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TRANSITIONING FROM PAPER CHART TO ELECTRONIC CHART DISPLAY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (ECDIS) NAVIGATION

1   The Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV), at its fifty-fourth session (30 June to 4 July 2008), while developing draft carriage requirements for ECDIS, recognizing that proper training will be an important factor in the successful implementation of an ECDIS carriage requirement; and, notwithstanding the expectation that the current review of the STCW Convention and STCW Code, due for completion in 2010, will fully take into account the human element and training requirements necessary for a smooth transition from the use of paper charts to ECDIS, agreed that Administrations, seafarers, shipowners and operators, maritime training organizations and ECDIS equipment manufacturers would all benefit from corresponding guidance transitioning from paper chart to ECDIS navigation, whenever ships are first equipped with ECDIS, regardless of whether or not it is part of a mandatory carriage requirement.

2   The NAV Sub-Committee therefore developed Guidance on transitioning from paper chart to Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) navigation, as set out in the annex.

3   The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-fifth session (26 November to 5 December 2008), concurred with the Sub-Committee's views, approved the Guidance on transitioning from paper chart to Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) navigation, as set out in the annex and encouraged their use by the relevant authorities.

4   Contracting Governments and international organizations are invited to bring the annexed Guidance to the attention of all concerned.

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ANNEX

GUIDANCE ON TRANSITIONING FROM PAPER CHART TO ECDIS NAVIGATION

Introduction

1   The following guidance and information is provided to assist those involved with the transition from paper chart to ECDIS navigation.

Transition and training

2   As an initial step, shipowners and operators should undertake an assessment of the issues involved in changing from paper chart to ECDIS navigation. Ships' crews should participate in any such assessment so as to capture any practical concerns or needs of those that would be required to use ECDIS. Such a process will help facilitate an early understanding of any issues to be addressed and will aid ships' crews prepare for change.

3   Documenting the assessment of issues, combined with the development of ECDIS standard operating procedures, will help lead to the adoption of robust ECDIS navigation practices, simplification of crew training and facilitate smooth handovers between crews.

4   In addition, shipowners and operators should ensure that their ships' crews are provided with a comprehensive familiarization programme[*] and type-specific training; and that the ships' crew fully understand that the use of electronic charts aboard ship continues to require the need for passage planning.

IHO catalogue of chart coverage

5   The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) provides an online chart catalogue that details the coverage of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) and Raster Navigational Charts (RNC) (where they exist and where there is not yet ENC coverage) together with references to coastal State guidance on any requirements for paper charts (where this has been provided). The catalogue also provides links to IHO Member States' websites where additional information may be found. The IHO online chart catalogue can be accessed from the IHO website at: www.iho.int.

Additional information

6   In addition to national and international rules, regulations, the IMO model course and performance standards, the IHO has published an online publication *Facts about electronic charts and carriage requirements*. It is a recommended source of information on ECDIS hardware, training and the technical aspects of electronic chart data. Copies are available free of charge from various sources including: www.iho.int and http://www.ic-enc.org/page_news_articles2.asp?id=12.

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[*]   IMO Model Course 1.27 on Operational Use of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS).

7   Another useful source of information on ECDIS is *The Electronic Chart*, 2nd edition, by Hecht, Berking, Büttgenbach, Jonas and Alexander (2006). This book describes the basic components, functionality and capabilities and limitations of ECDIS. *The Electronic Chart* is published by GITC, The Netherlands, ISBN: 90-806205-7-2 and is available via: www.hydro-international.com.

8   Reference should also be made to other Safety of Navigation Circulars (SN/Circs.) issued by the Organization, in particular, SN/Circ.207/Rev.1 on Differences between RCDS and ECDIS; SN/Circ.213 on Guidance on chart datums and the accuracy of positions on charts; SN/Circ.255 on Additional guidance on chart datums and the accuracy of positions on charts; and SN/Circ.266 on Maintenance of Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) software. These and other IMO guidance material can be downloaded from the IMO website, www.imo.org.

9   Shipowners and operators should always refer to their national Administrations for the latest information on ECDIS carriage and use.

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