



MCA accepts Mini-ECDIS for Navigation

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has recently produced Marine Guidance Note **MGN 262 (M+F)** relating to the acceptance of the Mini-ECDIS standard as being suitable for navigation equipment on certain UK registered vessels.

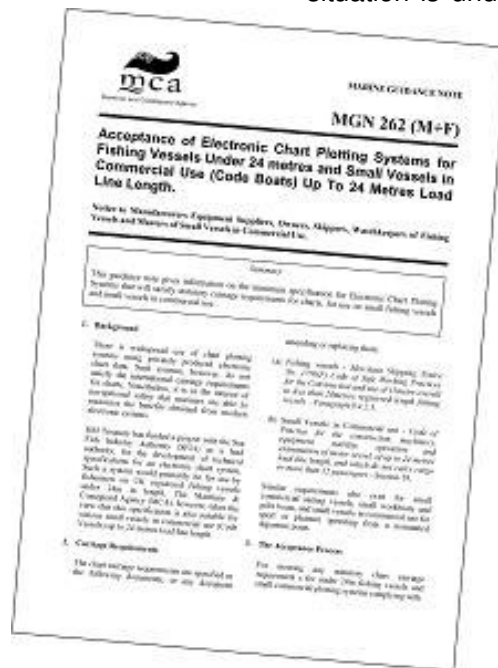
The new Mini-ECDIS standard from Seafish is directed towards fishing vessels and work boats and unlike the full-blown ECDIS, allows the use of computer hardware and display screens which are appropriate both in size and cost for use on smaller vessels.

"The standards for navigation equipment on larger ocean-going SOLAS vessels are inappropriate for smaller vessels because of the lack of space in a cramped wheelhouse", said Dr. Steve Taylor, marine IT consultant to Seafish. "This standard is intended to plug that gap and is suitable for use on fishing vessels and workboats where space is at a premium.

In its Marine Guidance Note the MCA also requires that **"Only electronic charts (ENCs/RNCs) authorised or issued by a national hydrographic office are acceptable for use in such systems"**. For backup the MGN allows the use of either paper charts or electronic systems which **'provide sufficient up-to-date electronic navigational chart information and navigational facilities for the vessel to navigate to a safe haven'**.

The non-mandatory MGN applies to United Kingdom Fishing Vessels and Small Vessels in Commercial Use (Code Boats) Up To 24 metres load line length.

'Plotters are an important navigational tool for fishermen, providing vital information at the touch of a button. However, there are many different types of plotting systems on smaller vessels, and before this initiative there was no appropriate standard for these systems', said Neil Murray, Head of Kingfisher Information Systems. 'The situation is undesirable in terms of safety at sea; it is clearly preferable if plotters comply with a minimum standard in terms of operation, accuracy and reliability'



Seafish developed the Mini-ECDIS standard, following a period of extensive consultation with manufacturers who have provided feedback on preferred options for the new standard.

Neil Murray continues, 'Our partners on this project have been MCA and the UK Hydrographic Office and we all have the common aim of improving navigational and operational safety, by encouraging the use of approved electronic navigational equipment.

For more information contact Kingfisher Information Services on 01482 327837 or visit the website: www.mini-ecdis.org.uk