



March 2023

Plant export legislation changes

Plant rules: Changes affecting export bulk vessels (commencing 1 July 2023)

On 1 July 2023, the Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Rules 2021 (Plant Rules) are being amended to align with current business and regulatory practices.

The changes to export bulk vessel survey practices will provide greater assurance to us, the shipping industry and Australia's grain exporters that bulk vessels comply with agricultural export legislation.

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

- put in place more effective checks and balances to ensure surveying practices meet the current expected standard
- minimise the risk of Australian grain becoming infested or contaminated after loading and while transiting to its destination overseas.

Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance scheme

We are introducing the Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance (AGSA) scheme on 1 July 2023. We are working with the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors (AIMS) and representatives of Australia's shipping and grain export industries to introduce and implement the Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance (AGSA) scheme.

The AGSA scheme clarifies the qualifications required for marine surveyors to be accredited to perform bulk vessel surveys and:

- reflects the broader range of relevant training and qualifications held by marine surveyors performing bulk vessel surveys
- incorporates work experience requirements to provide greater assurance that new marine surveyors can perform surveys safely and compliantly
- minimises fraudulent practices surrounding qualification and experience requirements.

Administration of AGSA scheme by AIMS

- AIMS members and non-members may apply to AIMS to be accredited under the AGSA scheme.
- Accreditation must be renewed annually at a fee of \$250 per marine surveyor. When first applying, an application fee of \$150 will also apply.

- The fees will facilitate assessment of applications and ongoing management of marine surveyors' accreditations by AIMS.
- A list of accredited marine surveyors will be available on the AIMS website.
- Accredited marine surveyors will receive identification cards as evidence of their annual accreditation.
- AIMS and the department will provide more information on how and when to apply for the AGSA scheme.

Sourcing accredited marine surveyors

Exporters and shipping companies will be required to source marine surveyors accredited under the AGSA scheme to perform bulk vessel surveys:

- When inspecting the bulk vessel, bulk vessel inspection authorised officers (BVI AOs) will confirm marine surveyors are accredited. This must be done before the BVI AO approves the vessel for loading with grain.
- BVI AOs will not accept marine surveyor certificates (Fitness to Load certificates) from non-accredited surveyors.
- We will provide information and changes to instructional material to support BVI AOs, exporters, marine surveyors and industry to understand the changes closer to commencement.

Qualification and experience requirements for accreditation

Marine surveyors must hold at least one of a combination of qualification and experience options listed in **Table 1** Marine surveyor qualification and experience requirements.

Table 1 Marine surveyor qualification and experience requirements

Option	Qualification	Experience
1)	Hold or have held either a: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master Class 1 (Unrestricted) Certificate, or• Master grade Certificate of Competency as outlined under <i>Schedule 1 of Marine Orders 71 (Masters and deck officers) 2014</i> made under the Navigation Act 2021.	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 months served on a bulk carrier with at least 6 months in the capacity of Chief Officer, or• 3 years' experience as a marine surveyor of bulk carriers.
2)	Advanced Diploma of Maritime Operations (Master Unlimited).	
3)	Diploma or Advanced Diploma of Marine Surveying with the modules for dry bulk cargo and grain operations.	
4)	Diploma of Maritime Operations (Watchkeeper Deck) with modules for dry bulk cargo and grain operations.	

Evidence required when applying for accreditation

When applying to AIMS for the AGSA scheme, applicants must provide the evidence set out in Table 2 Evidence of qualification and experience requirements when applying for accreditation.

Table 2 Evidence of qualification and experience requirements when applying for accreditation

Qualification requirement evidence	Experience requirement evidence
<p>Certified copy of your qualification (see one of the 4 options under qualification and experience requirements in Table 1).</p> <p>If option requires dry bulk cargo and grain operation modules, also provide a copy of your transcript showing completion of the relevant modules.</p>	<p>Provide as applicable to demonstrate the relevant experience requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sea service record, or• the following evidence supported by an Australian Commonwealth Statutory Declaration:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Discharge notices– Evidence of service– Employer reference– Resume.

Additional evidence requirements

Applicants must also include with their application, evidence that they hold Professional Indemnity Insurance to a minimum amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000 AUD).

Initial accreditation

To be accredited, marine surveyors must have performed at least 10 bulk vessel surveys in no less than 2 months and no more than 2 years. They must have been accompanied by another accredited marine surveyor (or a person who was a qualified marine surveyor prior to commencement of the AGSA scheme).

If these 10 supervised surveys were completed more than 3 years ago, marine surveyors will also need to provide evidence they performed at least 3 bulk vessel surveys in the most recent 3-year period.

Maintaining accreditation

To maintain accreditation, marine surveyors must continue to perform at least 3 bulk vessel surveys every 3 years.

You must provide the following evidence of your attendance at these surveys:

- your name as an attending surveyor listed on the Fitness to Load certificate (FTL) that is provided to the authorised officer at the completion of the survey, or
- submission of a separate listing of your ship surveys, which must include:
 - date
 - ship's name
 - grain type
 - port of survey
 - attending FTL Surveyors name and signature
 - Master's signature and ship's stamp.

To maintain accreditation, marine surveyors must also provide evidence of currency of their Professional Indemnity Insurance to a minimum limit of \$1,000,000.

Background

The Plant Rules commenced 28 March 2021 and, along with the Export Control Act 2020, set the requirements for the export of plants and plant products. We have been tracking areas for improvement where the new legislation may not align with current business practice and regulatory expectations. We will continue to review the Plant Rules annually and amend them as needed.

More information

Web agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/plants-plant-products/plant-export-legislation

Web agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/market-access-trade/improved-export-legislation

Web <https://www.aimsurveyors.com.au/Sys/Login>

Email plantexportreform@agriculture.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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