

18th CHRIS MEETING
Cairns, Australia, 25-29 September 2006

IHB LETTER ON S-58 ENC VALIDATION CHECKS

IHB File No. S3/8151/ECDIS

20 July 2006

To: ECDIS System Manufacturers

Dear Sir,

It has been brought to the attention of the IHO that some ECDIS system manufacturers have mistakenly incorporated some or the entire suite of ENC validation checks listed in IHO publication S-58 - *Recommended ENC Validation Checks*. This has resulted in mariners being presented with misleading error messages indicating that officially produced and released ENC data contains errors, when it does not. In some cases, official ENC data is even being reported as not suitable for navigational use.

The purpose of this letter is to make it clear that the majority of the checks in S-58 are intended for use in the ENC validation software that is used by Hydrographic Offices or Regional ENC Coordinating Centres. **These S-58 checks were not intended to be used in ECDIS software.** The introduction to S-58 reads, in part “...specifies the checks that, at a minimum, producers of ENC validation tools should include in their validation software. This software will be used by hydrographic offices to help ensure that their ENC data are compliant with the S-57, Appendix B1 ENC Product Specification...”

Of particular concern are the S-58 checks classified as ‘warnings.’ These checks are intended to highlight apparent discrepancies in the data so that HO’s or RENCs can investigate them further. Upon investigation, the data will usually be found to be correct and no change to the ENC data is required. Such investigations are carried out by the ENC producer, as well as by the Regional ENC Coordinating Centre before the data is released. Once an ENC has been officially released, it is therefore not necessary or recommended that these checks be performed again by ECDIS software, since any warnings of this type that are generated will be incorrect and will be misleading for the user.

In section 2.3 of S-58 there is a short list of '*Checks relating to ECDIS*'. These are the only checks that are intended for incorporation in ECDIS software. If there are additional checks that ECDIS manufacturers feel are necessary for safe operation they should forward proposals to the IHO Transfer Standard and Application Development Working Group (TSMAD) for inclusion in section 2.3 of S-58. In this way, a single, agreed list of tests will be maintained.

In the meantime, it is strongly recommended that those ECDIS manufacturers who have mistakenly incorporated the S-58 checks intended for ENC producers should remove them from their software as soon as possible. The IHB or the established RENCs can provide further guidance to manufacturers on which ECDIS may be affected.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Barbor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rear Admiral Kenneth BARBOR
Director