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CIRCULAR LETTER 40/1999
27 August 1999

RASTER FORMATS AND DATA ENCRYPTION

Dear Sir,

The International Electrotechnical Committee (IEC) Technical Committee 80 Maintenance Team for IEC 61174 met on 7 July 1999 in London to reconsider the Type Approval for ECDIS following the RCDS amendment to the IMO Performance Standards for ECDIS and to address the other 61174 related matters. At the Meeting, an appeal was made by industry representatives that the number of raster formats used should be restricted to the minimum. It was stated that there was a limit to the number of formats that industry could support. The two formats most widely used are the United Kingdom HCRF and the United States BSB formats.

Member States considering the production of raster charts are requested to seriously consider either of these two formats that are readily available from the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (www.hydro.gov.uk) and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (www.chartmaker.ncd.noaa.gov). It is possible that raster data developed in other formats will not be readable by the majority of equipment and industry may not be prepared to develop their systems further to read this data.

Similarly, it was suggested that Member States should consider the standardisation of data encryption methods. PRIMAR is using an encryption process that could be made available to Member States requesting it (www.primar.org or e-mail info@primar.org). If it is the intention of a Member State to encrypt their data, the Bureau recommends that the Member State seriously consider the implementation of the PRIMAR method.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Rear Admiral Neil GUY
Director