



GUIDANCE NOTICE

Initial Survey

Initial Survey is the process of design approval, inspection during construction of a vessel, stability approval, operational trials that leads to the issue of a Certificate of Survey.

In general Initial Survey is required for all new vessels; vessels undergoing change of class or specification requiring significant modification and vessels not having previously held valid certification issued by a Jurisdiction or authorised Class society. Circumstances vary widely, and all persons contemplating bringing a vessel into commercial operation are strongly advised to make contact with a Delegate of the National Regulator prior to committing to the process.

Procedure for Survey Application

Complete the Application for Certificate of Survey (AMSA form 521) and submit to your local marine safety agency. Most vessels that require survey will also require a Certificate of Operation. This is subject to a separate application and approval process.

Design Approval

The majority of vessels used for a commercial purpose are required to undergo design approval.

Delegates may choose to accept a design approval undertaken by an authorised Class society or recognised Jurisdiction.

Plans need to be accurate representations of the vessel, high quality and legible, and in English.

A poor quality submission will delay or prevent approval. The importance of a high quality submission cannot be overstressed.

This is most often best achieved by engaging a specialist naval architect or consultant. Annex D to Part B of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) has very clear guidelines as to the types and quality of drawings and the level of detail required. This should be read in conjunction with other applicable chapters of the NSCV. Plans are required to ensure a vessel complies with applicable standards

to verify they are maintained over time and to provide important safety information to those responsible for the safety of the vessel.

Plans, specifications and data sheets are to be submitted as required by the Delegate. You should check with your local Delegate and agree the submission method early in the process.

Design approval will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the NSCV. The following is indicative of the plans likely to be required for plan approval, and should be read in conjunction with Annex D to Part B of the NSCV:

Schedule of plans

- General arrangement
- Construction plans and/or specifications
- Lines plan
- Plans or specifications for closing devices
- Piping schematics
- Fire protection
- Rudder and steering gear plan
- Shafting plan
- Construction schedule
- Electrical schematic
- Sail plan
- Machinery arrangement
- Freestanding fuel tanks
- Damage control plan
- Fire control plan
- Emergency plan
- Intact stability
- Damaged stability
- Manuals
- Failure mode and effect analysis
- Any other plans or diagrams reflecting the configuration, equipment or safety systems on the vessel required by the Delegate.

Inspection during Construction

A surveyor will inspect prior to and during vessel construction and will provide feedback to the client along the way.

The surveyor must be a person recognised by the national regulator as having the qualifications and skills necessary to perform the task competently on domestic commercial vessels.

It is critical that all parties form a collaborative working relationship to ensure a steady progress towards certification.

The program of inspection during construction will vary for each vessel and must be established and agreed between the vessel representative and Delegate prior to construction of the vessel commencing. The following is an indication of the inspection intervals required:

Inspection intervals

An indicative inspection regime might be as follows:

1. **Pre-commencement inspection of site, builders qualifications etc prior to build commencement**
2. Keel voids prior to closing off, or mould preparation for Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) construction
3. Approximately 20% hull completion including reinforcement layers of FRP
4. Approximately 80% hull completion including framing of FRP hulls
5. Piping/wiring and other systems installations
6. Hull thickness testing for FRP
7. Fuel tank pressure testing
8. Propeller shafting and components
9. Buoyancy fitting
10. Rudder stock and components
11. Engine and thrust seatings
12. Accommodation spaces prior to lining
13. Machinery, propulsion system, piping and electrical systems

Other Inspections prior to commissioning

The following may be required prior to the vessel commencing commercial operations:

Stability Approval

Three copies of the vessel's completed Trim and Stability Book which have been prepared by a consultant Naval Architect, are to be forwarded to the Delegate for approval.

Certificate of Survey

Following satisfactory completion of plan approval, stability approval and inspections, a vessel will be issued with a National System Certificate of Survey valid, in most cases, for 5 years. The certificate is issued in a nationally recognised format.

Certificate of Operation

A domestic commercial vessel requires an Safety Management System (SMS) in accordance with Part E of the NSCV and this underpins the issue of a Certificate of Operation for the vessel. This is a separate process on which information may be found on the website.

Load Line Certificates

Delegates for applicable vessels and approval will issue a Load Line Certificate. Generally these are required for Class 1 and 2 vessels over 24m.

If you are intending bringing a vessel in either of these categories into commercial operation please discuss the process for assigning a load line with your local Delegate.

Vessels Having Previously held Valid Certification which has Expired

An expired Certificate of Survey does not guarantee the condition of the vessel or compliance with the NSCV. The extent and depth of survey and updating requirements for vessels having previously held valid certification will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

This will take into account: the vessel's present condition and fitness of purpose; how long it has been since the certificate expired; the quality and provision of survey information available; the size of the vessel and nature and area of the proposed operation; and other general risk factors.

If you are contemplating returning an expired vessel to survey you are strongly advised to get an independent assessment by a surveyor or naval architect experienced in commercial vessel survey and operations. This service is not available from National Regulator Delegates.

Existing Vessels Having Not Previously held Valid Certification

Delegates cannot guarantee and are generally unable to advise whether existing vessels, constructed without design approval or not having held valid certification will be acceptable for commercial operation.

It is recommended that a consultant Naval Architect or Marine Surveyor having a sound knowledge of the NSCV and National Law be engaged by the applicant to provide a submission to a Delegate for design approval and subsequent survey of the vessel considering the following:

Existing vessels not previously holding valid certification require the same plan submission requirements as for new vessel construction.

- Timber, steel, FRP and aluminium vessels will require internal linings and fit out removed to the extent required by Delegates to reasonably ascertain construction and condition inspection.
- FRP vessels will, in addition, require samples of the hull removed for testing at the owner's expense. This and other forms of destructive testing are likely to be specified and may damage the vessel requiring costly repair.
- **Existing ferro-cement vessels will not be accepted into commercial survey.**

Experience has shown that the process of bringing anything other than the simplest of existing vessels into commercial survey is expensive, intrusive and may fail at any stage. Persons contemplating this option are advised to contact an independent expert for an in-depth analysis before approaching Delegates. Delegates are unable to provide this service.

Further information on bringing a vessel into commercial operation may be found at www.amsa.gov.au.

Note this note is intended for guidance only and must be read in conjunction with the National Law, National Standard for the Administration for Marine Safety (NSAMS) and the NSCV at all times.

More detailed guidance on this area may be found in Annex D of Part B of the NSCV. This may be found via the AMSA website post commencement.