



Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance (AGSA) scheme

Key information

Updated July 2022

Version 3.1

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are working with the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors (AIMS) to introduce the Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance (AGSA) scheme. The department and AIMS have been engaging with representatives of Australia's shipping and grain export industries on implementing the scheme.

The AGSA scheme

On 1 July 2023, the AGSA scheme will be implemented under the Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Rules 2021 (Plant Rules).

The AGSA scheme:

- clarifies the qualifications marine surveyors require to be accredited to perform bulk vessel surveys
- reflects the broad range of relevant training and qualifications held by marine surveyors
- incorporates work experience requirements to provide greater assurance that new marine surveyors can perform safe and compliant surveys.

The changes do not affect the standard expected of vessels that will be loaded with Australian grain. They:

- introduce more effective checks and balances to ensure surveying practices meet the current expected standard
- minimise the risk of Australian grain becoming infested or contaminated by vessels that have not met the standard.

The new bulk vessel survey standard

From 1 July 2023, marine surveyors will be required to undertake bulk vessel surveys in accordance with the 'Standard for empty bulk vessel surveys by accredited marine surveyors'.

This standard is an industry service level agreement developed by AIMS. It provides a consistent standard for bulk vessel surveys prior to loading grain or other consumable plant products.

Marine surveyors will be provided with a copy of the standard as part of their accreditation application.

The standard will also be available for download from the [AIMS website](#) before commencement.



How the changes will affect marine surveyors

From 1 July 2023, marine surveyors must be accredited under the AGSA scheme before performing bulk vessel surveys.

Marine surveyors can apply for accreditation via the [AIMS website](#) before commencement. All marine surveyors (including AIMS members and non-members) will need to apply under the AGSA scheme and renew their accreditation each year.

A \$90 application fee is payable at the time of initial application. Once an application has been approved, an annual \$250 accreditation fee will be payable.

Marine surveyors must meet the qualification and experience requirements to be accredited under the AGSA scheme.

Further information is available in the [Plant Rules: Changes affecting export bulk vessels factsheet](#). The factsheet includes information about:

- qualification and experience requirements
- evidence needed when applying for accreditation
- minimum number of bulk vessel surveys for initial accreditation
- minimum number of bulk vessel surveys to maintain accreditation.

For further information or to find out how to gain the required qualification or experience, please contact [AIMS](#).

Accreditation mandatory for undertaking bulk vessel surveys

Under the AGSA scheme you cannot do bulk vessel surveys if you are not accredited. From July 2023, marine surveyor certificates (or Fitness to Load certificates) will not be accepted from marine surveyors who are not accredited under the AGSA scheme and whose name does not appear on the Accredited Grain Surveyor list on the AIMS website.

The 10-ship survey requirement

To complete the 10-ship survey requirement you will need to attend surveys as a 'trainee' or 'buddy' with a marine surveyor accredited under the AGSA scheme. A list of accredited marine surveyors will be available on the AIMS website.

If you are having difficulty finding an accredited marine surveyor to assist with the 10 surveys, please contact [AIMS](#).

Application processing time

Applications for accreditation will generally be processed within 10 business days of receipt. Insufficient or incorrect information provided as part of the application will delay this timeframe.

Once an application has been approved and finalised, and the marine surveyor receives their ID card, the marine surveyor can start surveying bulk vessels in accordance with the plant export legislation.



ID card required for undertaking bulk vessel surveys

Accredited marine surveyors will be issued with an ID card, which can be used to confirm the surveyor's accreditation. Marine surveyors must ensure they have their ID card with them when attending a bulk vessel survey.

Marine surveyors and BVI AOs cannot be employed by the same company

The marine surveyor and BVI AO cannot be employed by the same company. This is considered a conflict of interest.

If any relationship exists between the employing companies of the marine surveyor and BVI AO, this is considered a conflict of interest.

If any relationship exists between the employing companies of the agent and the marine surveyor, this is considered a conflict of interest.

If a conflict of interest exists between any parties involved in the survey, an independent marine surveyor will need to be appointed to do the survey.

Sourcing accredited marine surveyors

An up-to-date list of all marine surveyors accredited under the AGSA scheme will be on the AIMS website before commencement. Exporters, shippers and/or shipping agents will be required to source marine surveyors accredited under the AGSA scheme to perform bulk vessel surveys.

If you have any questions about marine surveyors accredited under the AGSA scheme, please contact AIMS.

Verifying marine surveyors are accredited under the AGSA scheme

Before the BVI AO approves the vessel for loading with grain, they must confirm the marine surveyor is accredited. BVI AOs must confirm that:

- the name of the marine surveyor appointed to survey the vessel on the written declaration matches the name on the marine surveyor's certificate
- the name of the marine surveyor is listed on the AIMS website under the Accredited Grain Surveyor List
- the marine surveyor declaration has been approved by the exporter
- the marine surveyor declaration states that the marine surveyor appointed to survey the vessel meets the qualifications outlined in Part 5 of Chapter 11 of the Plant Rules.

BVI AOs will not accept Fitness to Load certificates from non-accredited surveyors.

A photo or a screen shot of the marine surveyor's name on the Accredited Grain Surveyor List must be attached to the inspection record in the Plant Export Management System (PEMS).

Instructional material will be updated and made available on the [PEOM](#), so that BVI AOs can familiarise themselves with the changes before commencement of the scheme on 1 July 2023.

Further assistance

For further assistance, please contact [AIMS](#).

