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**CIRCULAR LETTER 61/2015**  
**24 August 2015**

### **ECDIS – GUIDANCE ON GOOD PRACTICE**

References:

- A. IHO CL 57/2012 dated 30 May - *90<sup>th</sup> Session of the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization*
- B. IHO CL 50/2014 dated 9 July - *Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 1)*
- C. IHO CL 43/2015 dated 18 June - *Report on the 95<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee*
- D. IHO CL 81/2014 dated 22 December - *Adoption of New Editions of IHO Publications: S-52 Specifications for Chart Content and Display Aspects of ECDIS, Edition 6.1.0, S-52 Annex A-IHO Presentation Library for ECDIS Edition 4.0.0, S-64 IHO Test Data Sets for ECDIS Edition 3.0.0*
- E. Document IRCC7-09B - *Update on the IHO ENC Catalogue*
- F. IHO CL 41/2014 dated 27 May - *Preparation for the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue*
- G. IHO CL 10/2008 dated 24 January - *IHO online chart catalogue, coastal States' recommended paper charts*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The Directing Committee draws the attention of Member States to the recent promulgation of Circular MSC.1/Circ.1503 of 24 July 2015 on *ECDIS - Guidance for Good Practice* by the Secretariat of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
2. The Circular is posted on the IHO website at Home > External Liaisons > Int Organizations' Documents related to the IHO under the header "International Maritime Organization (IMO) - Relevant ECDIS-ENC Documents".
3. The Circular was developed in accordance with the output approved by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 90<sup>th</sup> Session (Reference A) in order to offer a clear and unambiguous understanding of the carriage requirements and use of ECDIS by bringing together, in a single document, the guidance which has been developed in an incremental manner by the relevant IMO bodies (MSC and the former Sub-Committees on the Safety of Navigation and on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping). The IHB contributed to the drafting of the Circular which was coordinated by Australia. The text was endorsed by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue at its first session (Reference B) and approved by the MSC at its 95<sup>th</sup> Session (Reference C).

4. The Circular replaces, without modifying the related provisions, five circulars which, as a consequence, have been cancelled. The Directing Committee notes in particular the indication in paragraph 12 of the Annex to the Circular that “ECDIS that is not updated to the latest version of the IHO Standards may not meet the chart carriage requirements as set out in SOLAS Regulation V/19.2.1.4.” This indication is particularly relevant in relation to the recent publication of new editions of IHO Publication S-52 – *Specifications for Chart Content and Display Aspects of ECDIS*, and S-52 Annex A- *IHO Presentation Library for ECDIS* (Reference D). As indicated in Reference B, the IMO has considered that an unambiguous requirement to update ECDIS software would require amending SOLAS Chapter V, subject to appropriate proposals from IMO Member States. The IHB has invited the IHO-EU Network Working Group to investigate the feasibility of introducing such a requirement in the European Directive on Marine Equipment to which many of the type-approval organizations are subject.

5. The guidance contained in the Circular also refers to the IHO online ENC Catalogue, maintained by the IHB on behalf of IHO Member States. The Catalogue can be accessed from the IHO website at Home > ENCs & ECDIS > ENC Availability. As reported to the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (see Reference E), the Catalogue has been progressively upgraded to facilitate its use and to ensure that it provides the most complete and authoritative display of available ENC coverage. A notable progress in terms of user-friendliness is the recent implementation of a GIS-based interface.

6. The mention of the IHO online ENC Catalogue in the Circular includes a reference to the provision of Coastal State information on any requirements for ECDIS back-up arrangements using paper charts. Where relevant information has been provided by Member States, it is located at:

- Home > ENCs & ECDIS > ENC Availability > Backup Paper Charts, and
- Home > ENCs & ECDIS > ENC Availability > Online Chart Catalogues.

7. **The Directing Committee reiterates its request (Reference F) that Member States ensure that the relevant information which has been posted on the IHO website since 2008 (Reference G) is kept current and to provide the IHB with updates as appropriate. The provision of pending updates before the end of 2015 and the provision of subsequent updates, or confirmation of no change, at least once a year would be welcome.**

8. The project team of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee which is preparing a new edition of IHO Publication S-66 - *Facts about Electronic Charts and Carriage Requirements* has taken into account the new IMO Circular. In this context, some minor editorial errors have been identified in the final text of the Circular and have been reported to the IMO Secretariat. It is expected that a corrigendum will be issued. The corrigendum will be posted on the IHO website to accompany the Circular as soon as it is made available.

On behalf of the Directing Committee  
Yours sincerely,



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Director