

Guiding Principles of the International Joint Commission

1. The Commission gives full effect to the spirit and purpose of its mandate as expressed in the Treaty, and supplemented by other relevant agreements and references.
2. As a binational institution, the Commission maintains its independence and strict impartiality in the performance of its duties.
3. Commissioners represent only the Commission and not the government that has appointed them. Advisers and staff members serve only the Commission and not their respective governments, Members of the Commission's boards or similar bodies serve on such bodies in their personal and professional capacity and not as representatives of the agencies or organizations that employ them.
4. While the Commission comprises two sections and maintains offices in Washington, Ottawa and Windsor, it remains a single integrated body working collegially in a spirit of openness, mutual trust and confidence, and in the common interest of both countries.
5. The Commission seeks to achieve consensus both in its own deliberations and those of its boards and similar bodies.
6. The Commission employs joint science-based fact-finding as a foundation for building consensus and determining appropriate action.
7. The Commission fosters public awareness and affords all parties interested in any matter before it a convenient opportunity to be heard. It promotes the engagement of all governing authorities and the public in addressing these matters.
8. The Commission's advice will be objective, timely, well-founded, honest, relevant, and science-based.
9. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission will apply an adaptive management approach based on changing conditions and improved knowledge.
10. The Commission upholds the principles of pollution prevention, sustainable development, the ecosystem approach, and the virtual elimination and zero discharge approaches to persistent toxic substances. The Commission also recognizes that it may be necessary to adopt a precautionary approach and to act even in the absence of a scientific consensus when prudence is essential to protect the ecosystem and public welfare.

11. The Commission's rules of procedure must be in accordance with justice and equity.
12. The Commission adheres to the highest ethical standards in all its activities.
13. The Commission seeks to ensure the inclusion of appropriate expertise in its operations and the membership of its boards and draws that expertise from a diversity of sources on a non-discriminatory basis. The Commission is committed to a merit-based, diverse and inclusive culture that solicits multiple perspectives and views and is free of conscious or unconscious bias and discrimination. Diversity includes, but is not limited to age, gender, ethnicity, race, aboriginal status, sexual orientation or disability.
14. Building on the longstanding friendship between the U.S. and Canada, the Commission promotes cooperation between governments for the common good of our shared waters.