

Bridge Memorandum #38: Phase out of Paper Charts

Captains,

As some of you are aware, the UKHO and NOAA are starting the process to phase out Paper charts.

NOAA made it public in 2019 that they have started the process to move strictly electronic charts by 2025, while the UKHO has plans to be fully electronic by 2027.

TDI Marine Management is aware that this will impact our fleet and operations worldwide. As of now, Print on Demand (POD) charts are still available, but it is anyone's guess for how long. The use of only electronic charts is not authorized for our vessels; therefore, Marine Management is watching closely the discussions on this topic.

As this change continues to develop and continual discussions progress, we will plan according for the safest and most responsible outcome for our fleet.

However, for the present time, paper charts will still be used and updated as necessary for Voyage planning and Notice to Mariners.

Actions to be taken:

- Review Attached articles
- Discuss with the Bridge crew the pros/cons of phasing out Paper charts



Roy Robbins

Port Captain / DPA



Dr. James Howell

HSE Director



Photo courtesy UKHO

Going Digital: UKHO to Phase Out Traditional Paper Nautical Charts

Mike Schuler

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For more than two centuries, mariners, shipping companies and international governments have relied on [UK Hydrographic Office \(UKHO\)](#) charts to safely navigate the world’s oceans. Today, the agency announced it will cease its paper chart production and transition to fully digital products by 2027.

Plans to withdraw the UKHO’s portfolio of ADMIRALTY Standard Nautical Charts (SNCs), which are among the most trusted and widely used official paper charts in the world, come as more marine, naval and leisure users primarily rely on digital products and services for navigation. UKHO’s Thematic Charts will also go digital.

The phased withdrawal of paper charts will take place over a number of years and is anticipated to conclude in late 2026. In parallel, the UKHO says it will develop viable, official digital alternatives for sectors still using paper chart products. “This will be a carefully managed process, conducted in close liaison with all customers and stakeholders, including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) as well as other regulatory bodies, hydrographic offices, industry partners and distributors,” the UKHO said in a statement.

“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,” said Peter Sparkes, Chief Executive of the UKHO. “As we look to the future, our core purpose remains the safety of shipping operations and delivering

Transition to digital charts means the UKHO’s ADMIRALTY Maritime Data Solutions portfolio can be updated in near real-time, greatly enhancing safety of life at sea (SOLAS).

The move to digital navigation solutions comes amid a rapid decline in demand for paper charts, driven by the SOLAS-mandated transition to ECDIS and the wider benefits of digital solutions, including the next generation of navigation services, explained Sparkes.

“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,” he added.

“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,” Sparkes said.

Baroness Goldie, Minister of State at the UK government’s Ministry of Defence, said digitalization and rapid technological advancements in recent years has changed the world “unrecognisably.”

“When it comes to maritime, one of our priorities at the Ministry of Defence is to make shipping as safe as possible; to achieve this, the industry must continue transitioning to digital tools and technology that share data almost instantly from ship-to-ship or ship-to-shore,” said Minister Goldie.

“As one of the world’s leading authorities on navigational charts, the UKHO is well positioned to recognise the need to deliver a range of digital solutions that enhance safety and data accuracy. The decision to focus on digital products and services makes strategic and commercial sense, helping usher in a new era of maritime navigation, which will be powered by digital innovations,” he added.

Richard Bell, Assistant Director for UK Technical Services Navigation at the MCA, commented:

“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. This announcement by UKHO represents a clear vision for the future of navigation, which will need to be supported by official equipment and data suited to the needs of the different maritime end users.

“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,” said Bell.

In 2019, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced a similar to plan to [transition away from paper charts](#) and move exclusively to electronic navigation charts by January 2025.

Tags:

[charts](#) [electronic navigation](#) [Navigation](#) [ukho](#)

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Electronic navigational chart displayed on an Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) on NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson. Photo credit: NOAA

NOAA Kicks Off Transition Exclusively to Electronic Navigation Charts

[Mike Schuler](#)

Total Views: 10774 🔥

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The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is set to begin implementing its sunset plan for paper nautical charts as it transitions exclusively to electronic navigation charts.

NOAA announced its Sunsetting of Raster Nautical Charts in the Federal Register in 2019, which detailed a 5-year plan to gradually end production and maintenance of NOAA traditional paper and raster nautical chart products beginning this year.

The electronic charts, NOAA says, are easier to update and maintain, keeping mariners safer with up-to-date information on marine hazards.

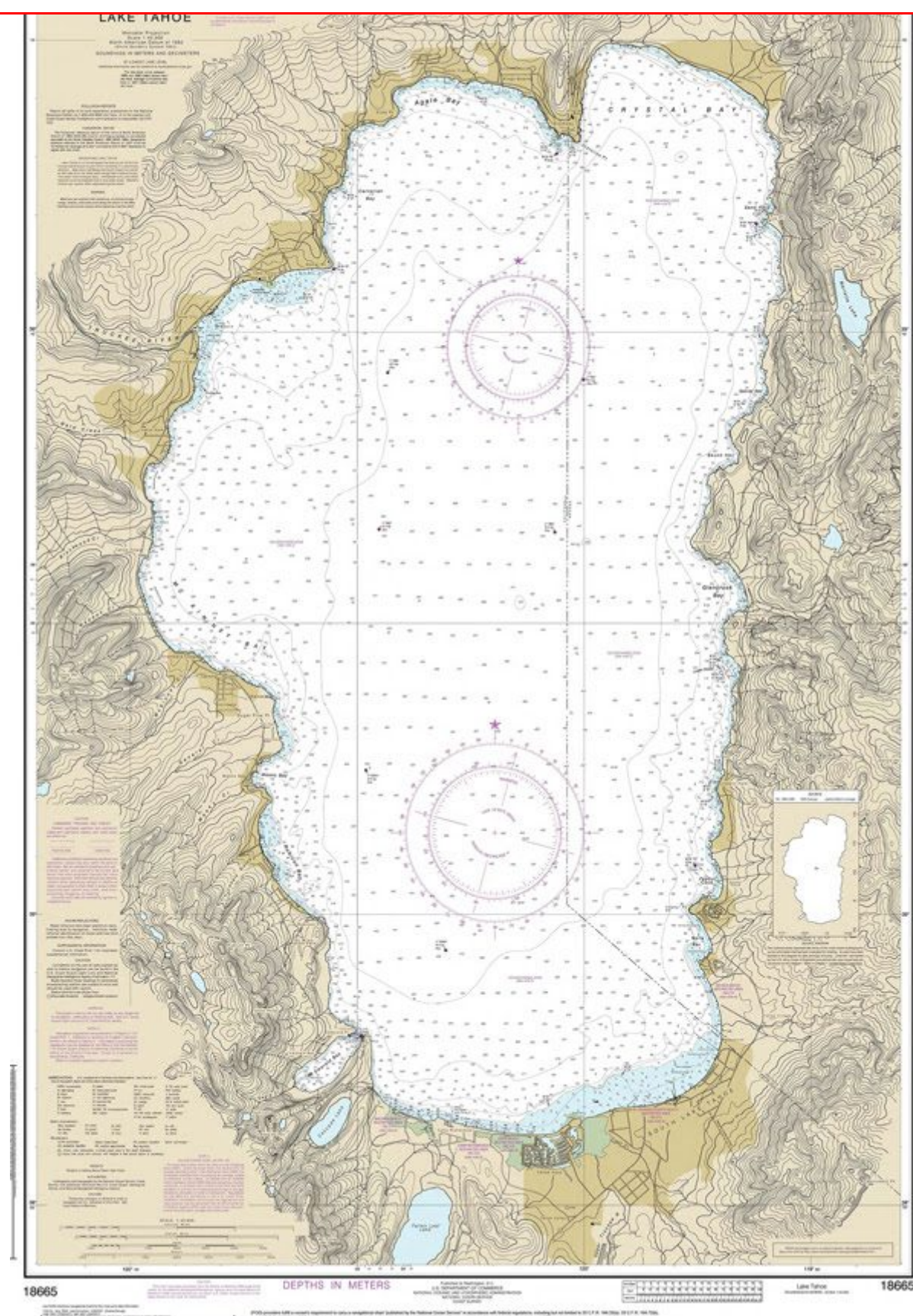
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Chart 18665 of Lake Tahoe is the first traditional paper chart to be fully supplanted by an electronic navigational chart as part of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Raster Sunset Plan. (NOAA)

The transition is kicking off with the cancelling of paper chart 18665 of Lake Tahoe, becoming the first traditional paper chart to be fully supplanted by an electronic chart. Mariners will be officially notified of the chart's cancellation in the U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners. A note in the lower left corner of the chart will also state that it is the last paper edition and it will be canceled six months later on August 26.

NOAA and its predecessor agencies have produced paper nautical charts of the U.S. Coasts, its territorial waters, and the Great Lakes since the mid-1800s. Electronic navigational charts (ENCs) have been produced by NOAA since 1993.

The International Maritime Organization now mandates that all large commercial vessels on international voyages use ENCs, and the U.S. Coast Guard has also allowed regulated commercial vessels on domestic voyages to use ENCs in lieu of paper charts since 2016.

According to NOAA, use of ENCs surpassed paper nautical charts in 2011.

Over the next several years, NOAA will continue to announce the cancellation of additional paper charts, initially based on volume of sales or downloads, and in regions with improved NOAA electronic navigational chart coverage.