



Shipping Guidance Notice 116
**Acceptance of electronic chart plotting systems (Mini-ECDIS) for small vessels in commercial use
(code boats) up to 24 meters load line length.**

To: Ship Owners, Operators, Master's, Classification Societies and Recognised Organisations

Summary

The Gibraltar Maritime Administration (GMA) will accept the use of electronic chart plotting systems complying with the specifications and standards described within this notice, on small commercial vessels of under 24 metres.

Manufacturers, or their agents, will be required to provide a signed statement confirming compliance with the standards developed by the United Kingdom Sea Fish Industry Authority (SFIA). A certified copy of the statement must be retained on board the vessel.

To satisfy the statutory requirements vessels must comply with these standards, including the provision of suitable back up arrangements which are detailed within section 5 of this notice.

1. Introduction/background

- 1.1 There is widespread use of chart plotting systems using privately produced electronic chart data. Such systems do not satisfy the international carriage requirements for charts. Nonetheless, it is in the interest of navigational safety that mariners are able to maximise the benefits obtained from modern electronic systems.
- 1.2 SFIA, in partnership with the United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, led an initiative in developing a performance standard for a physically smaller Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) referred to herein as Mini-ECDIS. SFIA has been designated as the lead authority, for the development of technical specifications for an electronic chart system.
- 1.3 The GMA considers this specification to be suitable for various small commercial vessels up to 24 metres load line length, certified under the Code of Practice for sport or pleasure, workboat and pilot boats ((MGN 280) (Code Vessels)), or the Workboat Code.

2. Carriage Requirements

2.1 The chart carriage requirements for Code vessels are specified within the following requirements (as amended):

2.1.1 Small Vessels in Commercial Use - Code of Practice for sport or pleasure, workboat and pilot boats (MGN 280) – Section 19;

2.1.2 The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats – A Code of Practice (as amended).

3. The Acceptance Process

3.1 In relation to chart carriage requirements for Code vessels, the GMA will accept electronic chart plotting systems complying with the specifications developed by SFIA. Details of the specifications are available from:

3.1.1 www.mini-ecdis.org.uk , or;

3.1.2 Seafish, 18 Logie Mill, Logie Green Rd, Edinburgh, EH7 4HS.

4. Satisfying Statutory Requirements

4.1 Manufacturers, or their authorised agents, will be required to provide a signed statement for each Mini-ECDIS, declaring that the system fully conforms to the SFIA technical specification. This statement, or a certified copy, must be retained on board the vessel, and made available for inspection by relevant Authorities.

4.2 GMA Surveyors may request the statement to be provided during any surveys or inspections undertaken on the relevant vessel. Surveyors may also require verification that the electronic chart plotting system is being used with suitable Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs). If, ENCs have not been published by the National Hydrographic Office for a specific geographical area, then approved Raster Navigational Charts (RNCs) may be used for the intended areas of operation. In either case, charts must be kept up-to date.

4.3 To satisfy the statutory requirements, vessels must comply with these standards, including the provision of suitable backup arrangements.

5. Backup Arrangements

5.1 Details of acceptable backup arrangements are contained in the SFIA specifications, and are outlined as follows:

5.1.1 a second acceptable Electronic Chart Plotting System, or;

5.1.2 a portable computer or similar device which will provide sufficient up-to-date electronic navigational chart information and navigation facilities for the vessel to navigate to a safe haven, or;

5.1.3 a selection of paper charts, corrected up-to-date, sufficient for the vessel to navigate to a safe haven.

6. Training & Familiarisation

6.1 GMA strongly recommends that generic training on Electronic Chart Systems, and specific familiarisation on the type of Mini-Ecdis fitted in the vessel, should be undertaken by the Master and any other crew member responsible for navigation, whom are likely to make use of the Mini-Ecdis for navigational requirements.

7. Systems non-compliant with the SFIA specifications

7.1 These fall in to two categories:

7.1.1 Systems supplied that are subsequently found not to be in compliance with the SFIA specification, as declared by the supplier and/or system manufacturer, and/or;

7.1.2 Systems that are found on survey or inspection not to display correctly the ENC's and/or RNC's of the intended areas, or such charts have not been kept corrected and up-to-date, or the system is using unofficial electronic charts that have not been authorised or issued by the National Hydrographic Office.

8. Caution

8.1 Users of these systems should note the following points:

8.1.1 Whilst there is a statutory requirement for small vessels under 24m in commercial service to carry "charts", there is no statutory requirement for the carriage of electronic chart systems;

8.1.2 Electronic chart plotting systems conforming to the SFIA specifications are not a substitute for approved Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) and they are not accepted for use other than as prescribed in this notice;

8.1.3 Only electronic charts (ENC's or RNC's) authorised or issued by / or on the authority of a Government, authorised Hydrographic Office or other relevant government institution, are acceptable for use in such systems to satisfy statutory carriage requirements.

Steve Gomez – Chief Surveyor (Ag)
For & on behalf of the Maritime Administrator

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