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CG-NAV Policy Letter 01-23
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COMDT (CG-NAV)

To: LANTAREA (LANT-54)
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Subj: **CHART CARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS DURING NOAA CHART
SUNSETTING PLAN**

Ref: (a) CH-2 to Use of Electronic Charts and Publications in Lieu of Paper Charts, Maps and Publications, NVIC 01-16, COMDTPUB 16700.4
(b) Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 83, 161, and 164
(c) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, various parts
(d) Sunsetting Traditional NOAA Paper Charts, NOAA Office of Coast Survey Strategy, November 14, 2019
(e) 46 U.S.C. 3105, Electronic Charts
(f) RTCM Standard 10900 (series), Electronic Chart Systems (ECS)

1. **PURPOSE.** This policy letter provides updated enforcement guidance regarding reference (a) to Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) and Marine Inspectors (MI) regarding chart carriage requirements required in references (b) and (c). This policy letter will expire on April 1, 2025, unless otherwise rescinded.
2. **ACTION.** OCMI and MI shall apply this policy letter to regulatory requirements for chart carriage. Area Commanders, District Commanders, Sector Commanders and OCMI are encouraged to apprise industry representatives of this guidance.
3. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** None.
4. **DISCLAIMER.** This document provides enforcement guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to, nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any person outside the Coast Guard. It does not prescribe new requirements for the maritime industry. This guidance is provided for domestic requirements and is not intended to supplement the requirements contained in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) or for the purposes of SOLAS certificates.
5. **ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.** The Office of Navigation Systems (CG-NAV) and the Office of Environmental Management (CG-47) have reviewed the general policies contained within this policy letter. These policies are categorically

excluded (CE) under current Department of Homeland Security (DHS) CE L5 from further environmental analysis. Since this policy letter implements, without substantive change, an applicable Commandant Publication and/or other federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents, DHS categorical exclusion L5 is appropriate. This directive will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. CG-NAV will evaluate all future actions resulting from this policy letter for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates.

6. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

7. DISCUSSION.

- a. The regulations in references (b) and (c) require certain vessels to carry currently corrected nautical or marine charts. At the time these regulations were issued, paper charts were the only available form of charts. Consequently, the requirements set forth in these regulations can only be met via paper charts.
- b. Reference (a) was initially issued on February 3, 2016, to address the use of electronic charts domestically by establishing an equivalency to the chart and publication carriage requirements in references (b) and (c) by permitting the use of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) in lieu of paper charts, under certain circumstances. NVIC 01-16 was updated in 2017 and in 2020 to reflect changes in available technology and the use of electronic publications.
- c. NOAA is the U.S. hydrographic authority for nautical charts covering the U.S. shoreline, Great Lakes, and waters within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. In 2019, NOAA published reference (d) announcing a 5-year “sunsetting” program to gradually end the production of its raster navigational charts (RNC) and paper nautical charts. Production of all NOAA’s RNCs and NOAA’s paper nautical charts is scheduled to cease by January 2025 with approximately 50% of the U.S. charts canceled by the summer 2023.
- d. Section 410 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004, later codified as reference (e), required certain vessels operating on the navigable waters of the United States be equipped with and operate electronic charts. At the time, however, recognized hydrographic authorities did not maintain a full portfolio of electronic charts, and an affordable means for a mariner to display and safely use electronic charts was not available on the market. Consequently, the Coast Guard did not issue implementation regulations. Since the enactment of section 410 in 2004, charting systems manufacturers have developed multiple systems that are available to mariners for use, and recognized hydrographic authorities now provide a full suite of electronic charts. Section 8301 of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020 updated reference (e) by no longer requiring vessels to be equipped with and operate electronic charts. The law now provides a “statutory equivalency” between electronic charts and paper charts but requires the Coast

Guard to provide standards for electronic chart systems when vessels are equipped with and operating electronic charts.

- e. NOAA has developed an online application that enables users to create their own customized nautical charts directly from the latest official NOAA ENC data. Some of NOAA's certified Print on Demand (POD) chart agents provide service to print and ship copies of the custom charts made from the NOAA Custom Chart (NCC) tool. Many other commercial print shops can print large format NCC charts, as well. Because NCC products do not have a numerical designation, Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) are not issued for chart corrections. NOAA is currently working on a feature to provide users chart corrections for their custom chart, but this feature is currently under development, and is not anticipated to be available before the end of Calendar Year 2023.
 - f. The Coast Guard published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on March 28, 2022 (87 FR 17241) seeking public input regarding the modification of the chart and navigational equipment carriage requirements in references (b) and (c). Any resultant rulemaking is not expected to be completed until after most of NOAA's paper charts have been canceled. As such, a period may exist when correctable charts are not available, and the rulemaking is not final.
8. **POLICY.** The primary purpose of chart carriage regulations is safe navigation. Most critical to safe navigation, for the purposes of those regulations, is carriage of a proper, updated chart of the area being transited. OCMI and MI shall review a vessel's navigational charts in accordance with references (a), (b), and (c). The following additional guidance may be applied.
- a. A marine chart of the area being transited that is published by a foreign government may be substituted in accordance with reference (b).
 - b. Custom paper charts of the area to be transited, which have been developed through NOAA's online NCC application, may meet carriage requirements. OCMI and MI should consider the following:
 - (1) NCC charts should be of a large enough scale and have enough detail to make safe navigation of the area possible. A printed chart as described in paragraph 7.e is preferred. Charts do not need to be of the largest scale available. To enable safe navigation the scale on any acceptable chart should be appropriate to show all aids to navigation, the detail of soundings, and enable the taking of radar and/or visual fixes, and appropriate to the vessel's draft and operating characteristics.
 - (2) To ensure the chart is current, the printed date of the chart should be within six months of the date of the inspection, or the owner/master of the vessel can show the charts are currently corrected. Charts and publications need only be corrected for the transit of the vessel. Requiring correction of charts and publications for areas not applicable to the vessel's transit, such as small boat channels, is unnecessary.
 - c. If any part of the vessel's intended domestic voyage is seaward of the territorial sea baseline

(as defined by 33 CFR 2.20), reference (a) requires ENC's to be displayed on a system that has been tested against and meets the International Electrotechnical Committee's Maritime Navigation and Radiocommunication Equipment and Systems Standard (IEC 60945) or be a Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) Electronic Chart System (ECS). Reference (f) delineates standards for four classes of ECS. Class C and Class D are not acceptable for use on certificated vessels because they do not meet International Hydrographic Organization chart portrayal standards. In meeting the requirements set forth in reference (b), mariners should display ENC's on a RTCM Class A or Class B ECS.

9. INSPECTION/ENFORCEMENT GUIDANCE. If a vessel is found to be operating without corrected paper or electronic charts in compliance with the current regulations or this policy, the MI or vessel examiner should issue a deficiency citation referencing the existing applicable regulatory provision (e.g. 46 CFR 184.420 for a vessel inspected under 46 CFR subchapter T).
10. QUESTIONS. Questions or comments regarding this policy can be directed to the Office of Navigation Systems by email at CGNAV@uscg.mil. Upon receipt, your request will be assigned to a Coast Guard Marine Transportation Specialist for consideration and processing.

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