



AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE
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September 2026



- **Marine Surveyors Symposium in 2027**
- **Report on AIMS biennial conference**
- **Marine incident annual report**

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Thanks to all AIMS members and the Board for allowing us to be part of your 40th anniversary conference. We enjoyed catching up with existing clients and members.

Congratulations to all the nominees and award winners.

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Front Cover: *Global Mercy*, the world's largest purpose-built civilian hospital ship. Tymor Marine recently completed a lightweight survey and inclining test aboard the vessel. (See page 48.)

Back Cover: Marine Rescue Queensland's *Gladstone Rescue 1* at Gladstone, Queensland.



From the Bridge (Page 5.)



CEO: AMSA stakeholder forum. (Page 7.)



Marine Surveyor Symposium. (Page 11.)



Marine incidents report 2025. (Page 22.)



Cyber security risks. (Page 28.)



Incat 096 oversea-bound. (Page 38.)

ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

Advertising is now available in *Shipshape*, the official journal of the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors (AIMS). For all the information about advertising in our quarterly magazine, contact AIMS CEO Eric Perez at gm@aimsurveyors.com.au or on +61 492 881 737.

Marine survey reports – some common mistakes

SO, you've had a fun day on the job crawling around a boat, meeting new people, having interesting conversations and learning things ... now it's time to strap in for the difficult part, writing the report! Marine surveyors are generally time-poor, and report writing is time consuming, so it is easy to rush through this critical process.

Your report is important for several reasons: it is where you will present your findings and recommendations and, in doing so, meet your contractual obligations; it is an opportunity to promote your brand, both through the quality of your report and presentation of company messaging; and it is a means of protecting your liability.

While there are various ways of presenting your information, from narrative to checklists, depending on the level of detail required, there are certain elements that must be included in all reports.

A survey report should be clear and concise and written using active language. It is a highly structured document with an introductory section that will be very similar for all survey types and include such things as a title page, scope of work, disclaimers, vessel particulars and attending parties.

The middle section of the report may vary somewhat, depending on the type of survey being conducted, but will generally contain your survey findings including any defects.

The concluding section will summarise these defects, state your recommendations, followed by a concluding statement. Despite its structured format, the report should flow in a logical fashion that makes sense to the reader, leaving them with a clear

understanding of what you have found and what is expected of them.

It is not an opportunity to make decisions on behalf of the buyer, speculate about what the vessel might be capable of, comment on the effectiveness of the design or present the vessel's history and so on. Particularly when conducting a condition survey, you should be just assessing the vessel as is, on the day you inspect it, and presenting a factual and unbiased summation of the results.

Common mistakes surveyors make

Scope

The first conversation you have with a prospective client will be to determine what it is they want you to do, whether you are capable of doing it, and what will not be included as part of your survey. This information will then become your scope of works and must be clearly stated at the start of your report.

The following extract from ITIC demonstrates the importance of being clear:

“International Transport Intermediaries Club (ITIC) has warned that the wording of instructions can potentially widen the scope of liability for marine service providers, citing the recent case of a marine surveyor sued for €1.56m for alleged poor onboard stowage of a cargo.

“The marine surveyor in Germany was engaged by charterers to attend the loading of a cargo and to report on any damage caused by the stevedores. The emailed instructions from the charterer contained the following provisions: “We hereby order the following: supervision of the loading / preloading survey; reporting of eventual

damages to the coating or the material – and time of damage; reporting of negligence while handling the material and loading; detailed documentation, with photos, of the loading operations; no continuous supervision will be necessary, only during the important moments (commencement of loading operations – change of shift – securing of the cargo).

“Loading and lashing of the cargo was completed and the vessel sailed. Three days later there was a loud noise from the cargo hold and the ship developed a 30-degree list. The master reduced the list by ballasting and diverted to a port of refuge. The cargo was discharged, sorted on the quay, reloaded, lashed and secured. About 600 tonnes of damaged cargo was left behind. Over ten days later, the ship resumed its voyage.

“The owners alleged that the cargo had shifted due to poor stowage, and ultimately obtained an arbitration award against the charterers for €1.56m. The charterers subsequently held the surveyor and the stevedores who had loaded the cargo jointly liable for this amount.

“Lawyers appointed by ITIC represented the surveyor at court, where the claim was subsequently rejected on the basis that the stevedores were responsible for the loading and stowage, and that the surveyor's instructions were limited to reporting on stevedoring damage caused during loading.

“ITIC director Charlotte Kirk says, ‘The potential difficulty with this defence was that the charterer's email instructions could have been interpreted as conferring a wider obligation. In the circumstances, it was agreed that the surveyor would make a contribution of approximately

ten per cent to the settlement of the claim.

“ ‘While this contribution was relatively modest in percentage terms, the claim is an example of how the wording of instructions can potentially widen the scope of a surveyor’s liabilities. If the brief is understood to be restricted to a specific task, it is important to make sure that this is clearly recorded’.”

Source: Editorial Team at SAFETY4SEA

<https://safety4sea.com/court-rejects-e1-56m-claim-against-marine-surveyor-accused-of-poor-stowage/>

Disclaimers / terms and conditions

Terms and conditions of service provide the general rules relating to your overall business dealings such as payment of invoices, intellectual property rights, dispute resolution, overall liability, obligations and responsibilities, Force Majeure, time bars, jurisdiction of law and indemnity.

They should be presented to a client before accepting the assignment to ensure that the client is fully aware of theirs and your liability. AIMS members will have access to a Standard Terms of Engagement Agreement form that can be used for this purpose.

Disclaimers are specific to each job and detail what was and what was not included in the inspection items, this should flow from your agreed scope. These will vary for each job and should be presented at the start of each report, after the scope, so that the client is fully aware of their content and reads the report in context.

Again, examples of standard T&Cs and disclaimers can be found in the members’ resources of the AIMS website. These should be reviewed before applying to ensure they meet each situation.

Disclaimers are often applied generically to all survey reports and sometimes don’t reflect the actual service provided. For instance, a surveyor might state in the disclaimers that the engine or rigging wasn’t inspected then go on to provide comment on these items, or vice versa. Disclaimers are too often not comprehensive enough and restricted to a few lines.

Although applying rigorous and comprehensive disclaimers won’t prevent legal action being taken against you, they can serve to limit your liability.

Recommendations

This is probably the section that most clients will skip straight to, and should succinctly summarise all of the defects noted in the body of the report along with associated recommendations and time frames for rectification. The latter should be based on the level of risk they propose – serious structural faults, for instance, should be addressed before the vessel re-enters the water, whereas minor defects may be monitored over time for deterioration.

A common problem is to see defects identified in the main body of the report that aren’t noted in this section, or items being listed in the Recommendations that aren’t identified through the report. Clarity and consistency are important outcomes for the client. Remember that you will be held accountable for the accuracy of your reports

Grammar, spelling, formatting

Nothing detracts from the overall professionalism of a report that you have worked hard on faster than poor grammar and spelling! Combined with poor formatting, the client will be questioning your credibility, regardless of how technically detailed and accurate your findings. It is easy to perform a grammar / spell check on your

device and well worth the extra 10 minutes of time.

Common formatting problems include leaving large gaps at the top of a page, poorly placed and poor quality photos of inconsistent size that aren’t labelled, not providing enough space between sections of information and not highlighting and numbering section headings.

An index at the start will help to provide context and assist with referencing but must be accompanied by appropriate Header / Footers showing page numbers.

Always double-check your reports before releasing, to ensure that they are:

- ☐ accurate;
- ☐ consistent;
- ☐ clear and concise;
- ☐ professionally formatted;
- ☐ in line with the scope;
- ☐ grammar/spell check is completed; and
- ☐ contain all essential elements.

For those wishing to upgrade their report writing skills, the AIMS study unit IDS01 – “Prepare and Present Professional Marine Survey Reports” can be completed as a stand-alone unit.

You can apply directly online using the Student Enrolment form on the AIMS website or call or email me at training@aimsurveyors.com.au for more information.

AIMS Student handbook

[Industry Diploma of Recreational Vessel Survey™](#)

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Sue Brown
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and Training Coordinator