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To: **Ships' Masters, Owners and Operators**

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Important ENC/ECDIS Data Presentation and Performance Check in Ships

THIS LETTER CONCERNS SAFETY OF NAVIGATION

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has recently indicated its concern about reports of operating anomalies identified in some ECDIS and issued MSC.1/Circ.1391. MSC.1/Circ.1391 encourages mariners to report any unexpected ECDIS performance issues to the appropriate authorities. It is believed that some older ECDIS are unable to display important new chart features recently agreed by IMO such as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas and Archipelagic Sea Lanes as these require ECDIS to use the latest version of the display standards set by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). Some other ECDIS alarms and indications may also not work in certain operating modes in some equipment.

To support safety of navigation, to help keep mariners informed about ECDIS, and to provide more information to the 90th session of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee in May 2012, the IHO, which is the intergovernmental organization responsible for the ECDIS chart and display standards, has produced a simple dataset comprising two fictitious Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) that allow mariners to check some important aspects of the operation of their ECDIS.

The check is intended to alert mariners to the possibility that their ECDIS software may require upgrading and if so, what extra measures they might need to take in the meantime, such as employing particular equipment operating procedures. Mariners are being asked to report the results of their checks to help the IHO identify how the different brands of ECDIS display and handle chart information and also to inform the IMO, national Hydrographic Offices, ECDIS manufacturers and others, so that they can take any corrective action that may be necessary.

The ENC data needed to conduct the checks is being provided to ships through the normal ENC provider network and should be delivered free of charge with one of the routine chart update deliveries in October 2011. The ENC data and instructions can also be downloaded free from the IHO website at: www.ihb.int. The check should take less than half an hour.

In order to present the most comprehensive report possible to the IMO and to further assist in resolving the issues so far identified, the IHO is keen that as many ships as possible forward their results. Reports on the results can be sent via a form provided with the data or the results can be submitted on-line through a web-form.

We recommend that the accompanying background documentation and the results of the checks are distributed and discussed amongst all relevant officers and any other personnel that may be affected. We have also been advised that if any shortcomings are found, then action consistent with the requirements of the International Safety Management Code may also be required.

All relevant documentation can also be downloaded free from the IHO website at: www.ihb.int.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,

Robert WARD
Director