

## NOAA Paper Charts

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey expanded "print-on-demand" (POD) chart production and distribution system now has 25 certified chart printing agents and gives them the flexibility to offer different color palettes, various papers, a cleaner margin, and a range of services. Certified vendors can be found at: [https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/print\\_agents.html](https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/print_agents.html)

NOAA's paper nautical charts are printed when the customer orders them -- or "on demand." The information on the charts is still maintained by NOAA, and the charts are corrected with Notices to Mariners up to the week of purchase.

The expansion of the paper chart printing program will lead to new options for all who purchase U.S. nautical charts. As a premium service, for example, print agents are authorized to customize charts with user-specified overlays.

With more chart printing agents, we hope to encourage competition and ensure fully up-to-date charts are widely available. Buyers can shop around and find different types of paper, or choose between traditional or new color palettes. Our printing agents can offer delivery or in-shop service, and customers can have their navigation track lines or other information printed as overlays on their chart if they wish.

All charts sold by NOAA-certified printing partners are NOAA charts and fully meet USCG navigational requirements.

For the last 150 years, the federal government produced nautical charts using lithographic printing presses. Although chart-making techniques advanced from the 19th century's delicate hand-applied etchings on copper plates to a process that is now completely computer-based, the system remained based on printing large volumes of charts, then selling them from stock for years. Charts for sale were gradually more and more outdated until a new edition was printed. The print on demand system allows the changes made by Coast Survey cartographers to reach mariners much faster.

Coast Survey continues to examine applications from additional companies wishing to become certified as NOAA chart printing agents. The examination process includes testing of applicants' sample charts, to make sure they stand up to normal onboard usage conditions.

The paper charts sold by the NOAA-certified printing agents meet carriage requirements for ships covered by Safety of Life at Sea regulations, specified in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

