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MARINE CIRCULAR 126.1

To: **ALL SHIPOWNERS, MANAGERS, MASTERS, DEPUTY REGISTRARS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

Subject: **GUIDELINES ON THE SAFETY OF NAVIGATION, ECDIS, NAVIGATION CHART CORRECTION AND USE, SPEED INPUT TO ARPA EQUIPPED RADARS, AND TRAFFIC SEPARATION LANES**

1. Reference
   - 1.1 International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), Chapter V
   - 1.2 International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (COLREG) Rule 15
   - 1.3 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), as amended – Regulation II/1-3
   - 1.4 SN/Circ.213, *GUIDANCE ON CHART DATUMS AND THE ACCURACY OF POSITIONS ON CHARTS,* May 31st, 2000
   - 1.5 SN.1/Circ.207/Rev.1, *DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RCDS AND ECDIS,* October 22nd, 2007
   - 1.6 SN.1/Circ.255, *ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON CHART DATUMS AND THE ACCURACY OF POSITIONS ON CHARTS,* dated July 24th, 2006
   - 1.7 SN.1/Circ.266/Rev.1, *MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRONIC CHART DISPLAY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (ECDIS) SOFTWARE,* dated December 7th, 2010
   - 1.8 SN.1/Circ.276, *TRANSITIONING FROM PAPER CHART TO ELECTRONIC CHART DISPLAY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (ECDIS) NAVIGATION,* dated December 10th, 2008

2. Purpose
   - 2.1 The purpose of this Marine Circular is to provide advice and guidance to mariners on the importance of initiating and maintaining a regular and efficient system of chart and publication carriage requirements and updating, the proper use of ARPA Radar, and Rules of the Road in Traffic Separation Lanes.

3. Applicability
   - 3.1 This Marine Circular applies to all Palau registered ships which:
     a. Use the Electronic Chart Display Information Systems (ECDIS);
     b. Are equipped with Automatic Radar Plotting Aids (ARPA);
     c. Are required to carry nautical charts and nautical publications including sailing directions, list of lights, notice to mariners, tide tables as necessary for the intended voyage.

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4. Requirements for Navigational Chart Correction and Use

4.1 Masters and Officers should be aware of the danger of navigating without adequate under keel clearance. The practice of navigating through waters barely adequate in depth with a finely assessed under keel clearance based upon predicted tidal heights is not recommended, as the actual tidal rises may be appreciably lower than predicted.

4.2 It is essential that any nautical publication which is likely to be affected by changes in navigational or hydrographic conditions be corrected and updated by every available means, primarily Radio Navigational Warnings, e.g., NAVTEX, SafetyNet and Notices to Mariners. Failure to follow this basic procedure can place the master, his vessel, and owners in an untenable legal position in the event of an accident.

4.3 Chart corrections have proven to be a major source of problems with Port State Control inspections as well. While it is appreciated that many vessels may be engaged in worldwide trading calling at ports in countries where Notices to Mariners and other publications may not be available, it is possible to order well in advance the current editions of sailing directions, tide and current tables, charts and chart corrections for delivery to the ship on a regular basis.

4.4 The Palau Ship Registry Administrator recognizes that several companies offer quick and efficient means of updating and correcting nautical chart and publications and issue Notice to Mariners to ships at sea by way of INMARSAT and email. There is also the availability of computer CDs containing the same information. Provided the data contained in these products is promptly and correctly applied to affected nautical charts and publications aboard the ship, these new systems can be used on board Palau registered vessels.

4.5 Flag Surveyors will be instructed to pay particular attention to the carriage onboard of nautical charts and publications appropriate to the voyage and/or service in which the ship is engaged during the carriage of Annual Flag Inspections or Occasional Inspections. In the event that it is determined that the charts/publications are inadequate, or that an efficient correction procedure does not exist, the ship may be prevented from proceeding to sea until appropriate action is taken to correct the situation.

4.6 Even charts based on recent surveys may not show all seabed obstructions or the shallowest depths. Hydrographic surveys have inherent technical limitations, due partly in some offshore areas to difficulties in accurately calculating tidal



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ranges. Furthermore, in some cases the depth of the seabed is constantly changing. Nautical charts should, therefore, not be absolutely relied upon in their representation of depth and, when tidal predictions are applied to the chart as if they were actual tide levels, the uncertainties are thereby compounded.

4.7 In areas such as estuaries and approaches to ports, where optimum under keel clearance cannot be obtained, Masters should carefully consider what is an appropriate speed having regard to the 'squat' characteristics of their particular ship and monitor depth sounding equipment closely.

5. Requirements for ARPA Radar

5.1 Regulation 19 of reference 1.1 above clearly states that speed input to ARPA on all ships of 10,000 gross tons and upwards must indicate speed and distance through the water. ARPA equipped ships of lesser tonnage should heed this standard as well. Mariners are cautioned that inputs providing speed over the ground are not to be used for collision avoidance decisions when using ARPA since doing so may lead to a dangerous navigation situations and/or erroneous collision avoidance solution.

6. Requirements for ECDIS

6.1 The precautions that must be taken with ARPA also apply to the use of ECDIS equipment. Inputs determine the information that is displayed to the user. The mariner should be properly trained in the use of ECDIS to minimize the possibility of incorrect information being set up in the system and that the peripheral equipment is supplying information properly to the system.

6.2 Owners and operators of Palau registered vessels should ensure that Masters and Navigation Watch Officers serving onboard their vessels have received ECDIS training and that they are familiar with the specific equipment installed onboard the vessel on which they are serving.

6.3 The International Maritime Organization's has published SN.1/Circ.276 which includes general guidance as well as references that may be of use when determining company ECDIS-related training requirements for Masters and Navigation Watch Officers.

6.4 ECDIS training is required at two levels:

a. First, shore-based generic training in the use of ECDIS and its capabilities is required that provides the mariner with a thorough understanding of electronic chart data, data accuracy, presentation rules, display options, and other chart data formats. This training alerts the mariner to the dangers

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of over-reliance in the ECDIS system. Also, the generic training provides the mariner with techniques that will help him/her develop proficiency in the operation, interpretation and analysis of the information that is obtained from the system. Additionally, the mariner will learn how to use the required functions of the equipment that is integrated with the ECDIS system to enable him/her to properly adjust and monitor that information to enhance the mariner's situational awareness.

b. Second, type specific training on the use of the particular unit(s) that is(are) found on board the vessel to which the mariner is assigned must be completed prior to the officer assuming a navigational watch by a qualified officer on board the vessel.

7. Traffic Separation Lanes

7.1 Mariners are cautioned that the provisions of reference 1.2, Crossing Situation rules apply equally to vessels navigating in, near and outside Traffic Separation Lanes.

8. Contact

8.1 Any inquiries concerning the subject for this Marine Circular should be directed to the Palau Ship Registry Administrator at technical@palaureg.com

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