



THE UNITED KINGDOM  
HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE

FACT SHEET  
**ADMIRALTY VECTOR  
CHART SERVICE (AVCS)**

# ADMIRALTY VECTOR CHART SERVICE (AVCS)

**This Fact Sheet anticipates any questions you may have regarding AVCS, if you require further assistance, please contact your UKHO account manager.**

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## Question

### What is AVCS and how does it benefit shipping companies?

#### Answer

The Admiralty Vector Chart Service (AVCS) provides comprehensive, official worldwide ENC coverage.

By combining its own produced ENCs with others from the world's national hydrographic offices, the UKHO has created a single SOLAS-compliant source of ENC coverage for use in ECDIS (Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems), that is comprehensive, official and global.

AVCS is helping the maritime community overcome historic barriers to the adoption of ECDIS, by offering the mariner usable and effective digital navigation, delivering significant gains in terms of efficiency, economy and, above all, safety.

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## Question

### Why choose AVCS over unofficial alternatives?

#### Answer

To comply with IMO regulations an ECDIS system must be loaded with ENCs if it is to be used for primary navigation. If an ECDIS is loaded with unofficial private vector data (in any format) then the ECDIS is operating in ECS mode and can only be used to assist navigation. In this case paper charts must continue to be used as the primary means of navigation.

*AVCS is 100% compliant, 100% official, and 100% future-proof.*

## Question

### Why is AVCS better than official alternatives?

#### Answer

AVCS offers the most extensive ENC coverage available from any one supplier. It includes ENCs which are not available through any other service. This coverage is key for any shipping company with vessels trading internationally and is not available from any other ENC provider.

These folios are available in three defined types (Transit, Regional and Port), and they provide customers with the best possible combination of flexibility of coverage, budgetary predictability, and ultimately peace of mind. Such folio services are not available from any other ENC provider.

AVCS also provides very flexible licensing to minimise chart costs. AVCS customers need only buy the ENCs they need when they need them. Chart access is provided for periods of as little as 3 months up to 1 year according to the geographic area and vessels operating requirements and priced accordingly. The vessel carries all the ENCs onboard.

Chart permits can be requested at any time via an Admiralty chart agent and supplied on board in minutes.

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## Question

### What criteria should customers consider in choosing a digital supplier?

#### Answer

The following issues should be considered when selecting a digital chart service from any supplier:

- Is the service carriage compliant?
- Is it focused on the required routes?
- Does it offer comprehensive coverage?
- Does it offer flexible buying options?

- Does it offer managed coverage (folios) at no extra cost?
  - Are new ENC's supplied automatically, allowing charts to be added to the licence immediately?
  - Does the service offer remote (Internet) updating?
  - Does it offer flexible licensing options – 3, 6, 9 or 12 months?
  - Is it supported by a comprehensive catalogue which includes a complete series of navigational products?
  - Does it include Temporary & Preliminary Notices to Mariners information?
  - Is it available through normal channels for navigational products?
  - Does it offer a 'try before you buy' free period?
- AVCS does all of these things!

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## Question

### Does AVCS offer 100% global coverage?

#### Answer

Not currently. It does however, offer the most comprehensive ENC coverage available.

Global ENC coverage is still maturing – in some areas it falls short of what is ideal for prudent navigation. Some such areas fall on major trade routes, and are significant to many vessels. Therefore, vessels navigating in such areas will need paper chart coverage to comply with SOLAS Regulations, with other digital charts possibly being used to aid navigation.

AVCS offers the widest coverage available and maximises the chances of being able to use a single chart service for the full voyage, cutting the cost of maintaining multiple services while also reducing training requirements and the potential for confusion.

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## Question

### How does AVCS updating compare with other updating services?

#### Answer

Most services provide access to ENC updates over the internet; as well as weekly updates.

The Admiralty Updating Service provides access to Notices to Mariners (NMs), New Editions and New Charts (new ENC's).

Customers can get all available new ENC's online via the internet, without ever receiving a CD. We do, however, recommend occasionally installing an update CD, simply because it will contain cumulative update information for all ENC's worldwide, ensuring that no updates are missed, and so maximising safety.

Many flag states have additional requirements related to training, and some still do not allow paperless operation. Panama, for example, requires paper charts to be carried as backup on vessels using ECDIS as their primary navigation tool.

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## Question

### How does AVCS pricing compare with alternatives?

#### Answer

AVCS pricing is generally comparable with that of competitors such as Primar, on a more or less like-for-like basis.

In some areas, AVCS sometimes offers more comprehensive coverage, at a marginally higher price. The difference in price is generally in the order of 1-3% with the difference in coverage perhaps 10-15%. In other words, a typical scenario will see a competitor providing 85% of AVCS coverage for 98% of the AVCS price.

The major selling point of AVCS is its folios, which on many routes offer significant savings over buying ENC's individually, particularly given that updates are provided free of charge within the license period.



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