

NATIONAL CHARTING PLAN

A strategy to transform nautical charting

What is the National Charting Plan (NCP)?

The NCP is a strategy to improve NOAA nautical chart coverage, products, and distribution. It describes the evolving state of marine navigation and nautical chart production, and outlines actions that will provide the customer with a suite of **products that are more useful, up-to-date, and safer for navigation**. It is not a plan for the maintenance of individual charts, but a strategy to improve all charts. Stakeholders are invited to review and comment on the National Charting Plan, which can be downloaded from the Office of Coast Survey website.

Comments are due June 1, 2017.

<https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/news/2017/nationalchartingplan.html>

Why is Coast Survey releasing the NCP now?

Since the introduction of electronic navigational charts (ENCs) thirty years ago, the size of commercial vessels has increased four-fold and navigation systems have become more sophisticated. Additionally, there are now over 15 million recreational boat users in the U.S. and many have joined professional mariners in using electronic chart displays and NOAA digital chart products when navigating. User groups of all types are increasingly expecting more precise, higher resolution charts, and greater timeliness and ease-of-access to chart updates. This plan presents strategies **to meet the growing demand**.

How will the NCP improve marine navigation for users?

Key improvement activities include:

- Reduce unwarranted ECDIS alarms
- Convert to metric
- Improve chart coverage
- Provide timelier data
- Create an orderly layout for ENCs
- Reduce uncertainties
- Improve chart update information
- Increase efficiency

Some changes have already begun, such as improving the portrayal of wrecks on ENCs. Other changes, such as the converting charted depths to meters, are being evaluated.

Customer feedback will help us refine these initiatives and possibly identify new ones that will help drive our efforts to keep up with the increasingly complex requirements of marine navigational systems.

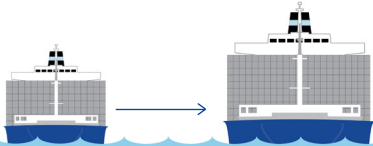
Improved ease of access to more precise, higher-resolution charts that deliver the most up-to-date navigation information possible.



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A CHANGING WORLD

Ships are growing, requirements are changing, technology is advancing



Container ship size has increased four-fold in 30 years.



Use of electronic charts and ECDIS will soon be mandatory for all large commercial vessels.



Electronic chart display use is rising among recreational boaters.

A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE NAUTICAL CHARTING

Key actions that will improve charting and marine navigation

Reduce unwarranted alarms



Reduce alarms and clutter of “isolated danger” symbols in ECDIS by calculating and encoding safe clearance depths for wrecks deeper than 20 meters.

Create an orderly layout



Create an orderly layout for ENC charts that will replace the current set of 1,182 irregularly shaped ENC cells compiled at 131 different scales.

Convert to metric



Compile depth areas on ENCs in whole (integer) meters and work toward converting raster charts from fathoms and feet to meters.

Reduce uncertainties



Implement a systematic review of features categorized as “reported” or “existence doubtful” and features labeled as “position approximate” to start resolving uncertainties.

Provide timelier data



Earlier access to new shoreline and hydrographic survey data. Work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the provision of minimum channel depths on NOAA products and Corps’ websites.

Improve chart update information



New online tools provide information about all the changes made to ENC and raster charts since the release of their previous editions.

Improve chart coverage



Migrate small craft chart coverage into standard nautical charts of equal or greater scale and eventually cancel all small craft charts.

Increase efficiency



Work with the U.S. Coast Guard to develop methods to ingest changes to the database of Coast Guard maintained aids to navigation directly into NOAA’s chart production system.

OUTCOME

Ease of access to more precise, higher-resolution charts that deliver the most up-to-date navigation information possible