



Marine notice 08/2021  
Supersedes 07/2017 and 16/2014

## Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems

### Purpose

This marine notice draws attention to important information regarding the proper operation of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS), including the importance of adequate and up to date Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs), for ships visiting Australian ports.

### ECDIS – Guidance for Good Practice

Comprehensive guidance is available in [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\) Circular MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1 ECDIS – Guidance for Good Practice](#). All masters and officers in charge of a navigational watch, and operators of ships fitted with ECDIS, are encouraged to use this guidance to facilitate the safe and effective use of ECDIS.

### ECDIS training requirements

The *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers* (STCW) requires all officers who carry out navigational tasks to be appropriately trained.

All officers in charge of a navigational watch must have a thorough knowledge of and ability to use nautical charts and nautical publications (see [STCW Code Table A-II/1](#)).

This requirement is further recognised under the provisions of the [International Safety Management Code](#), sections 6 and 7.

### Port State control (PSC) inspections

Masters and officers in charge of a navigational watch must be able to demonstrate competency with functionality of the ECDIS and particularly critical functions essential to safe navigation. These functions may include but are not limited to:

- Entering safety settings (i.e. safety depths and contours) appropriate to the ship and its intended voyage.
- Setting and response to ECDIS alarms, such as those for crossing safety contours, deviation from

route, positioning system failure, and approach to critical points.

- Entering and route checking voyage plans.
- Updating ENCs.
- Alternate methods of position fixing.

AMSA PSC officers may take action when there are clear grounds to believe the master or officers in charge of a navigational watch are not familiar with essential shipboard procedures relating to the operation of ECDIS. They also may take action to ensure the ship does not leave port until the situation is resolved within the requirements of the relevant Convention.

### Electronic Navigation Charts (ENCs)

The *International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea* (SOLAS) Chapter V Regulation 27 requires that all nautical charts and publications necessary for an intended voyage shall be adequate and up to date.

The definition of a nautical chart in SOLAS V/2 includes a special-purpose map or book, or 'a specially compiled database'. This includes official ENCs and Raster Navigational Charts (RNCs).

The Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO) produces official ENCs (AusENC) for Australian, Australian Antarctic Territory, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands waters.

There is complete ENC coverage of Australian waters. ECDIS operating in raster chart display system (RCDS) mode must not be used when navigating in Australian waters. The use of RNCs when ENCs are available is not permitted in Australia.

For an ENC to be considered adequate for navigational purposes, it must be issued officially

by or on the authority of a national hydrographic office. ENC's must be kept up to date using the latest available official Notice to Mariners. The ENC must be of appropriate scale and suitable for the navigational task at hand.

**AMSA recommends masters and officers in charge of a navigational watch familiarise themselves with information on AusENC provided on [the AHO website](#).**

## References

[MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1 - ECDIS – Guidance for Good Practice](#)

[AMSA Website - ECDIS](#)

[Australian Hydrographic Office](#)

[AMSA Website – Port State Control](#)

[Maritime Safety Awareness Bulletin issue 14](#)