

INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC
ORGANIZATIONORGANISATION HYDROGRAPHIQUE
INTERNATIONALE

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CIRCULAR LETTER 77/2006
24 November 2006**SUBMISSION TO IMO REGARDING THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE REGULAR
MAINTENANCE OF ECDIS SOFTWARE**

Dear Hydrographer,

At its 18th meeting in Cairns, Australia, the IHO Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems (CHRIS) considered the status of implementation of the standards and specifications governing ECDIS and ENC. In particular, the CHRIS expressed its concern that even when important improvements to the IHO standards have been made in the interests of safety of navigation, many ECDIS manufacturers have been slow to incorporate these changes into their new ECDIS products or to support existing customers. Importantly, mariners may be unaware of the potential problems that this can cause.

In the case of ECDIS, any equipment in use should comply with the relevant current editions of the IHO standards. In 2007 these will be the ENC Product Specification (S57 Ed.3.1 and Ed3.1.1), the relevant ECDIS Colours and Symbols (S-52 PresLib Ed.3.4) and the IHO Data Protection Scheme (S-63 Ed.1.1).

Mariners may be unaware that, by using older editions of the relevant IHO standards, ECDIS performance will be sub-optimal and in some cases they will not be aware of important information published in ENCs. For example, when using older editions of ECDIS software, recently introduced IMO requirements, such as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), Archipelagic Sea Lanes and the IALA Emergency Wreck Marking Buoys may not be presented to the mariner or the appropriate alarms or indications may not be activated. This has obvious safety, environmental protection and liability implications.

The CHRIS agreed that it is important for the IMO to consider issuing a Safety of Navigation Circular (SN/Circ.) bringing this matter to the attention of its Member States. The IHB intends to submit an appropriate request to the IMO Sub-committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV), under agenda item 6 - *Evaluation of the use of ECDIS and ENC Development*, for consideration at its 53rd Session in July 2007. Member States are requested to inform the IHB if they have any objection to such a submission to IMO NAV being made and of any further comments they may have by **31 January 2007**.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President