

NOAA On-line Chart Catalog Help Documentation

Overview

The On-line Chart Catalog web pages provide the public with information about, and access to, NOAA navigation products. These products include paper and digital charts through the “Paper/RNC Catalog” page and Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) through the “ENC Catalog” page. These are graphical interfaces that allow you to view the outline of the area covered by each product. Selecting a product by clicking the mouse on an outline provides basic information about the product and also provides links to more detailed information. You may also see a list of similar products that cover that location.

As a convenience for downloading, Raster Navigational Charts (RNC) and ENCs have been grouped by geographic regions. The “Download Files by State” page provides access to the most current products available for each state. The “Download Files by CGD” provides the same information grouped by US Coast Guard District.

In addition, there are text-only pages that provide direct access to the products available for download. If you know the specific product number you are interested in you may find that these pages are quicker and simpler to use. These pages also provide the state and Coast Guard District product groupings.

The Map Display Pages

The graphical interface for the On-line Product Catalog uses Google Maps for the background display. The product outlines appear on top of this map. For performance reasons and to simplify the appearance of the map, normally not all of the product outlines are displayed at once. Showing all the outlines would result in a cluttered display making it hard to identify individual products. Instead, only products that are a “good” size for the area displayed by the map are shown. As you change the area displayed, some previously hidden product outlines will appear and others will be hidden.

Also, on the subject of performance, like other Google Maps applications these pages perform their work in your browser. As a result, the speed and responsiveness of the application is very dependent on the performance of your computer and the browser you choose to use. Our testing has shown that the Firefox, Safari and Chrome browsers generally provide the best performance with these pages. Internet Explorer 7 and lower may exhibit sluggish performance. If you continue to experience performance problems we recommend that you work with the text version of the catalog.

Parts of the Page

Most of this discussion relates to the “Paper/RNC Catalog” and “ENC Catalog” pages. The “Download Files by State” and “Download Files by CGD” have a simpler interface and have many, but not all of the features described here.

The screenshot shows the NOAA Office of Coast Survey website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for "Paper/RNC Catalog", "ENC Catalog", "Download Files by State", and "Download Files by CGD". A "Tabbed browsing for different products" callout points to these tabs. Below the navigation bar is a search box labeled "Search the map" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search box are map type selection buttons: "Map", "Satellite", and "Hybrid", with a "Google Map Type Tool" callout pointing to them. The main map area shows a coastal region with various chart panels overlaid. A "Selected Location" callout points to a specific area on the map. A "Selected chart highlighted yellow (underline indicates selectable)" callout points to a yellow-highlighted chart panel in the right-hand column. Below the map, there is a "Google maps background display" callout. At the bottom of the map area, there is a "Metadata location" callout pointing to the chart's metadata information.

Right Hand Column

Chart Panel	Scale
12264	604 1:40000
12266	610 1:40000
<u>12263</u>	603 1:80000
<u>12280</u>	2974 1:200000
<u>13003</u>	2156 1:1200000

For Chart 12263
[View Online](#)
[Notice Listing](#)
[Download RNC](#)
[Order Paper Chart](#)

Select by Coordinate, enter decimal degrees, DM or DMS. Just numbers and spaces, no fancy characters please.
Lat: N
Lon: W

12263
Coastal Chart
Panel Title: Chesapeake Bay Cove Point to Sandy Point
Current Edition: 55 Print Date: 4/1/2007

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Navigation Controls

In the upper left corner you will see the standard Google Map navigation controls. These allow you to zoom in and out on the map and move (pan) around on the map. Clicking the arrow buttons moves the view of the map in that direction. The button in the center of the arrows returns you to the starting map area. Below these buttons is the zoom control which allows you to see a smaller area of the map (zoom in) or view a larger area (zoom out). As you slide the control toward the “+” you zoom in; as you slide toward the “-” you zoom out. If you have a mouse with a wheel you may also zoom in and out by moving the wheel when the mouse cursor is over the map display.

Search Box

To the right of the Navigation Controls there is a Search Box that allows you to enter geographically oriented searches. This search can be used to place the map display on a

particular named place such as “Silver Spring, MD”. The results of the search depend on the area displayed by the map. For example, if you search on “harbor” the results will be the geographically closest match for “harbor”. If you were really interested in Boston Harbor it would be best to be more specific and enter “Boston Harbor”. Often adding the state on the search gives better results. The geographic search can be very useful when you have the map display centered on an area you are interested in and you do a general search such as “marina”, “food”, “hotel”, etc. Note that the first search result provides the coordinate used to select the location of interest.

Map Type

The set of buttons to the right of the Search Box control how the background maps from Google are displayed. The options are “Map” for a standard map like display; “Satellite” for a photographic background (note that these are for reference only and are not to be used for navigation) and “Hybrid” which combines features of the other two options.

Right Hand Column

To the right of the map display is an area that shows status and product information. At the very top you may see red text displayed while the application is busy performing an operation such as loading data or moving the map display. Its best to wait until this text is removed before attempting any other operations.

Below this area is a link to this Help information followed by a checkbox labeled “Show all Charts/ENCs” depending on the particular product page you are viewing. This gives you the option of forcing the application to draw all of the product outlines on the map. You may want to select this once you have reached the area of interest in order to access all of the product information for the point you have selected. It is recommended that you normally leave this unchecked for performance and clarity of the map display.

One way to obtain product information is to use the mouse to click on the map display. A marker is placed on the map where you click and in the right hand column you will see the marker symbol and the “Selected Point” link above the coordinate values of the selected point. If there are products that fall on the selected location you will see a list of them below the coordinate values. See the following example for the Paper/RNC Catalog page, the ENC Catalog Page has very similar features:

At the place where the mouse was clicked, a marker appears on the map display. To the right beneath the coordinate display is a list of charts that contain that location. The chart number, 12263, is highlighted and the outline of this chart is highlighted on the map display. The chart numbers below 12263 are shown as hyperlinks indicating that clicking on that number will select the chart and highlight its outline on the map. Notice that chart numbers 12264 and 11266 do not appear as hyperlinks. These charts are “hidden” in the current display because their outlines are too small to be displayed on this map area. You may access information about it by selecting the “Show All Chart” checkbox; remember to uncheck this box before changing the map display area to avoid performance problems.

Notice below the list of charts is a set of hyperlinks that direct you to additional information about the selected chart. For the Paper/RNC page this includes viewing the chart on-line, viewing the Notice to Mariners listing for the chart, downloading the selected RNC and ordering information for the paper chart.

On the right near the bottom of the page there is a place to enter a coordinate value then press the “Select Lat/Lon” button. The map will act as if the mouse had been clicked on that location. The map display will be centered at the location and any charts that fall on that location will be listed. The coordinate input may be in decimal degrees (however use positive values and indicate south and west using the drop-down selections), degrees and minutes or degrees minutes and seconds. You should separate the values with just spaces and do not attempt to put in dashes or special symbols. You can include a decimal value only on the least significant set of numbers.

Validate Coordinate Inputs

	Template	Example
Decimal Degrees (DD)	DDD.DDD	100.508
Degrees Minutes (DM)	DD MM.MMM	100 30.508
Degrees Minutes Seconds (DMS)	DD MM SS.SSS	100 30 30.5

D – degree value
M – minute value
S – second value