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History of Lloyd's Register's Classification Committee

In 1837 Lloyd's Register General Committee appointed a subcommittee to deal with all classification matters. This Classification Committee has been in existence ever since and is still the only body entitled to assign, suspend or withdraw class.

Lloyd's Register is unique among classification societies in having outside members, i.e. shipowners, underwriters and protection and indemnity (P&I) club representatives, on its Classification Committee. This contributes greatly to the process of impartial judgement.

Both Lloyd's Register and the Classification Committee are conscious of our twin aims of maintaining standards and being fair to shipowners. The Committee is an excellent vehicle for endeavouring to achieve these sometimes divergent aims. Nevertheless it is of interest that approximately one third of ships leaving Lloyd's Register class are disclassed for punitive reasons. Thus, although owners can and do elect to class vessels elsewhere, for various reasons, Lloyd's Register initiates the withdrawal process in a significant number of cases.

Clearly there were and are many more routine classification activities that do not require the immediate attention of the Classification Committee and so, in 1982, it appointed a Classification Executive, composed of senior members of Fleet Services Department (now Classification Services), to deal with some of these matters on its behalf. However, the Executive remains accountable to the Classification Committee for its actions.

Thus the Classification Committee acts as a watchdog over Lloyd's Register. Its objectives are to ensure consistency in the application of classification standards, which includes assigning, suspending or withdrawing class and agreeing, or otherwise, to postponements of surveys or other temporary departures from the Rules or Committee requirements. For this, Classification Services provides the technical and administrative support, ensuring that all technical and other factors are placed before the Committee to assist in the decision making process.

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