

BACKUP TO AN ECDIS SYSTEM

The role of back up to an ECDIS system is defined very clearly by the IMO in MSC resolution 232 (82). It is not a requirement that two independent ECDIS stems are fitted. This would mean that route planning for instance would have to be done on both systems if they were independent. However, IMO makes it clear that the back up system should take over the route plan originally performed on the ECDIS for example. Route planning, presentation of chart information, route monitoring, updating etc is carried out on the main ECDIS and it is correct that a data link provides that this information should be passed continuously to the back up device such that in the case of a failure of the main ECDIS system the back up system is reasonably up to date with the route etc.

This is how it is meant to be. Those who fit two ECDIS systems without the data interconnection would have to route plan twice and route monitor twice etc - not the intention. In summary the back up device does not need to be a complete ECDIS just a subset that will meet some minimum requirements if the main ECDIS fails. Appendix 6 of the Resolution sets out the back up requirements.

It's a sad fact that many existing mariners are going to be presented with a layered ENC display which is confusing if you have not been trained and it is recommended that anyone who has not been on a training course for ECDIS should do so. The recent grounding of the CFL Performer is a good example of lack of training and it is quite clear from the formal safety assessment carried out by the Norwegians that is safer to use an ECDIS than paper.

The danger of Viruses must also be considered. Hopefully, your ECDIS systems are not connected to the internet or other virus generating receiving equipment. The only thing that should be put into an ECDIS is an approved encrypted CD from a reputable agent.