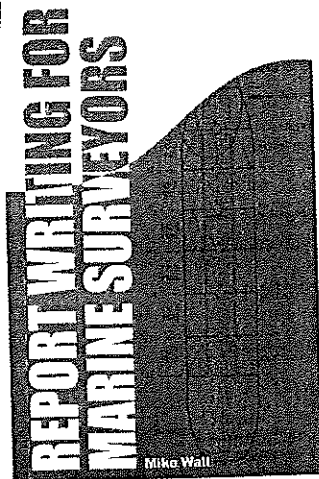


(in review)

# Survey Reports and Portsmouth Subs



*Report Writing for Marine Surveyors*  
By Mike Wall  
PUBLISHED BY PETROSPOT, LTD.

REVIEWED BY WAYNE P. THOMAS

**R**eport *Writing for Marine Surveyors* is a paperback handbook for preparing marine survey reports. It includes tables, drawings, charts, and templates to illustrate a concise and consistent formatting style for a cross-section of survey report types that a marine surveyor may be called upon to produce. The author, Mike Wall, who has sailed as chief engineer and has broad international experience as a hull, machinery, cargo, and pleasure craft surveyor, is well positioned to provide the reader with many helpful insights.

The book is organized into easily-followed chapters that deal with the basic concepts of survey reports, preparing for the report, the different types of reports, and writing the report so that it is clear, concise, accurate, logically formatted, and will stand on its merits.

Topics covered in the preparatory stage include gathering of evidence, discovery, protocols and interactions with other survey parties, disclaimers, terms and conditions of service, and legal guidelines that deal with insurance, liability, and copyright issues.

A broad range of legal topics is discussed, but the book is not intended to be a legal treatise and is not all encompassing. There are descriptions for the inclusion of disclaimers and caveats as well as several limiting exculpatory clauses in the terms and conditions section. A word of caution is warranted here, as some of the author's recommended clauses may give the surveyor a false sense of protection. Not all

of the clauses mentioned will have the force of law or be applicable under all jurisprudence. This is particularly so in the United States, where the courts may defer to COGSA rules.

In the section on preparing for the report, there are several points worth remembering. Chief among these are the recommendations for first preparing an outline, and the need for clarity, conciseness, use of precise terminology, and avoiding jargon—which is difficult to do for your average surveyor. The author briefly discusses the subject of communicating and interviewing skills in the information-gathering phase, key tools for the surveyor.

The different types of survey reports covered in the book include those most likely to be encountered during the careers of most marine surveyors. The appendices contain specimen formats for pre-purchase, condition assessment, hull and machinery damage, off-hire, cargo and container damage, collision damage, speed and angle of blow, trip-in-tow approval, and heavy-lift survey reports.

In discussing how to write survey reports, the author recommends that a standard, logical, and concise sequence be maintained. He provides a good explanation of the differences between abstracts and executive summaries, their purpose, and when they should be used in the report. Other helpful tips include the use of active versus passive writing styles and the use of spreadsheets for laying out reports. The author suggests that spreadsheets simplify formatting, especially when columns are involved as in a found and recommended section of a damage report.

The book is well suited for surveyors entering the profession and for those who are not native English speakers. However, experienced surveyors may also come away with useful information that should improve their writing style or help streamline their report preparation.

Wayne P. Thomas is a member of SNAME with 21 years experience surveying ships.