

25. ELECTRONIC NAVIGATIONAL CHARTS — GUIDANCE ON THE USE AND LIMITATIONS OF ENC AND ECDIS SYSTEMS.

Source: UK Hydrographic Office

Former Notice 25/04 is cancelled. Additions and amendments to the former notice are indicated by sidelines.

1. Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) are vector electronic charts that conform to International Hydrographic Organization specifications. They are compiled from a database of individual items (“objects”) of digitised chart data which can be displayed as a seamless chart. When used in an Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS), the data is re-assembled to display either the entire chart image or a user-selected combination of data. ENCs are intelligent in that systems using them can be set up to give warning of impending danger in relation to the vessel’s position and movement.

2. Updates for UKHO ENCs are issued weekly in line with UKHO policy for all its navigational charts, paper and electronic. ENC Updates are issued for all Permanent Chart Updating Notices to Mariners and all chart-specific temporary and preliminary Notices to Mariners. Mariners should be aware that it may not always be possible to issue updates for temporary and preliminary Notices to Mariners that are not chart specific. Mariners should consult the paper weekly Notices to Mariners booklet or the UKHO website at www.ukho.gov.uk for details of these Notices to Mariners.

3. Mariners should be aware of the significant changes in navigational practice required by the introduction of ECDIS and of the need to manage these changes in a careful and prudent manner. It should be noted that the appearance and content of the data displayed on ECDIS may differ substantially from the same or similar data in the paper chart form. It should also be noted that although the IHO specifications permit ENCs to include information from nautical publications, currently available ENCs do not contain this information and mariners using ENCs must continue to use related nautical publications issued officially by or on the authority of a Government authorised Hydrographic Office or other relevant government institution.

4. Because of the developing nature of ECDIS and because there is as yet only limited ENC data available, there has so far been little experience of the practical, operational use of ECDIS. Mariners should satisfy themselves that their ECDIS provides all the navigational functionality that they will need and that they are familiar with the operation of this functionality. For example, some early ECDIS systems may be unable to display the cautionary notes which appear on the paper chart and are included in the ENC. Hence, care is required while experience is gained in the practical use of ECDIS. Some national maritime administrations have issued advice relating to the introduction of ECDIS, and mariners should ensure that they are aware of, and conversant with, that advice. Advice from the UK administration, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), is contained in the publication “Safety of Navigation - Implementation of SOLAS Chapter V 2002”. Similar advice is also available from the MCA website at www.mcga.gov.uk.

5. Attention is drawn to the statement in Chapter 1, sections 1.1 and 1.2 of The Mariner’s Handbook (NP100) concerning the use of navigational information provided by the UKHO. This includes the following caution which applies to all charts, paper and electronic:

While the UKHO has made all reasonable efforts to ensure the data supplied is accurate, it should be appreciated that the data may not always be complete, up to date or positioned to modern surveying standards and therefore no warranty can be given as to its accuracy. The mariner must be the final judge of the reliance he places on the information given, bearing in mind his particular circumstances, the needs of safe and prudent navigation, local pilotage guidance and the judicious use of available navigational aids.

6. UKHO has been operating the Admiralty ENC service since July 2002. The service, which currently includes ENCs obtained from IC-ENC (the International Centre for ENCs) is available from Admiralty Digital Distributors. A new service, the *Admiralty ECDIS Service* will be available early in 2005. This combines available ENCs and ARCS Raster Navigational Charts (RNCs) into a single service, to provide global coverage of official IMO compliant electronic charts. Whilst the UKHO is making every effort to obtain all ENCs available, mariners must be aware that they may need to subscribe to other ENC services in order to obtain all available ENC data.