

# **Professional Ethics for Licensed Surveyors – the Proposal for a Social Contract**

**Ron ADLER and Moshe BENHAMU, Israel**

**Key words:** ethics, standards

## **SUMMARY**

The land resources in Israel have national value, with social, legal and economic aspects and implications. The surveying and mapping practitioners constitute an important factor in registration and management of these resources [2]. This is the background for a professional and ethical commitment of the surveyor in his practice.

The surveyor's activities, even if performed for a specific client have a long term influence on the public, lasting for generations [1]. The information and data collected at a certain time and for a certain purpose will be available to the public in general for a variety of purposes, becoming the infrastructure for planning and development.

Notwithstanding is a fact that over the years the surveying profession became one of the most advanced, one can observe a certain lowering in the surveyors standards, sometimes reaching a level which can cause to damage the user and devalue the profession - This causes the customers to see the surveyor's community in an unfavorable manner.

The surveyor's duty and obligation has to be subject to the following guiding rules:

- High professional level and ability based on academic education, practical training and cumulative experience.
- A commitment to the public in general, in addition to the commitment to the client and to the colleagues within the profession.
- Behavior, at all times, characterized by objectivity and honesty.

The paper will present the proposed principles of ethics which constitute a basis for the surveyor's behavior, which should serve the whole surveying community, including the private and the public sectors.

Every surveyor will identify the principles at all times and abide by them. The surveyor will not be partner, directly or indirectly, to any infringement of the law and support professional work is performed only by qualified persons.

The covenant of ethics, together with national agency for surveying and mapping, will no doubt influence the principles of activity based on the detailed ethics principles, and advance the standing of the surveyors amongst other professions.

# Professional Ethics for Licensed Surveyors – the Proposal for a Social Contract

Ron ADLER and Moshe BENHAMU, Israel

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The land administration practice in Israel involves both the private and the governmental sectors[2]. In the years, there is a growth in the land activity due to a great demand of government and the private sector for development based on economic considerations.

The private sector, which counts some 1,000 active licensed surveyors (about 500 run private businesses and others are employed by survey firms), is deeply involved in the planning and development projects and in cadastral activity [2]. The private surveyor (with his disciplines – geodesy, cadastre, surveying, mapping and modern geo-informatics) carries out a great variety of tasks in engineering and cadastral surveying, in data acquisition for mapping and GIS, in mapping itself, in management and coordination of housing projects, and is growing in importance as executives of the profession. One of the most important tasks is the preparation of the Mutation Plans of changes in the cadastre.

- The licensed surveyor is involved in most of the stages of a planning and development project - The surveyor accompanies the project from its inception through its implementation on the ground until its registration in Land Registry [4]. Because of that:
- The surveyor make an effort to coordinate projects before their implementation including a final superposition of all the various levels of planning (include cadastre data) and ensure that there are no contradictions between them.
- The surveyor role is to coordinate between all professionals involved in project planning - urban planners, architects, road and transportation planner, infrastructure engineers, real estate expert, land appraiser economists, lawyer, environment protection professional etc.
- In many cases, the surveyor preventing fatal errors and financial loss and make the difference between a success and failure of a project.
- The public sector (ILA - Israel Land Administration, SOI, etc) realized that the demand for a license surveyor in every project is critics.

Moreover, due to the central involvement of the licensed surveyor in the planning and development process, the surveyor must be especially knowledgeable of the major and principal laws regarding to this process, including the Land Law, Law of Planning and Building and Survey Ordinance and Regulations.

The Survey of Israel (SOI) and the Association of Licensed Surveyors in Israel, have to define the next main tasks:

- Enforcement of the survey regulations, ethics and standards.
- Qualification and surveyor commitment to continued professional development.
- Necessary amendments will be made in the relevant laws and Regulations.
- Updating professional standards include the survey regulations.
- Cooperation between governmental and private sector.

## 2. ETHICS TODAY

One of the phenomena that we all are concerned with, is the competition through bids for survey work [1]. The danger is that submitting a low bid in order to get the contract may result in lowering the standard of the work provided to the client. The Treasury concept and the trend are that government survey work be carried out by the private sector, on the basis of competition. One of the factors of the competition is the fee for the work to be performed.

It is a fact that there are no government surveyors available for avoid ethical problems. In the past few years, surveyors from the private sector acting as inspectors on behalf of the Survey of Israel in checking and inspecting land registration plans [1]. These surveyors were carefully chosen on the basis of professional experience and reputation. In order to avoid ethical problems, these inspector surveyors are the preferable option.

Today, the professional ethics in Israel, in both the public and the private sectors of the surveying community, are based on the model developed by Allred for the FIG [8] and adopted for Israel by Adler [6]. However ethics are a standard of behavior. Can they be enforced? Up to the present no license has been revoked for unethical behavior, nor has a surveyor been expelled from the Association.

We consider allred [8] work as the basis for developing professional ethics for any country.

## 3. THE PROPOSAL PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR LICENSED SURVEYORS

Any licensed surveyor in Israel and members of the Association of Licensed Surveyors in Israel are required to conduct their professional practice in a manner that will inspire the respect of clients to the profession, and fellow professional surveyors, as well as the general public. It is the individual responsibility of every surveyor to uphold this professional ethics.

<p><b>1. <u>Surveying profession setting aside by licensed surveyors</u></b></p>
--

<p><b>A surveyor upholds and advances the setting aside surveying profession to ensure professional work is being performed only by qualified persons.</b></p>
--

<p><b>A surveyor promotes the surveying profession to clients and the public.</b></p>
---

<p>1.1 A surveyor shall act with reasonable care and competence, and shall apply the knowledge, skill and judgment which is ordinarily applied by surveyors currently in practices in Israel.</p>
---

<p>A surveyor shall limit professional practice to areas of his competence.</p>
---

<p>1.2 A surveyor shall not seal or sign maps, specifications, or other surveying documents</p>
---

except where the surveyor or the surveyor's firm has prepared, supervised or professionally reviewed them.

1.3 A surveyor shall refuse to advance the application for professional status of any person known to be unqualified by education, experience or character.

1.4 A surveyor shall report any unauthorized practice to the governing body of the profession.

1.5 A surveyor assumes responsibility for all work carried out by their professional and non-professional staff and support professional work is be performed only by qualified persons.

1.6 Each office maintained for offering surveying service to the public, shall have a surveyor who has direct knowledge and supervisory control of the services.

## **2. The prestige of the survey profession**

**A surveyor advances the dignity the competence and the prestige of the survey profession.**

2.1 In practicing surveying, a surveyor shall act with reasonable care and competence, and shall apply the knowledge, skill and judgment which is ordinarily applied by surveyors currently practicing.

2.2 A surveyor shall comply with all existing laws, surveying regulations governing the practice of surveyor as established by the state and by survey of Israel.

2.3 A surveyor shall seek to continually upgrade their professional knowledge and competency regarding new developments with respect to the survey profession.

2.4 A surveyor agree, whenever possible, to encourage and contribute to the sharing of knowledge and information between surveyors and other allied professional disciplines, industry and the public.

## **3. The fees of the surveyors for professional services**

**The surveyor will set the fee for services performed, considering the technical complexity, level of responsibility and liability for the services rendered.**

3.1 Surveyor's contracts with a client shall clearly set forth the scope and nature of the project involved, the services to be performed and the method of compensation for those services.

3.2 The fees of the surveyors for professional services shall be justified and reasonable.

3.3 A surveyor shall not receive any compensation, monetary or otherwise, which shall reflect adversely upon the profession.

3.4 A surveyor shall not accept any form of undisclosed compensation from person or firm with whom the surveyor deals in connection with the project.

## **4. Highest standards of honesty and integrity**

**A surveyor shall identify the principles Ethics at all times and abide by them. The surveyor will not be partner, directly or indirectly, to any infringement of the law.**

4.1 A surveyor must make his work based on independent professional judgment and

uncompromised evaluation, being honest and impartial and serving with fidelity the public, their employers and clients.

4.2 A surveyor having a personal association or interest which relates to a project shall fully disclose the nature of the association or interest to the surveyor clients or employers.

4.3 A surveyor shall not accept professional employment outside of their regular work or interest without the knowledge of their employers.

4.4 A surveyor shall not accept compensation for services from more than one party on a project unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to and agreed to by all interested parties.

4.5 A surveyor shall not accept compensation from more than one party for services on the same project, or for services pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed to and agreed to, by all interested parties.

**5. Preserve any confidential information about the client**

**A surveyor preserves the confidence and regards as privileged all information about his clients' affairs.**

5.1 A surveyor shall not divulge any confidential information about the client or the client's project.

5.2 A surveyor shall not utilize any information about the client or the client's project, without the express permission of the client.

5.3 A surveyor shall not use any information coming to him in the course of the client's project as a means of making personal profit if such action is adverse to the interests of their clients, employers or the public

**6. Surveyor - Client Relationships**

**A surveyor performs professional services by professionally, objectively, honestly, devotionally and efficiently.**

6.1 A surveyor shall undertake to perform professional services only when qualified by education, training and experience in the specific technical areas of surveying involved.

6.2 A surveyor shall conduct himself professionally, with honesty and fairness and to refrain from any action which might be considered detrimental to his clients.  
A surveyor shall be candid and truthful in all his professional communication.

6.3 A surveyor shall conduct business in a manner which will assure the client of the surveyor independence from outside influences and interest which would compromise the ability to render a fair and professionally service.

6.4 A surveyor shall avoid actions situations where the surveyor's personal interests conflict or appear to conflict with professional obligations to the public, the client and to other surveyors.

6.5 A surveyor shall promptly inform their employers or clients of any business association, interests, or circumstances which could influence their judgment or the quality of their services.

6.6 A surveyor shall comply with all existing laws, regulations and codes governing the practice of surveying. A surveyor shall limit himself to actions which do not contravene the law.
6.7 A surveyor will inform the client as o the procedure for appeal with respect to the fees and to the behavior of the surveyor.
6.8 Surveyor contracts with a client shall clearly set forth the scope and nature of the project involved, the services to be performed and the compensation for those services.
6.9 A surveyor may accept an assignment requiring education or experience only in their own fields of competence and provided services restricted to those phases of the project in which they are qualified.
6.10 A surveyor who decided not to accept a matter offered will inform the client and justify his decision.
<b>7. <u>Responsibility to the profession and Surveyor - Public Relationships</u></b> <b>The surveyor shall cooperate with other surveyors to ensure the continued promotion of the high standards the surveying profession, and pledges the continued pursuit of increasing competence, fairness, education, and knowledge necessary to achieve the confidence of the public.</b>
7.1 A surveyor agrees to maintain standards of professional and personal conduct that will reflect in responsible manner oil the profession.
7.2 Dishonorable conduct in the professional or private life of a surveyor which reflects adversely on the integrity of the profession must be avoided.
7.3 A surveyor shall build his professional reputation on merit and honesty of his services.
7.4 A surveyor firm’s representations must accurately reflect current principals and staff capacities.
7.5 A surveyor shall accurately represent to the public, a prospective or existing client or employer the surveyor’s qualifications and the scope of the surveyor’s responsibility in connection with work.
<b>8. <u>Surveyor - Employees Relationships</u></b> <b>A surveyor shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those surveyors under their supervision.</b>
8.1 A surveyor shall assist his employees to achieve their optimum levels of technical and professional advancement.
8.2 A surveyor shall ensure that his employees have proper working conditions. A surveyor shall uphold the principle of mutually satisfying relationships between employers and employees with respect to terms of employment including professional grade descriptions and salary ranges.
8.3 A surveyor shall cultivate in his employees integrity and an understanding of the professional obligations of surveyors to public.
<b>9. <u>Surveyor - Colleagues Relationships</u></b> <b>A surveyor shall pledge himself to the duty of maintaining fairness and integrity in</b>

<b>all dealings with other surveyors and other persons. A surveyor shall conduct the surveyor's affairs in a professional manner and refrain from any act which would reflect unfavorably on the profession as a whole</b>
9.1 A surveyor's conduct towards other surveyors shall be characterized by courtesy and good faith.
9.2 A surveyor shall not falsely or maliciously injure the professional reputation of another surveyor.
9.3 A surveyor shall not maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, injure the professional reputation, practice or employment of another surveyor.
9.4 A surveyor may, when requested and it does not cause a conflict of interest; render a second opinion to a client.
9.5 A surveyor shall not interfere with the performance of another surveyor's contractual or professional relationship with a client.
9.6 A surveyor agrees to foster a fair and competitive survey market, and never knowingly solicit a fellow member's client.
9.7 A surveyor shall not supplant or attempt to supplant another surveyor after the other surveyor has been retained or definite steps have been taken toward the other surveyor's retention.
9.8 A surveyor may only accept a commission for a project when the services of any surveyor previously retained for the project have been terminated.
9.9 A surveyor shall only take credit for work that has actually been created by that surveyor or the surveyor's firm, and under the surveyor's supervision.
9.10 A surveyor leaving an employer's service shall not take maps, data, reports, client lists, or other materials relating to work performed in the employer's service except with permission of the employer.

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The surveyor's activities, even if performed for a specific client have a long term influence on the public, lasting for generations. Notwithstanding is a fact that over the years the surveying profession became one of the most advanced, one can observe a certain lowering in the surveyors standards - This causes the customers to see the surveyor's community in an unfavorable manner.

The proposed principles of ethics will constitute a basis for the surveyor's behavior, which should serve the whole surveying community, including the private and the public sectors. Surveyors are required to conduct their professional practice in manner that will inspire the respect of clients to the profession as well as the general public.

The covenant of ethics, together with national agency for surveying and mapping, will no doubt influence the principles of activity based on the detailed ethics principles, and advance the standing of the surveyors amongst other professions

## REFERENCES

- Adler R., Forrai J. and Srebro H., (2006). *Professional Practice Based on Education, Ethics and Standards*. XXIII FIG Congress, Munich, Germany.
- Israel Cadastral Template Report (2006). Cadastral Template 2003 - FIG-Commission 7 "Cadastre and Land Management". (Internet proceedings).
- Israel Licensed Surveyors Association - Code of Ethics (2006). (In Hebrew)
- Codes of Ethics Online – Center for Study of Ethics in the Professions. (Internet proceedings).
- Forrai J., Kirschner G., Klebanov M. and Shaked R. (2004). *Classification of Licensed Surveyors*. FIG Working Week, Athens, Greece.
- Adler R. (2001). Proposal for a Professional Ethics for Licensed Surveyors in Israel. Collection of Selected Papers and Abstract – The Chief Scientist of Survey of Israel. (In Hebrew)
- Adler R., Forrai J. (2000). *Surveying and Mapping in Israel - The Mediterranean Surveyor in the New Millennium*. FIG Seminar, Malta.
- Allred K. (1988), *Statement of Ethical Principles and Model Code of Professional Conduct*. FIG publication No. 17, London.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**Ron Adler** received a Master of Science degree from Ohio State University in 1963 and a Doctor of Science degree from the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology in 1970. He is a registered professional engineer and licensed surveyor and has held a number of posts at the Center for Mapping – Survey of Israel, including 21 years as Director General. He has been a Visiting Professor at Ohio State University several times and an adjunct professor at a number of universities. He is the author of a textbook on Map Projections and some of 45 published articles.

**Benhamu M.**, Head, Division of 3D Cadastre in the Survey of Israel (since 2004). He is a geodetic engineer, a licensed surveyor and a registered professional engineer. He is currently a doctoral student in the Geodetic Engineering Division of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. Between 2002 and 2004 was a member in the 3D Cadastre R&D projects. Between 2000 and 2002 was lecturer at the Technion. He holds a B.Sc. Degree in Geodetic Engineering (since 1995) and an M.Sc. Degree in Geodetic Engineering (since 1998) , both from the Technion. Memberships of the Association of Licensed Surveyors in Israel. The Israeli representative to Commission 8 of FIG. His main fields of Interest include GIS/LIS, Temporal GIS, Cadastre, 3D Cadastre and Photogrametry.



## CONTACTS

Dr. Ron Adler  
Survey of Israel  
1, Lincoln St.  
Tel Aviv - 65220  
ISRAEL  
Tel. + 972 3 6231811  
Fax + 972 3 5624766  
Email: ronadler@netvision.net.il  
Web site: www.mapi.gov.il

Benhamu Moshe  
Survey of Israel  
1, Lincoln St.  
Tel Aviv - 65220  
ISRAEL  
Tel. + 972 3 6231829  
Fax + 972 3 5611565  
Email: bhmoshe@mapi.gov.il  
Web site: www.mapi.gov.il