information from your employer: that’s theft.

The second aspect is that your employer “owns” the good will of that client. While you are an employee, you owe a duty of loyalty to your employer, including a duty not to do anything to harm their business or their relations with clients.

If you do not have a “non-compete” agreement with your employer, after you leave their employment, you are entirely free to offer your services, or the services of your new employer, to that client. You are free to compete, and that’s simply “free enterprise” at work. But be careful: you’re not free to openly criticise your old employer – you are only able to offer the services of your new firm.

Even if your employment contract is poorly drafted and doesn’t contain any confidentiality or non-compete provisions – or you haven’t signed one at all – there’s a general principle of law in place that can prevent you being able to take unfair advantage of information you received in confidence while working for your employer.

To be protected by the law of confidentiality, the information must be confidential in nature, meaning that it must have the “necessary quality of confidence” and it must be disclosed in circumstances importing an obligation of confidence.

Unless there was a clear understanding that you would have rights to continue to use client lists, information on other employees and their skills, information on company policy or procedures, information on services or product specs and pricing after you leave, taking, using, or copying these is against the law.

## **11) Continuing Professional Development**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a mandatory requirement for all levels of membership of the AIMS apart from students. The AIMS requires all members to undertake activities which will keep them abreast of professional developments, new skills and broaden their experience.

Members are required to obtain a minimum of 10 points per calendar year. However, points can be accrued and rolled over to the following year where a member has exceeded the minimum points in one year.

Members will need to provide evidence that they have obtained 10 points per calendar year or 30 points during each consecutive 3-year period.

Evidence is required to support CPD activities, and this may include a receipt, a copy of a certificate of attendance, email confirmation or trail, diary notation or log, or any other means of confirming CPD activities.

CPD is due in the first quarter of each year for the previous calendar year, but CPD evidence can also be submitted during the year as it is accrued. CPD submissions are to be emailed to [gm@aimsurveyors.com.au](mailto:gm@aimsurveyors.com.au).

Continuing Professional Development activities may include but are not limited to:

- Subscriptions to magazines and industry publications – 1 point
- Attending a marine survey organisation or company technical meeting – 2 points
- Attending an industry networking event (formal or informal) – 2 points
- Technical meetings or presentations in person or online – 5 points
- Short courses and workshops – 5 points
- Publication of a letter or short article in an industry magazine - including the AIMS newsletter or website/LinkedIn forum – 5 points
- Completion of any business management activities (could be new software, new business systems, attending business related events etc) – 5 points
- Completion of an AIMS business or professional development short course – 5 points
- Researching and learning a new skill or mentoring a new surveyor (logbook evidence required) – 5 points
- The preparation and presentation of material for courses, conferences, and seminars – 10 points
- Attendance at seminars and conferences related to the marine survey and shipping industries generally – 10 points
- Completion of an AIMS survey specific professional development program or undertaking any post-graduate study or individual tertiary short course, unit, or subject – 10 points
- Formal training course (Diploma or higher) related to marine survey that is undertaken with an assessment component – 20 points

## **12) Grievances And Complaints**

In the event of receiving a written complaint, advice will be sent to the complainant within 14 days confirming receipt of the complaint and explaining what is being done to investigate and resolve their complaint.

The AIMS commits to investigate and resolve all complaints within 28 days of receipt of the formalised written complaint. If this time frame cannot be met, the person will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution. All complaints are dealt with:

- Seriously;
- Quickly;
- Confidentially; and
- Without stopping a person's right to use AIMS services.

All persons have the right to access a support person at all stages of the complaints resolution process.

Copies of all complaints and details of actions taken are held with the CEO. These files are secure and confidential.

Details regarding the outcomes of any complaint and the reasons for the outcomes will be provided to the complainant and complainee in writing.

Within six months of the complaint being resolved, the Chief Executive Officer must review the actions taken to ensure adequate follow-up.

### **12.1) Complaints or disputes involving an AIMS member, policy or employee**

Written complaints against an AIMS member, an AIMS policy or an AIMS employee or contractor should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will attempt to resolve the issue by:

- Notifying the person about whom a complaint is being made and the nature of the complaint;
- Investigating the complaint and provide the person with an opportunity to respond to any issues raised either in person, writing or other means;
- Attempting to mediate the dispute (if appropriate) and/or attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant;
- Referring the complaint to the board for further investigation where the matter remains unresolved after undertaking the above steps; and
- Taking any other action necessary to resolve the issue.

Under the Constitution the Board has powers to suspend or terminate the membership of any member who wilfully 'refuses or neglects to comply' with the provisions of the Constitution, or who is 'guilty of conduct prejudicial to the interests' of AIMS. Such action must be taken in accordance with the process described in the Constitution, which provides for proper notice and rights of appeal.

### **12.2) Complaints or disputes involving AIMS Board Members**

Written complaints received against a board member should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board. Where the Chairperson is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be referred to another Member of the Board. The receiving party will attempt to resolve the issue by:

- Notifying the person about whom a complaint is being made and the nature of the complaint;
- Investigating the complaint and provide the person with an opportunity to respond to any issues raised either in person, writing or other means;
- Attempting to mediate the dispute (if appropriate) and/or attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant;
- Referring the complaint to the board or to a sub-committee of the board for further investigation where the matter remains unresolved after undertaking the above steps; and
- Taking any other action necessary to resolve the issue.

Under the Constitution the members have the power to call a special resolution proposing the removal of a board member should concerns arise about the board members behaviour or conduct on the board. Such action must be taken in accordance with the process described in the Constitution, which provides for proper notice and rights of appeal.

### **12.3) Complaints or disputes involving the CEO**

Complaints or disputes involving the CEO should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board. The procedural format for complaints involving the Executive Officer is the same as for complaints involving other employees excepting it is the Chairperson facilitating resolution.

### **12.4) Student complaints and appeals on assessment**

Any complaint about any outcome or decision regarding applications for scholarship or assessment results will be treated seriously, investigated, and dealt with according to the policy and procedures for appeals.

Students are provided with information on the grievance and appeal policy in the student handbook and may appeal to the CEO with any complaint or appeal.

# Acknowledgement of acceptance

I have read, understood and, as an AIMS member, I agree to abide by the AIMS Code of Conduct during the course of my membership.

I understand that by providing false information regarding my Certification, membership level or failure to abide by the Code of Conduct may result in suspension of my Certification and / or my membership with the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE  
OF MARINE SURVEYORS**

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