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**CHART CARRIAGE REGULATIONS AND ECDIS  
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The United States (NOAA and U.S. Coast Guard) have been working to update U.S. chart carriage regulations to permit the use of ECDIS in U.S. waters. The following progress has been made.

1. The U.S. Coast Guard issued a direct final rule<sup>1</sup> in May, 2001 excluding U.S. Government vessels from certain requirements for paper nautical charts. The rule lets Federal agencies use electronic systems as an alternative to paper charts when the vessel is equipped with an electronic chart system and backup. This exclusion will let the Coast Guard evaluate such systems leading towards the goal of permitting electronic charting and navigation technology in the commercial sector.
2. NOAA issued an statement of policy in June, 2002 describing the items that meet the definition of “nautical chart” in the U.S. under the revised SOLAS, Chapter V. That policy states, in part<sup>2</sup>

“The following items are nautical charts for purposes of the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, as amended. Each contains sufficient navigation and safety information to meet the definition of “nautical chart.”

1. A paper nautical chart published by or on the authority of the National Ocean Service, NOAA; or
2. An electronic navigational chart or a raster navigational chart published by or on the authority of the National Ocean Service, NOAA.

Electronic navigational charts and raster navigational charts meet the standards for use in electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) in accordance with International Maritime Organization Assembly Resolution A.817(19), as amended.”

3. The U.S. Coast Guard is preparing a Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular. This Circular will permit U.S.-flag vessels on international voyages to use ECDIS when not operating in territorial waters, and will permit U.S.-flag vessels less than 1600 GT that are required to comply with SOLAS to use ECDIS in lieu of paper charts wherever they are operating.
4. Finally, the U.S. Coast Guard is preparing changes to chart carriage regulations that will apply to all regulated vessels in U.S. waters including both SOLAS and non-SOLAS. The USCG is in

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2001\\_register&docid=01-10834-filed](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2001_register&docid=01-10834-filed) for the entire direct final rule.

<sup>2</sup> See [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002\\_register&docid=02-14015-filed](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-14015-filed) for the entire statement of policy.

consultation with other agencies to this end, and to a certain extent awaits the maturity of standards, systems, chart production-verification-maintenance-distribution-updating, experience, and the development of case law.