

# PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT FOR CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES

Comité Maritime International  
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## INTRODUCTION:

1. The following Principles of Conduct for Classification Societies have been formulated on the initiative of the Comité Maritime International (CMI) by a Joint Working Group of representatives of concerned Non-Governmental International Organisations, as described in the Group's Report to the XXXVI (Centenary) International Conference of the CMI. These Principles of Conduct are intended to be consistent with and to develop further the Guidelines for the authorisation of Organisations acting on behalf of the Administration, as established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).<sup>1</sup>
2. Each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct shall maintain a status under national law such that, with respect to the surveys which it carries out and the reports and certificates which it issues, it stands independent of shipowners,<sup>2</sup> governments (except when acting as the agent of a government for purposes of statutory survey and certification) and all other parties having an interest in classification or statutory certification of a ship or ships.<sup>3</sup> The Classification Society shall not enter into any agreement or understanding which would contravene its independence.
3. Each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct shall ensure that the agreed services pursuant to its Rules for classification or its agreement for statutory certification are performed impartially and in good faith.
4. Each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct undertakes via its contracts with clients to perform all agreed services related to ship classification and statutory certification using reasonable skill, care and judgement.
5. Each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct accepts the following duties:

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Res. A.789(19) of November 1995.

<sup>2</sup> "Shipowner" for the purposes of these Principles of Conduct shall mean the individual or juridical person in a contractual relationship with the Classification Society.

<sup>3</sup> "Ship" for the purposes of these Principles of Conduct shall include any type of vessel or other unit which is classed with or otherwise surveyed or certificated by the Classification Society.

(a) To publish Rules for the classification of ships and Guidelines for other services, to review them regularly, and to update them when necessary;

(b) To carry out its plan approval and its surveys in accordance with the requirements set forth in its Rules and Regulations and its other published requirements;

(c) To establish and maintain an international network of offices to provide survey and certification services where they are customarily required;

d) To utilise suitably qualified persons in the performance of its services;

e) To achieve and to maintain compliance with the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS), as revised, or, at the discretion of the individual society, with a published quality system based upon the ISO 9000 series of quality system standards and which is at least equivalent to the IACS QSCS in effect; and

f) To carry out a programme of technical research and development related, but not necessarily confined, to improvement of ship and equipment safety and of classification standards.

6. The provisions of the quality system of the classification society shall govern all matters related to performance, conduct and objectives.

## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE:

Each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct undertakes to exercise the following standards of practice and performance in discharging its duties and responsibilities:

### **A. TECHNICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL:**

(a) To establish and maintain such personnel and management structure as will ensure the performance of agreed services in accordance with its respective quality system;

(b) To maintain its Rules, Regulations and Guidelines in a systematic form;

(c) To take such action with regard to the application of its Rules, Regulations, Guidelines and other requirements as will facilitate compliance with them;

(d) To comply with the applicable requirements of national maritime Administrations for the statutory survey and certification duties delegated to it in respect of ships flying their respective flags.

## **B. TECHNICAL PERSONNEL:**

- (a) To establish and maintain appropriate standards for training and qualification of its technical staff;
- (b) To establish and maintain periodic reviews of such standards for training and qualification;
- (c) To require, prior to an individual's performance of plan approval, surveys or other engineering services, education of such technical staff by means of successful completion in a recognised institution<sup>4</sup> of a course of relevant technical studies; and either
  - (i) successful completion of a programme of technical training;<sup>5</sup> or
  - (ii) sufficient and documented prior employment experience at an appropriate technical level and relevant to their authorised tasks.

## **C. CERTIFICATES AND REPORTS:**

- (a) To issue classification reports and, where appropriate, certificates in conformity with its Rules and Regulations, and to issue statutory certificates in accordance with the applicable requirements of national maritime Administrations.
- (b) To maintain records of the documents referred to in (a) for so long as the ship in question remains classed by the Society, plus a further period of at least five (5) years thereafter.
- (c) To make copies of the documents referred to in (a) available:

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<sup>4</sup>The term "recognized institution" includes but is not limited to:

degree-granting academic institutions; and

training organizations or programs certified by flag Administrations in accordance with standards established by the International Maritime Organization.

<sup>5</sup>"The RO [Recognized Organization] should have implemented a documented system for qualification of personnel and continuous updating of their knowledge as appropriate to the tasks they are authorized to undertake. This system should comprise appropriate training courses including, *inter alia*, international instruments and appropriate procedures connected to the certification process, as well as practical tutored training; and it should provide documented evidence of satisfactory completion of the training." Report of the IMO Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation, FSI3/17, 23 March 1995, Annex 5, p.8.

- (i) upon request, to the owner or other person in an equivalent contractual relationship with the Society;
- (ii) to third parties when authorised in writing by the owner or other person in an equivalent contractual relationship with the Society or when directed to do so by judicial or administrative process; and
- (iii) to the flag or other national Administration having the necessary legal authority.

(d) To publish periodically a register containing the principal particulars of ships relevant to classification.

#### **D. CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Subject to Section C above, each Classification Society which adopts these Principles of Conduct undertakes to treat as confidential all documents, materials and information relating to classification and statutory matters.

#### **FOOTNOTES**

1. See, e.g., Res. A.789(19) of November 1995.
2. “Shipowner” for the purposes of these Principles of Conduct shall mean the individual or juridical person in a contractual relationship with the Classification Society.
3. “Ship” for the purposes of these Principles of Conduct shall include any type of vessel or other unit which is classed with or otherwise surveyed or certificated by the Classification Society.
4. The term “recognized institution” includes but is not limited to:
  - (i) degree-granting academic institutions; and
  - (ii) training organizations or programmes certified by flag Administrations in accordance with standards established by the International Maritime Organization.
5. “The RO [Recognized Organization] should have implemented a documented system for qualification of personnel and continuous updating of their knowledge as appropriate to the tasks they are authorized to undertake. This system should comprise appropriate training courses including, *inter alia*, international instruments and appropriate procedures connected to the certification process, as well as international instruments and appropriate procedures connected to the certification process, as well as practical tutored training; and it should provide documented evidence of satisfactory completion of the training.” Report of the IMO Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation, FSI 3/17. 23 March 1995, Annex 5, p.8.

