



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



UKHO to Cease Paper Chart Production

A “distinguished history” of paper chart production by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) will end by late 2026, as the organisation targets exclusive delivery of digital navigation products and services.

UKHO chief executive Peter Sparkes described a “rapid decline” in demand for the UKHO’s portfolio of ADMIRALTY Standard Nautical Charts (SNCs) and Thematic Charts, driven by the SOLAS-mandated transition to ECDIS and the wider benefits of digital solutions.

“The decision to commence the process of withdrawing from paper chart production will allow us to increase our focus on advanced digital services that meet the needs of today’s seafarers,” he said.

“As we look to the future, our core purpose remains the safety of shipping operations and delivering the best possible navigation solutions to achieve that. Whether for the Royal Navy, commercial vessels or other ocean users, our focus is on developing and delivering ADMIRALTY digital services that promote safe, secure and thriving oceans.

“We understand the significance of this announcement, given the distinguished history of the UKHO’s paper chart production and the trust that mariners have placed in ADMIRALTY charts over the generations. We will support users of SNCs during the withdrawal of our paper chart portfolio and work with our distributors to help users switch to digital alternatives between now and our planned date of 2026.

“Shipping is moving quickly towards a future underpinned by digital innovations, enhanced satellite connectivity at sea and optimised data solutions, supporting the next generation of navigation. The UKHO aims to be at the vanguard of this digital transition, continuing to provide the assured and globally trusted ADMIRALTY navigation services that seafarers the world over depend on.”

United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) technical services navigation assistant director Richard Bell said the UKHO’s announcement “represents a clear vision for the future of navigation”.

“The MCA recognises the benefits of official digital navigation products for safe navigation, at a time when paper products make up a minority of navigation products being used at sea,” he said.

“We are committed to working closely with the UKHO, stakeholders and industry to make this vision a reality. Close liaison will be essential, to ensure that the technical and legislative barriers to the proposed change are overcome in advance of the UKHO’s 2026 timeline.”

Further information on the UKHO’s phased withdrawal of paper chart production can be found on the [ADMIRALTY website](#).

September 2022

