

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE  
90th session  
Agenda item 25

MSC 90/25/13  
14 February 2012  
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## WORK PROGRAMME

### Consolidation of ECDIS-related IMO circulars

**Submitted by Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Nautical Institute (NI)**

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This document contains a proposal for a new unplanned output to consolidate ECDIS-related information contained in several IMO circulars into a single IMO document

*Strategic direction:* 5.2

*High-level action:* 5.2.4

*Planned output:* No related provisions

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 19

*Related documents:* SN.1/Circs.213, 243, 255, 265, 207/Rev.1, 266/Rev.1, 274 and 276; MSC.1/Circs.982, 1221, 1389 and 1391; and STCW.7/Circ.10

1 This document is submitted in accordance with paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9 of the Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.4) on the submission of proposals for new outputs.

#### Background

2 At the eighty-sixth session of the Maritime Safety Committee, amendments were adopted to the 1974 SOLAS Convention through resolution MSC.282(86). These amendments included changes to chapter V, regulation 19 – *Carriage requirements for shipborne navigational systems and equipment*. Paragraph 2.1.4 of regulation V/19 now states that "*an electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) is also accepted as meeting the chart carriage requirements of this subparagraph*". Regulation V/19, paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11 provide for the carriage of ECDIS on various ship types, with implementation commencing on 1 July 2012 and progressing through to 1 July 2018.

3 At the eighty-eighth and eighty-ninth sessions of the Maritime Safety Committee, there were further discussions on the progress being made in resolving apparent anomalies within some ECDIS systems. The Committee referred this matter to the fifty-seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation for detailed consideration, so that the Sub-Committee could provide advice to MSC 90. The Committee also noted that COMSAR and STW would find this of relevance and concern, on an urgent basis.

4 The sponsors of this document believe that the increasing use of ECDIS as a primary means of navigation represents the most significant change in the navigation of ships in recent times. Therefore, the greatest clarity of advice and guidance should be made available to Administrations, ship owners, trainers and seafarers. As a complex, software-based, safety-related system, with multiple options for display and integration, ECDIS usage needs to be configured and controlled in a clearly understood and consistent way.

5 Recent workshops have identified that while much useful IMO guidance already exists, it has been necessarily developed incrementally and on a reactive basis. It is proposed that the existing information be brought together in a coherent document to improve understanding and provide a uniform interpretation and implementation of IMO rules.

6 The existence of multiple IMO circulars (see lists below) relating to ECDIS is an impediment to a clear and unambiguous understanding of the carriage and use of ECDIS.

#### **IMO circulars on ECDIS**

- .1 MSC.1/Circ.1391: Operating anomalies identified within ECDIS;
- .2 SN.1/Circ.207/Rev.1: Differences between RCDS and ECDIS;
- .3 SN.1/Circ.266/Rev.1: Maintenance of Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) software;
- .4 SN.1/Circ.276: Transitioning from paper chart to Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) navigation; and
- .5 STCW.7/Circ.10: Interim guidance on training and assessment in the operational use of the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) simulators.

#### **Other ECDIS-related IMO circulars**

- .6 MSC.1/Circ.1389: Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment;
- .7 MSC.1/Circ.982: Guidelines on Ergonomic Criteria for Bridge equipment and layout;
- .8 MSC.1/Circ.1221: Validity of type approval certification for marine products;
- .9 SN.1/Circ.213: Guidance on chart datums and the accuracy of positions on charts;

- .10 SN.1/Circ.243: Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations;
- .11 SN.1/Circ.255: Additional guidance on chart datums and the accuracy of positions on charts;
- .12 SN.1/Circ.265: Guidelines on the application of SOLAS regulation V/15 to INS, IBS and Bridge design; and
- .13 SN.1/Circ.274: Guidelines for Application of the Modular Concept to Performance Standards.

### **Scope**

7 The scope is to review and consolidate several MSC, SN and STW circulars on ECDIS into a single IMO document.

### **Compelling need**

8 With the imminent implementation of an ECDIS carriage requirement from 1 July 2012 onwards, it is vital that the shipping industry is provided with clear and unambiguous guidance to ensure the safest and most efficient transition from paper to ECDIS navigation.

### **Implications to the maritime industry**

9 The proposal does not incur any additional cost or administrative burden to the maritime industry, as it is intended to bring ECDIS-related information into one document.

### **Benefits which would accrue from the proposal**

10 The proposal will help to clarify ECDIS carriage requirements, assist with the implementation of SOLAS regulation V/19, prevent misinterpretation of the regulations and most importantly enhance the safety of navigation.

### **Priority and target completion date**

11 As the ECDIS carriage requirement begins from 1 July 2012, this work should be given high priority. The work is mostly related to reviewing and consolidating existing guidance (rather than creating new content) and will only need to be addressed by one Sub-Committee. As such, it is proposed that two sessions of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation should be able to complete the work, with completion expected in 2014.

### **Is the subject of the proposal within the scope of IMO's objectives?**

12 The proposal is within the scope of IMO's objectives as it aims to enhance maritime safety.

**How is the proposed item related to the scope of the Strategic Plan for the Organization and fits into the High-level Action Plan?**

13 Since the proposal is directly related to the enhancement of technical, operational and safety management guidance, the proposal is within the scope of strategic direction 5.2 of the Strategic Plan for the Organization 2012-2017 and that of high-level action 5.2.4 of the current High-level Action Plan 2012-2013.

**Do industry standards exist?**

14 In addition to the IMO instruments on ECDIS, IHO and IEC set standards for ECDIS data and type approval respectively.

**Do the benefits justify the proposed action?**

15 The sponsors of this proposal consider the benefits described in paragraph 10 justify the proposed action. The current situation is undesirable and should be addressed promptly in the interests of enhancing safety of navigation.

**Output**

16 The output would be a single consolidated ECDIS-related guidance document, drawn from existing IMO circulars. The output is realistic and achievable in the proposed timeframe.

**Estimation of the number of sessions needed to complete the work**

17 It is estimated that the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation will need two sessions to complete the work.

18 To facilitate the work of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation and, as the work proposed largely involves drafting of a document using existing information, the sponsors of this document are willing to prepare a draft circular, if requested by the Committee, for initial consideration at NAV 58.

**Action requested of the Committee**

19 The Committee is invited to consider this proposal and to decide as appropriate.

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