



Rules of Conduct for Firms

04 June 2007 version 5

With effect from 01 January 2012





Foreword

The Rules of Conduct for Firms apply to firms that RICS regulates. They cover those matters which are dealt with at firm level. The Rules focus on our regulatory goals and adopt the five principles of better regulation:

- **Proportionality**
- **Accountability**
- **Consistency**
- **Targeting**
- **Transparency**

For firms requiring further guidance, we have prepared a series of help sheets on different aspects of the Rules. These can be found at **www.rics.org/regulation**

These Rules provide a strong foundation for RICS and for the firms it regulates, helping to protect the public and uphold the reputation of the profession.

Eve Salomon
Chair
Regulatory Board

Rob Mahoney
Honorary Secretary

These Rules of Conduct for Firms are made by the Regulatory Board of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) under Article 18 of the Supplemental Charter 1973 and Bye-Law 5 of RICS Bye-Laws. Version 5 of these Rules shall apply from 01 January 2012.

Scope

These Rules set out the standards of professional conduct and practice expected of Firms registered for regulation by RICS. These Rules do not repeat obligations placed on Firms by the general law, for example in the areas of discrimination and employment.

Not every shortcoming on the part of a Firm, nor failure to comply with these Rules, will necessarily give rise to disciplinary proceedings. However, a failure to follow any guidance associated with the Rules is a factor that will be considered should it be necessary to examine the activities of a Firm. In such circumstances the Firm may be asked to justify the steps it took and this may be taken into account.

A Firm should be guided as much by the spirit of the Rules as by the express terms.

Part I General Interpretation

1. In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires:

Providing a surveying service to the public

means acting to provide a service(s) considered by RICS to be within those which are the responsibility of RICS' Professional Groups to professional, corporate, institutional and all other clients;

Contact Officer means the individual designated by the Firm to be the main liaison point between the Firm and RICS and the person authorised by the Firm to submit the Firm's Annual Return;

Firm means

- a. the whole or part of any body corporate; or
- b. a partnership; or
- c. a limited liability partnership; or
- d. an unincorporated practice of a sole practitioner concerned with the business of surveying or providing other related services, which is regulated by RICS; or e. an equivalent in any of the world regions to any of the above in a–d.

Communication

2. RICS will communicate with Members by any of the following:

- a. post
- b. fax
- c. e-mail
- d. telephone
- e. in person

Part II Conduct of Business

Professional behaviour

3. A Firm shall at all times act with integrity and avoid conflicts of interest and avoid any actions or situations that are inconsistent with its professional obligations.

Competence

4. A Firm shall carry out its professional work with due skill, care and diligence and with proper regard for the technical standards expected of it.

Service

5. Firm shall carry out its professional work with expedition and with proper regard for standards of service and customer care expected of it.

Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

6. A Firm shall have in place the necessary procedures to ensure that all its staff are properly trained and competent to do their work.

Complaints handling

7. A Firm shall operate a complaints handling procedure and maintain a complaints log. The complaints handling procedure must include an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism that is approved by the Regulatory Board.

Clients' money

8. A Firm shall preserve the security of clients' money entrusted to its care in the course of its practice or business.

Professional indemnity insurance

9. A firm shall ensure that all previous and current professional work is covered by adequate and appropriate professional indemnity insurance cover which meets standards approved by the Regulatory Board.

Part III Firm Administration

Advertising

10. A Firm shall promote its professional services only in a truthful and responsible manner.

Solvency

11. Firm shall ensure that its finances are managed appropriately.

Arrangements to cover the incapacity or death of a sole practitioner

12. A Firm which has a sole principal (i.e. a sole practitioner or a sole director in a corporate practice) shall have in place appropriate arrangements in the event of that sole principal's death or incapacity or other extended absences.

Use of designations

13. A Firm registered for regulation must display on its business literature, in accordance with the Regulatory Board's published policy on designations, a designation to denote that it is regulated by RICS.

Information to RICS

14. A Firm shall submit in a timely manner such information about its activities, and in such form, as the Regulatory Board may reasonably require.

Co-operation

15. A Firm shall co-operate fully with RICS staff and any person appointed by the Regulatory Board.



Confidence through professional standards

RICS promotes and enforces the highest professional qualifications and standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our name promises the consistent delivery of standards – bringing confidence to the markets we serve.

We accredit 118,000 professionals and any individual or firm registered with RICS is subject to our quality assurance. Their expertise covers property valuation and management; the costing and leadership of construction projects; the development of infrastructure; and the management of natural resources, such as mining, farms and woodland. From environmental assessments and building controls to negotiating land rights in an emerging economy; if our members are involved the same professional standards and ethics apply.

We believe that standards underpin effective markets. With up to seventy per cent of the world's wealth bound up in land and real estate, our sector is vital to economic development, helping to underpin stable, sustainable investment and growth around the globe.

With offices covering the major political and financial centres of the world, our market presence means we are ideally placed to influence policy and embed standards at a national level. We also work at a cross-governmental level, delivering a single, international standard that will support a safe and vibrant marketplace in land, real estate, construction and infrastructure, for the benefit of all.

We are proud of our reputation and we guard it fiercely, so clients who work with an RICS professional can have confidence in the quality and ethics of the services they receive.

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