
Alternative Arrangements for Meeting Paper Chart Carriage Requirements on MCA Code Vessels under 24 metres in Length and Fishing Vessels under 24 metres in Length

Notice to Private Nautical Chart Producers, Ship and Fishing Vessel Owners, Masters, Skippers and Officers

Summary

This Note sets out alternative arrangements by which fishing vessels and certain vessels operated under Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Codes of Practice may satisfy paper chart carriage requirements through the use of privately-produced products.

Key Points

- UK carriage requirements exist for vessels under 24 metres in length and operated under an MCA Code and fishing vessels under 24 metres in length.
- The MCA recognise the practical difficulties faced by operators of these categories of small vessels in using full-sized paper charts intended for much larger vessels.
- Alternative arrangements are now recognised by the MCA to enable compliance with UK carriage requirements using privately produced products.
- Private nautical chart producers who meet the assurance/integrity requirements and wish to have their charts recognised under this arrangement are requested to apply to MCA.

INTRODUCTION

1. The revised Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) entered into force on 1 July 2002 and is given legal effect in UK legislation by the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations 2002.
2. Regulation 19 of SOLAS Chapter V relates to carriage requirements for shipborne navigation systems and equipment (including charts) and applies to all ships irrespective of size. However, maritime administrations have discretion to grant exemptions or equivalents to the provisions of certain regulations for:

- Ships below 150 GT engaged on any voyage
- Ships below 500 GT not engaged on international voyages; and
- Fishing vessels.

3. A nautical chart (or nautical publication) is defined by Regulation 2.2 of SOLAS Chapter V as:

“a special purpose map or book, or a specially compiled database from which such map or book is derived, that is issued by or on the authority of a Government, authorized Hydrographic Office or other relevant government institution and is designed to meet the requirements of marine navigation”.

4. Under Regulation 34 of SOLAS Chapter V, all vessels which go to sea are required to ensure that the intended voyage has been planned using appropriate nautical charts (and publications).

5. Chart carriage requirements for small vessels in commercial service, pilot boats and work boats are covered by a number of statutory codes of practice. However, individual codes have been unified within a new harmonised code, the text of which is available, as an alternative standard to the existing codes as MGN 280 (M) entitled “Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure, Workboats and Pilot Boats – Alternative Construction Standards”.

6. The relevant text relating to Code Vessel chart carriage requirements stipulates charts to plan and display the vessel's route for the intended voyage and to plot and monitor positions throughout the voyage should be carried. The charts must be of such a scale and contain sufficient detail to show clearly all relevant navigational marks, known navigational hazards and, where appropriate, information concerning ship's routing and ship reporting schemes. An electronic chart plotting system, complying with the requirements detailed in Marine Guidance Note MGN 262, may be accepted as meeting the chart carriage requirements of this sub-paragraph.

7. Legislation relating to carriage requirements for fishing vessels is dependent upon vessel length. For the purposes of fishing vessels between 15 and 24 metres, the requirements are covered by the Merchant Shipping (Safety of 15-24 Metre Vessel) Regulations and the associated code of practice contained within Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1770(F) – see Section 9.4.3 “Nautical Publications”.

8. The MCA recognises the practical difficulties faced by operators of small vessels in using full-sized paper charts intended for much larger vessels. Discussions have taken place recently with a number of long-established firms who produce charts primarily intended for recreational marine users.

9. As a consequence, the MCA will recognise certain products, produced by private organisations, to satisfy UK national chart carriage requirements or any implied requirement to aid passage planning under Regulation 34 of SOLAS Chapter V as follows:

- vessels under 24 metres in length and operated under an MCA Code of Practice, and
- Fishing vessels under 24 metres in length.

10. Leisure Charts, produced by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), will be automatically accepted by MCA in meeting the alternative arrangements outlined in this MGN.

Assurance/Product Integrity

11. Before the MCA gives any such recognition, however, private nautical chart producers will need to satisfy the MCA in writing that certain conditions have been met. These include:

- Provision of processes to ensure the quality of end products;
- Availability and frequency of an updating service (notices to mariners);
- A copyright agreement with one or more national hydrographic offices to ensure the provision of the bulk of source data for charts and publications;

- Professional indemnity insurance to cover any cases of negligence in the compilation of such charts and publications.
12. Applications by private nautical chart producers for recognition under this arrangement should be made to the Head of Navigation Safety Branch at the address shown at the foot of this Note.
 13. Information on those private chart producers who are deemed to meet the requirements specified above will be promulgated in a Marine Information Note (MIN) in due course.

Navigation safety Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/30
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel: 02380 329 523
Fax: 02380 329 204

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