

KISH P & I LOSS PREVENTION CIRCULAR KPI-LP-160-2014
(Familiarization with the ECDIS & the Required Workmanship)

► **Why this is a must:**

The ship may leave port in only a few hours; you may be due to be on watch and it may be dark, but you will need to master all these systems to navigate the vessel safely. You must be familiar with everything before the Pilot and Master rely on your expertise as they start to conn the vessel. However, the ECDIS you received your generic training on, or even the various ECDIS systems you have sailed with in the past, may be very different from that on the ship you are joining. At the moment, there are more than 30 different ECDIS manufacturers. And each manufacturer will offer many variations of models and software upgrades that will differ in operational aspects.

Being competent in the use of safety tools, including ECDIS, is a key part of a navigator's duty – and also a legal responsibility

No matter how good your ECDIS basic training is, when joining a new ship, you may come to the bridge for the first time and be faced with a fully integrated navigation system that is nothing like

the one you trained on. Obviously, that is a long way from ideal. Here, members of The Nautical Institute Seagoing Correspondence Group offer some suggestions on the importance of ECDIS familiarization and how to achieve it, both ashore and once you have joined the vessel.

► **What do you need to know:**

There are a number of ways to become familiar with onboard ECDIS, and ways in which the company can assist with this. The Nautical Institute, in collaboration with the wider industry, has identified a list of tasks which need to be addressed when familiarizing yourself with ECDIS along with other useful articles.

In addition to the navigator's individual need to be fully familiar with the onboard ECDIS, the company also has a responsibility within the ISM Code (section 6) to ensure their navigators are familiar with ECDIS. Masters share this responsibility too, on both a corporate and personal basis.



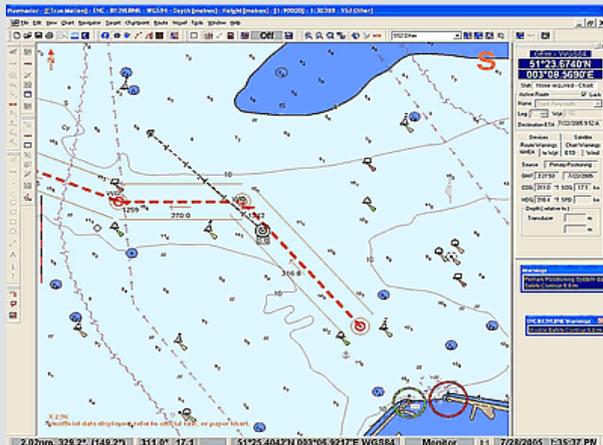
► **Read the manual:**

The most obvious process of familiarization with onboard ECDIS functions is to read the onboard User Manual. It is important to be aware of these manuals and their contents, but some are more useful than others. Companies should consider summarizing key tasks (in accordance with the industry recommendations) if necessary. Some companies have identified critical operations, such as setting Under Keel Clearance or Man Overboard, and have documented these procedures on a

laminated card attached to the equipment.

► **Type-specific training:**

Many manufacturers provide 'type-specific' training at various locations around the world and these offer excellent opportunities to learn from specialist instructors. However, sending officers for type-specific training can be harder for fleets which have a wide range of ECDIS models, and officers will still require a brief period of onboard familiarization when dealing with ship-specific installations.



► **Internet/ computer-based training (CBT):**

Many manufacturers have developed familiarization guides for specific ECDIS models, while specialist training providers have worked in conjunction with them to establish Internet-based or computer-based familiarization guides too. These tools can be excellent if they are specific to the hardware/software onboard, and can be used prior to joining a vessel or, at the very least, prior to assuming watch once onboard.

► **Extended hand-over:**

Many companies recognize the requirements of ECDIS familiarization and arrange extended hand-over periods. Such extended periods can last from a single day to an entire voyage, and allow a joining officer to become familiar with the features of the ECDIS, along with other safety critical systems.

► **Set up some scenarios:**

Practice scenarios are a useful tool to

encourage effective ECDIS familiarization. Crews outline a range of scenarios that require an in-depth understanding of the onboard ECDIS and challenge new and existing navigators to use the ECDIS to address such scenarios in an effective way.

One Master writes "I have created a set of training modules which have been adopted by the company I work for and used fleet wide. They include practical exercises in familiar circumstances that continually increase in complexity and cover all aspects. Officers perform them on watch over a month and we can see the level of interest increasing as the exercises become more challenging."

► **Choose your champion:**

Some companies appoint "ECDIS champions" within their fleets. These "champions" can be navigators of any rank, and might be specific to a single ship or work across the whole fleet.

They are given in-depth training in specific ECDIS models and versions, and are instructed to work closely with all officers to ensure that they are familiar with all ECDIS functions and

capable of demonstrating competence to the Master and, potentially, inspectors.

► **Looking to the future:**

Mariners from around the world have pleaded with the industry to make the process of familiarization with ECDIS, and other technology, easier and more effective. The Nautical Institute is working towards this by encouraging manufacturers to provide "familiarization guides" for ECDIS in the same format as the industry recommended checklists, and for companies to demand such guides as part of the purchasing process. The Nautical Institute has also proposed to the IMO a future requirement for an S-Mode, or standard mode of operation, for all navigation displays that would require all manufacturers to provide a one button operation to revert any navigation display to a default display. This display would have a default menu system where critical functions are controlled by a standard interface device.