

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 01-23

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: SUNSETTING OF TRADITIONAL PAPER NAUTICAL CHARTS

Date: 9 February 2023 (renewed 9 February 2024)

1.0 Background

Some national hydrographic offices are phasing out traditional paper nautical charts while others are still determining how to transition to an all-digital future. These decisions, which are beyond the control of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator, may have an impact on certain RMI-flagged vessels that are operating in the affected areas. The purpose of this Advisory is to bring awareness to the subject.

2.0 Recent National Announcements

2.1 United States (US)

- .1 By January 2025, the US will end the production of paper nautical charts and raster navigational charts. See Federal Register (FR) Notice [84 FR 62512](#). More details about this nautical chart sunseting program can be found [here](#).
- .2 In March 2022, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) proposed a rulemaking proceeding (FR docket [USCG-2021-0291](#)) on *Electronic Chart and Navigational Equipment Carriage Requirements*. The proposed rule outlined a broad strategy to revise the chart and navigational equipment requirements for commercial US-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels operating in the US waters. A final rule is pending.

2.2 United Kingdom (UK)

The UK originally [announced](#) that their hydrographic office (UKHO) would withdraw from producing paper nautical charts by the end of 2026. However, in response to user feedback, UKHO [revised their plans](#) by committing to continue their paper chart service until at least 2030. Further details will be announced in UKHO's [Notices to Mariners](#). Importantly, the UKHO is the primary and major global charting agency for the UK and for 63 other coastal States and territories. Frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

3.0 Current Requirements and Guidance

- 3.1 The shift to providing primarily Electronic Nautical Charts (ENCs) by the various hydrographic offices is likely to impact many RMI-flagged vessels, albeit to varying degrees. This is because all vessels are required to carry adequate and up to date charts and nautical publications necessary for the intended voyage. See the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter V, Regulation 19.2.1.4 and RMI Maritime Regulation [MI-108](#), §7.41.15. To determine the availability of official navigation charts (electronic, paper, and paper backups), check the International Hydrographic Organization [online catalog](#) and their article [here](#).
- 3.2 When paper nautical charts are the primary means of navigation or used as the dedicated back-up to an electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) for a vessel's area of operation and they are no longer available through the common providers, compliance may be met by:
 - .1 Obtaining alternative approved charts. This could be directly from the hydrographic office of a coastal State, or a nautical chart service; or
 - .2 Installing an ECDIS.
- 3.3 If an ECDIS is fitted, then the Master and officer in charge of a navigational watch must undergo ECDIS training per applicable SOLAS and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers requirements, regardless of the vessel's size or type. See RMI Marine Notice [7-041-6](#).
- 3.4 As a cautionary note, Electronic Chart Systems (ECSs) and other devices that electronically display the vessel's position and nautical chart data on a display screen do not meet all the International Maritime Organization requirements for ECDIS. They are not currently intended to satisfy SOLAS Chapter V requirements and therefore are not permitted to be used onboard RMI-flagged vessels in lieu of approved nautical charts.
- 3.5 See also RMI Marine Guideline [7-41-1](#).