



Weather TrainerTM

User's Guide

by

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Caution and Disclaimer

In a few of the Resources, such as fax and voice broadcast schedules, the data itself are subject to change on irregular, unannounced schedules. Hence all such data are presented as sample data, not necessarily working data. We have, though, in all cases, included what to our knowledge was the best and most reliable sources for the various data.

Our main goal in this regard is to explain what the various weather sources are, how they look, and how to interpret and use such data, not to present the most up to date versions. Please read the caution statement that appears on the Index Page of the Source Book and on the Index Page of the worldwide radiofacsimile schedules.

Weather references on the internet are another example of timely data that change frequently. See notes in the internet section of the Source Book.

Naturally we have made every effort to present an error free product, with up-to-date information, including only true facts and sound advice. Unfortunately, we cannot and do not guarantee that we have succeeded. We do not assume any responsibility or liability for any consequences of the use of any information presented in this course.

About this User's Guide

The contents of this User's Guide is an illustrated reproduction of the on-line Help along with notes on installation. It is primarily intended for those who want an overview of the Weather Trainer while away from their computers.

System Requirements

Before installing Weather Trainer be sure your computer meets the minimum suggested system:

- IBM PC, PS/2, or 100% compatible computer or Mac using Virtual PC 486 or newer processor.
- Small fonts -- else demo and help screen will appear distorted.
- VGA, or compatible display (640 x 480 x 256 colors is recommended)
- Microsoft Windows operating system version 3.x or 95
- 4 megabytes (MB) of RAM is minimum, but 8 MB or more is recommended
- 15 MB of free hard disk space

Installing Weather Trainer

Weather Trainer installs in the conventional manner from Win 3.1 or 95, using a:setup and disk 1. It is best to exit all other programs before installing. Use Program Manager in Win 3.x or Start button in Win 95.

After starting Windows

1. Insert disk 1 into drive A
2. From the File menu (Win 3.x) or Start (win 95), choose **Run**
3. Type **a:setup** and press Enter key and follow subsequent instructions.
4. Choose "Yes" to "Build program group?" question.
5. Please read the Release Notes (Readme.txt)

Starting Weather Trainer

1. From Win 3.x, open Starpath group in Program Manager
2. From Win 95, go to Starpath group from Program list under Start
3. Double click the Weather Trainer icon.

Technical Support

Technical support is available at www.starpath.com/support.htm -- please check this first. If you do not find your answer, please call: 206-783-1414 or by e-mail at info@starpath.com. Your serial number is located on disk 1. If you have questions about the computer program or about the content of the course, or related matters of navigation or marine weather, please do not hesitate to call us.

Contents and Goals

The Starpath Weather Trainer is an automated set of teaching materials on marine weather. It includes text, graphics, and weather data which are organized into a series of inter-related books, articles, and practice questions along with a thorough glossary of weather terminology. Some material is used primarily for training, other sections contain tabulated data and computations that could be (with the qualifications noted below) valuable resources after the training aspect of the course is completed.

Regardless of this potential application, however, all reference material presented in this course is intended for training purposes only. Much of it is dated information which could be outdated without our knowledge. Please see the "Caution and Disclaimer" note which applies to the use of all materials in this course.

The course includes two sets of questions. In one set (Practice Questions) the computer asks you the questions; in the other set (Ask-me! Questions), you ask the computer for answers to questions of your choice.

The practice questions each include notes and explanations along with cross references to related parts of the course. Most of the material in the course is intended to be read on-line. A printed text version of the course is also available (contact Starpath in the addresses section of the Source Book). A discussion of individual books and features of the course is covered under Help topic Library of features.

Goals of the course

The purpose of the Starpath Weather Trainer is to teach marine weather on a practical level. It is our goal that the knowledge gained from this course will lead to more effective decision-making in the preparation and conduct of voyages, long and short. The emphasis is, therefore, on those aspects of weather which can contribute directly to decision making.

To guide you in this direction, the program makes use of various techniques, such as realistic practice scenarios, which require you to apply your knowledge of weather phenomena and resources. Likewise, the certification process reinforces your training with numerous practical questions on marine weather.

More on the goals of the course is included below in "Who is it for" and "Background." Goals and philosophy are discussed in the Introduction section of the Practice Questions and Ask-me Book.

Who is the course for?

The Weather Trainer is intended for all mariners, regardless of the waters they ply, the size of their vessels, or their previous experience at sea. We hope to reach ship's officers, fishermen, and other commercial mariners as well as recreational boaters, power, sail, and paddle, racers and cruisers. We would hope that any mariner with an interest in weather could find what they need in this course. To this end, we have made some compromises on the content and style of the program. Seasoned commercial mariners may find some discussion to be more informal than they are accustomed to from more traditional sources, whereas recreational boaters may find some subject matter they do not need in their present study of weather. It is our goal, though, that all mariners interested in weather can find what they need without being distracted by what they don't need.

The Practice Questions are also categorized according to their application to USCG exams, so that these materials can also be used efficiently when preparing for licensing exams.

Background of the course

The Starpath Weather Trainer as a software product evolved from our home study and classroom courses on marine weather. The tone, level, and content of the course stem from three primary sources: our contact with over 14,000 navigation students during the past 15 years; the author's first-hand experience at sea; and from our continual research into the practical matters of marine weather and available resources.

While every attempt has been made to ensure that the Weather Trainer is scientifically sound, it is, nevertheless, not intended as a scientific treatise on meteorology — we include specific references to many fine books on the subject in the Source Book and specifically discuss them in the Study Guides. It is our experience that one must sometimes forego rigorous science with all its provisos in favor of rules-of-thumb that work at least most of the time.

Hence, we have tried to separate the things one can know and use from those that call for educated guesses. Furthermore, we have limited the use of facts and principles that, while interesting to know, may be of value only in very special circumstances. You may know how to tie many knots, but there are only a few you need to know how to tie while hanging from one hand in the dark.

In those cases where we have added more specific information, beyond what is needed for practical matters, it has been set aside in an article of the Articles Book and clearly marked as such.

The presentation of the course is informal. In many cases we sacrifice rigorous correctness in expression for the sake of an attempt at clarity. We have made every effort, however, not to compromise the thoroughness or correctness of the material. We have tried to include all the weather knowledge a mariner might require in their own particular setting.

The intent and methods of this course are further elaborated in the philosophy section of the Ask-Me Book and in the Introduction topic of the Practice Questions. We encourage readers to refer to these sections early in their study. We believe that this practical approach to marine weather is the best way to get the knowledge working for you as soon as possible. It is, in part, the reason we have chosen a software format to present the material. In this format of the course, you can select those topics for which you have immediate application, and in the process discover what other subjects are related to it. Gradually, as you use the course, you will thread your way throughout the subject matter and discover the relationships of weather phenomena to one another on your own. Finally, you can test your knowledge in the certifications mode.

Acknowledgments

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— David Burch