

IMO CHARTS A DIGITAL COURSE AT SEA

Next-Generation Navigation, Digital VHF &
NAVDAT Set to Transform Global Shipping



 **MARINER'S
UPDATE**
COMPLIANCE WITH SIMPLICITY

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Navigation & Communications Sub-Committee (NCSR 13) Wraps Up — Here's What Changes for Ships

The IMO's Navigation, Communications, Search & Rescue Sub-Committee met 22–26 June 2026, pushing forward three big shifts at sea: next-gen electronic charts, a slow move to digital VHF, and a new digital safety broadcast system. Most items now head to MSC 112 in December 2026 for approval.

■ Next-Gen ECDIS (S-100)

Draft connectivity rules finalized so ships and shore can exchange live chart data. New standards apply from **1 Jan 2029**; ships can use either old or new standards from 1 Jan 2026–2029.

■ VHF Goes Digital

A phased shift from analogue to digital VHF voice was agreed. Safety channels (06, 13, 16, 70, 75, 76, AIS-SART) stay untouched throughout. Full rollout isn't expected until the 2030s–40s.

2025 - 28
BUILD TRANSITION
SCHEME

2028 - 31
FRAMEWORK &
STANDARDS

2032 - 45
ROLLOUT &
EQUIPMENT SWAP

■ NAVDAT — Digital Safety Broadcasts

A roadmap update for NAVDAT, the future digital replacement/companion to NAVTEX, broadcasting weather, navigation warnings and SAR info over MF/HF. No fixed timeline yet — rolls out gradually alongside NAVTEX.

■ Quick Hits

- EPIRBs: draft rules add optional two-way comms via Galileo Return Link.
- R-Mode receivers: backup positioning standard finalized — works even if GNSS is jammed.
- GNSS augmentation (DFMC SBAS): new performance standards now in development.
- LRIT: coastal states to get ship-tracking data free of charge (in principle, approved).