

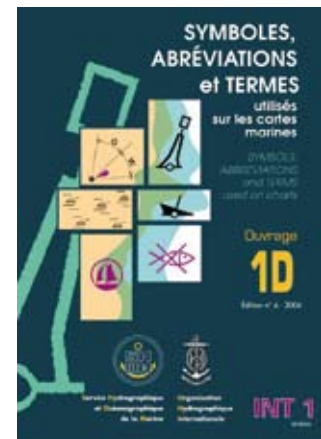
THE NAUTICAL CHART

In brief...

SHOM exercises the role of national hydrographic authority on behalf of the French government. It issues and keeps up to date official nautical documents, including nautical charts. These charts meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS) and the international convention on the Safety Of Life At Sea (SOLAS) ratified by France.

A standardized representation of the maritime space

Nautical charts are produced in accordance with ISO 9001-2000 certified processes and organization. Information is represented in such a way as to meet the requirements of seafarers and is based on standards and practices established under the auspices of the IHO (International Hydrographic Organization). There are several printed and electronic variants (C, L, G and Z charts). Through cooperative agreements between hydrographic services, data and copies of films can be exchanged and co-production or reproduction arrangements can be reached so as to avoid duplication of effort.



The 10 booklet presents the international symbols used on charts [downloadable free of charge]

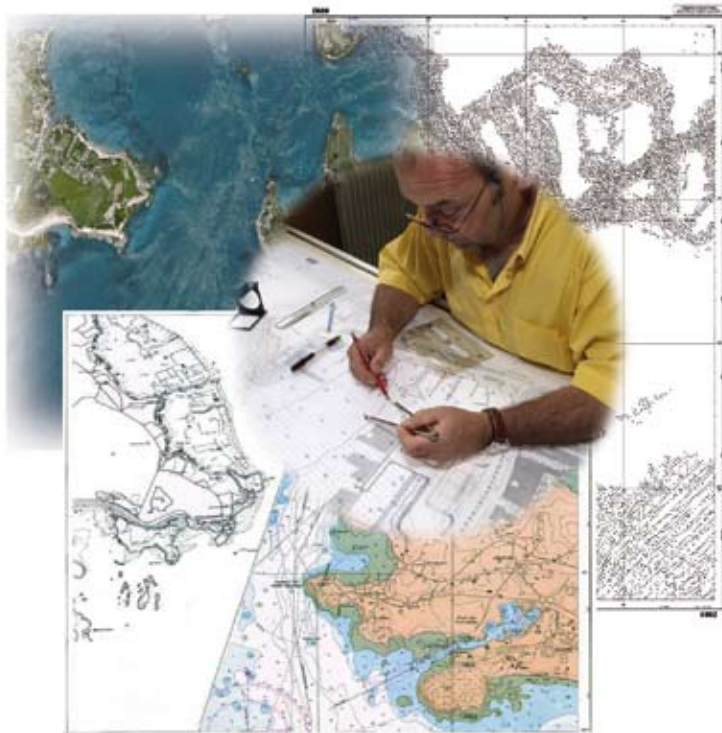
Organization and expertise

SHOM continually collects and processes the information required for navigational purposes and distributes it in the form of nautical charts.

The nautical charts are produced by expert cartographers who analyze, select and compile the data to transform it into a graphical summary: the charted data.

The cartographers use a wide variety of detailed information in accordance with maritime regulations: bathymetric databases, wrecks, buoys and beacons, underwater cables etc. They also benefit from the support of nautical experts, geophysicists, hydrographers and a specialized facility that processes airborne and satellite images.

The production process combines human expertise and the use of sophisticated computer resources. The nautical chart portfolio is regularly updated to integrate the latest data (new hydrographic surveys, new regulations, changes to buoyage systems or port infrastructure etc.) and to make it compliant with current international standards.



History

1693

Publication of the “Neptune François” collection of nautical charts



XIX century

The Beautemps-Beaupré's contribution (1766 – 1854)



1921

Creation of the International Hydrographic Bureau, which was to become the IHO in 1970

1970's onwards

International standards for nautical charts



1998 onwards

SHOM's first Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC)



Updating of charts

Nautical charts are re-printed when necessary. Once in force, the new edition supersedes the previous edition. Between two editions, any new information critical to navigational safety is included in instructions or graphic annexes issued by the weekly notice to mariners group (NtM) (see NtM product sheet).



Example of a graphical annex type correction issued by the GAN

Chart variants

C charts: standard nautical charts in unfolded paper format.

L charts: these charts contain exactly the same information as C charts. They are printed on a waterproof medium and come in folded form. They are printed at regular intervals (on average every two years) updated to include any corrections that have appeared in the NtM.

G charts: in addition to the standard information shown on nautical charts, they show the nature of the seabed (sediment).

Z charts: in addition to the standard information shown on nautical charts, they show exercise areas used by the armed forces.

ENC: Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) are the representation in digital form of SHOM's nautical charts.



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