



THE SURVEYORS BOARD of the NORTHERN TERRITORY

GPO Box 1154
DARWIN NT 0801
Telephone: (08) 8999 1826
Facsimile: (08) 8999 1888

ABN 56 443 139 402
E-mail: Surveyors.Board@nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Surveyors Board Direction Code of Practice for Licensed Surveyors (December 2020)

1. Introduction

As a primary source of information, the Surveyors Board of the Northern Territory (the Board) has utilised the “Model Code of Professional Conduct” as developed by the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG French acronym) and the “Queensland Code of Practice” issued by the Surveyors Board of Queensland, for the development of the Board’s Code of Practice for Surveyors.

All terms used in this Code are intended to have the same meaning as those terms and definitions contained within the statutes pertaining to the regulation of the practice of land boundary surveying in the Northern Territory (NT). The term ‘Surveyor’ used within this Code shall refer to all ‘registered’ persons as defined under the Licensed Surveyors Act (NT).

1.1. The Profession

Professionals are distinguished by certain characteristics, including:

- Mastery of a particular intellectual skill, acquired by education, training and experience;
- Acceptance of duties to the community as a whole in addition to duties to the client or employer;
- An outlook which is essentially objective; and
- Rendering professional service to a high standard of competence, conduct and performance, for which they can be personally liable.

1.2. The Public Interest

The surveyor’s role in the public interest poses several ethical obligations with regard to the exercise of professional duties. Clients and the public at large must be able to rely on the objectivity and integrity of the surveyor in rendering professional opinions regarding survey and / or spatial information and data. Professional surveyors recognise that their ethical responsibilities extend to the public, to their clients and employers, to their peers and to their employees. Accordingly, they acknowledge the need for integrity, independence, care and competence and a sense of duty.

1.3. Reasons for a Code

The Code of Practice for Surveyors provides benefits for consumers of survey and spatial information including survey services specifically and to the community in general. The record of surveys through the data depicting those surveys provides for public confidence in surveying and surveyors. The Code

of Practice for Surveyors may be supported by a range of technical standards and a level of directions and guidelines in support of the accepted rules governing the practice of surveying.

2. The Code

2.1. Survey Standards

Surveyors shall abide by the survey standards and survey guidelines prescribed at an International, National and State or Territory level as they apply to surveys being undertaken by the Surveyor.

2.2 Professional Competence

In general, surveyors shall assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the surveying profession, their own competence, improving survey systems, and:

- a) Abide by the principles and standards of professional practice and apply best practice.
- b) Not accept assignments beyond the surveyor's professional competence, unless making satisfactory arrangements to engage persons appropriately qualified. These arrangements will address the question of responsibility and liability to the client.
- c) Be competent and maintain competence to ensure the capacity of the surveyor to continue to provide high quality advice to the client and to safeguard the community interest.
- d) Maintain adequate records directly pertinent to the surveys undertaken, whilst in control of those records.
- e) At all times, serve the client or employer with integrity and diligence and to the best of their knowledge and ability.
- f) Not accept assignments that a competent surveyor could not reasonably expect to complete in a timely and professional manner.

2.3. Professional Conduct

Surveyors shall act in a professional manner and:

- a) Assist in preventing unauthorised surveys as defined under the Licensed Surveyors Act (NT).
- b) Only sign a certificate, report, or plan relating to work that was completed and prepared by the surveyor personally or under the surveyor's supervision.
- c) Assume professional responsibility for all works carried out under their control and direction.
- d) Where the surveyor becomes aware of a significant error in a survey undertaken by the surveyor, correct the error.
- e) Not knowingly enter into any arrangement that would enable any unauthorised person to practice the profession of surveying directly or indirectly.
- f) Inform their clients or any relevant party of any conditions, requirements, limitations or assumptions arising from the implementation of their instructions or enquiries or imposed from any other source as may affect the conduct of the work, or relate to or qualify the data provided as a result of that work.
- g) Not knowingly make false or misleading statements
- h) Take all necessary steps to complete instructions promptly and inform clients of any significant delays, the reasons for those delays, and any actions to be taken to rectify same.
- i) Not claim the work of another person, body or authority as their own.
- j) Not falsify any plan, document or data or knowingly misuse any data or deliberately misuse their position to achieve a predetermined result which is:
 - (i) Inconsistent with normally accepted survey practice; or

- (ii) Has been specified by the client or a third party.
- k) Not knowingly become an accessory by failing to report what appears to be a breach of the Act, Regulation or Board Direction.
- l) Employ the expertise of others when their knowledge and ability are inadequate for addressing specific issues.
- m) Act in accordance with the Codes of Ethics of the relevant professional associations or institutions.
- n) Maintain the appropriate level of insurance for the surveying service being provided by the surveyor.

2.4. Personal Conduct

Surveyors shall maintain the dignity of the profession in association with clients and colleagues, and shall:

- a) At all times abide by the moral, ethical, business standards befitting of professional behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would knowingly or reasonably be expected to bring the profession into disrepute.
- b) Not further the application for registration and endorsement by the Board of any person known by the surveyor to be unqualified or unsuitable for such advancement.
- c) Not knowingly make false or misleading statements which would harm another person or surveyor.
- d) Fully co-operate with any request for information or directives, where a complaint has been lodged or a prima facie breach of the Licensed Surveyors Act (NT) and / or Code of Practice for Licensed Surveyors has been determined, unless advised or prevented from doing so for legal reasons.
- e) Not participate in any criminal or otherwise illegal activity during the course of their employment as a surveyor such that the profession is brought into disrepute.
- f) Must conform to the decisions of the Board on questions of ethics and conduct.

2.5. Client and Community Relations

Surveyors shall preserve the confidences of clients and regard as privileged, all information regarding the affairs of clients, and shall:

- a) Maintain confidentiality with respect to the client's business affairs.
- b) Not take any action which would serve to disadvantage the lawful and correct interests of their client save that they should exercise a duty of disclosure where such is necessary in the interests of integrity or in the public interest generally.
- c) Where possible harm could occur to the public, recognise the interests of the community as being paramount and seek resolution within the area of responsibility or jurisdiction of the surveyor.
- d) Establish and maintain a system, within their company, firm or organisation, for the internal resolution of disputes with clients or other members of the public affected by the surveyor's professional conduct.
- e) Where a dispute relates to the surveyor's professional conduct, as defined in this Direction, provide the complainant with a written statement to advise that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal dispute resolution process, the complainant may take their complaint to the Board. Such a statement is to be accompanied by all current contact details of the Board.

2.6. Conflict of Interest

Surveyors shall at all times act with propriety and exercise unbiased independent professional judgment on behalf of clients represent clients competently, and:

- a) Where possible, avoid or attempt to manage, conflicts of interest and compromising situations.
- b) Disclose to clients any potential conflicts of interest, affiliations, or prior involvement that could impair the quality of services to the client.

2.7. Employees

Surveyors, as employers, shall:

- a) Assume responsibility for all work carried out by their professional and other staff and, where appropriate, by contractors and subcontractors.
- b) Assist their employees to achieve their optimum levels of technical or professional advancement in relation to the requirements of the position in which they have been employed.
- c) Ensure their employees working conditions and remuneration are at least in accordance with relevant awards or employment contracts.
- d) Cultivate integrity and an understanding of the professional and personal obligations of surveyors to the community in their employees.

2.8. Natural and Built Environment

Surveyors shall approach environmental concerns with perception, diligence and integrity, and shall:

- a) Develop and maintain a reasonable level of understanding of environmental issues and the principles of sustainable development.
- b) Bring any matter of concern relating to the physical environment and sustainable development to the attention of their clients or employers.
- c) Include the principles of environmental sustainability among the essential factors used for project evaluation.
- d) Where possible, ensure that environmental assessment, planning and management are integrated into projects that are likely to impact on the environment.

2.9. Business Practice

Surveyors shall maintain appropriate standards of ethical business practice and shall:

- a) Not make false or misleading statements in advertising or other marketing media.
- b) Not, either directly or indirectly, act to undermine the reputation or business prospects of other surveyors by unfair, dishonest or derogatory conduct.
- c) Not attempt to supplant by unfair, dishonest or derogatory actions, other surveyors whom have current agreements with their clients.
- d) Provide and maintain safe working practices and workplaces.

3. Administering the Code

This code shall be administered by the Board and be subject to ongoing review and improvement. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the Board to provide publicity and reporting on the Code to include:

- a) Monitoring of adherence to industry standards of quality, safety and conduct and compliance with the principles and procedures of the code;
- b) Publicity and education programs;
- c) Confirmed breaches of the code and the remedial action taken;
- d) Steps taken to address identified systemic complaints;
- e) Statistics on complaints and disputes, and their resolution, classified in appropriate detail;
- f) Costs and other details of administration;
- g) Continuous improvement in code principles and administration.

4. Acknowledgement

The Board also thank the Surveyors Board of Queensland for their permission to modify the Queensland Code of Practice, which was formed on the FIG Model Code of Professional Conduct.