

# Regulations in Chapter V of SOLAS

There are three new elements of hydrographic importance contained in Chapter V of SOLAS which will increase safety at sea; the provision of hydrographic services, the definition of nautical charts and the acceptance of ECDIS as meeting the chart carriage requirements. The IHO as the regulatory “executive body”™ must monitor the progress of implementation.

1st July 2002 is a date of particular importance for the IHO and its Member States. A set of new rules of hydrographic interest then came into force, originating from Chapter V of SOLAS, which will improve navigational safety at local, regional and global level. These rules are binding under international law. Three new main hydrographic elements may be identified in the new rules of SOLAS Chapter V.

- a) Under Regulation 9, governments contracting into SOLAS. The obligation to execute hydrographic surveys, prepare issue and update nautical charts and publications and ensure uniformity in their products and world-wide availability. These obligations must be based on the appropriate resolutions and recommendations of the IHO.
- b) Regulation 2, paragraph 2 gives the definition of a nautical chart or nautical publication. The nautical chart must be issued officially by, or on the authority of, a government-authorised hydrographic office. Concerning the authority and responsibilities of coastal states in the provision of charting in accordance with Regulation 9, the appropriate resolutions and recommendations of the IHO must be taken into consideration.
- c) Under Regulation 19, paragraph 2.1.4 all ships shall have nautical charts and nautical publications. ECDIS with official ENC's may be accepted as meeting the chart carriage requirements.

Analysis and conclusions from the above IHO perspective.

- The decisions and recommendations of the IHO are recognised by the SOLAS Convention and therefore have specific importance under international law
- The new regulations are compulsory for all governments contracting into SOLAS. This means that many coastal states, must develop or increase their hydrographic capabilities in order to fulfil these obligations
- It is important to note that this is the first time the definition of a nautical chart has been included in an International Convention and it is certain that we will see it in use in future scientific reports, conferences and tribunals
- These hydrographic regulations will provide the necessary impetus for the establishment of hydrographic services in developing states. This will lead to the acquisition of high quality hydrographic data and the production and provision of updated nautical charts and publications.  
It is clear that under the new regulation all ships must carry only official charts and publications produced by a Hydrographic Office. This carriage requirement applies even to small craft, unless exempted under Regulation 1, paragraph 4
- The commitments for contracting governments to co-operate and to provide uniform charts and nautical publications on a world-wide scale are included in the IHO Convention

The IHB, as the executive body of the IHO, has the responsibility of providing guidance, advice and support in all hydrographic areas, in particular to those countries interested in establishing or expanding their hydrographic capabilities in order to satisfy the obligations of the new regulation of SOLAS Chapter V.

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