

Annual Notice to Mariners and other Government Publications – Capt. Geoff

In the spring, I wrote an article on Notices to Shipping and Notices to Mariners, and using them to keep your charts up to date. I want to briefly touch on the other Nautical Publications that Canadian Hydrographics and the Canadian Coast Guard produce. Many of these are available for free in PDF format.

Before Hydrographics put individual notices on the web, everyone got their Notices to Mariners via post, in a monthly edition. Written Monthly notices are still available, but many people now use the web.

Along with Monthly Notices to Mariners, there is an **Annual Notice to Mariners**. The majority of information is more applicable to commercial vessels, and not applicable to the Campbell River area (requesting ice breaker assistance, lighting of Oil and Gas exploration vessels, etc.) But amongst this you will find official information on Marine Mammal Guidelines and Marine Protected Areas, Private Buoy Regulations, Search and Rescue, Pollution Reports and Military notices (Which among other things talks of area Whiskey Gulf and handling of military flares found at sea or on a beach). The electronic edition is available for free at the same site where you retrieve notices to Mariners ([link on our website](#)).

Chart 1, is a booklet containing all the symbols used on Canadian Charts. Again, we have a link to the electronic copy on our website

The **List of lights** is, along with a list of all the navigation lights and their characteristics, where you can find definitions of light characteristics such as occulting and equal interval and how nominal range is calculated. It also outlines cautions in the use of Aids to Navigation. The electronic edition is available for free at the same site where you retrieve notices to Mariners ([link on our website](#)).

The **Sailing Directions** are primarily written for commercial navigators new to our area (such as from offshore – although most ships would also require a pilot in these waters). There used to be two Volumes of Sailing Directions, one for the North Coast and one for the South Coast. However they have recently been split into a General Information Volume and four regional volumes – with the South coast split at Campbell River into two volumes. The general volume introduces terminology used around the coast, such as deadheads, logbooms, etc. It also gives general information of Routes and Port Facilities. It shows things as diverse as diagrams of various commercial fishing methods to how kelp can mark dangerous rocks. The regional volumes contain aerial photos of ports and major marinas. There are also sections on making passages through the area, such as advice on passing through Seymour Narrows, including descriptions of the land and structures you would see. But again, this is for larger commercial vessels. There used to be a small craft guide available, but this seems to have been discontinued. The Sailing Directions are not available on line, but are available for purchase at CHS dealers.

Personally, rather than getting the official Sailing Directions, as a pleasure boater, I would opt instead for one of the cruising guides for the area. They are much more focused on pleasure craft, and contain details of small anchorages and marinas that won't be found in the Sailing Directions. You should be

able to find a selection at your favourite chandler. However, if you come across a second hand copy of the old South Coast directions for a good price, you may find it an interesting read.

Radio Aids to Marine Navigation. You should have a copy of this aboard if you have a VHF aboard. Along with identifying times and channels for broadcasts and Coast Guard station working channels (useful if you are heading to a new area), it contains radio calling procedures, the vessel traffic system and the like. Again, there is a link on our website.

If you want a deeper understanding of the waters around BC, I would strongly suggest **Oceanography of the British Columbia Coast**. It is out of print, but has been made available as a PDF download by DFO (link on our website).

Also available for download (links on our site) are two Canadian Marine weather books, a national overview and a BC regional guide.

There are numerous other government publications available, such as the Safe Boating Guide, Canadian Aids to Navigation System and others, some of which are linked from our website (<http://www.riplerocksquadron.com/>). Some are much more useful to pleasure craft operators than others, but they all answer specific questions and can be useful at times.

The Campbell River area is a great area to cruise, with hundreds of miles of channels and many inlets and bays to explore. But there are many rocks and other hazards, so knowing how to navigate (among other things) is critical. To learn more about how to safely navigate our area, consider taking our boating course. For more details, please visit our website at <http://www.riplerocksquadron.com>