

Chart datum (CD)

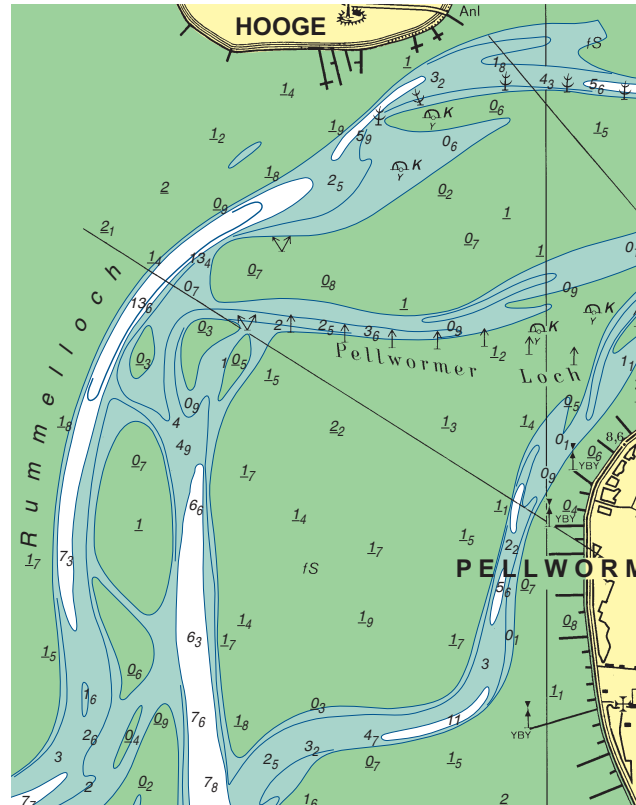
Nautical charts are indispensable for safe navigation. The depth data in our charts are minimum depths below which water levels can only fall after prolonged periods of offshore winds in the German Bight. All depths are referred to chart datum (CD), which is a uniform reference level. In accordance with International Hydrographic Organization regulations, all countries bordering the North Sea are using a common chart datum.

The Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) was the chart datum used in the German North Sea coastal waters until the end of 2004. In 2005, the Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) was adopted as the new chart datum. LAT is about 50 cm below the level of MLWS.

The chart datum in the Baltic Sea charts has not been changed because tides in the Baltic Sea are of negligible relevance to navigation.

Example of a chart referred to the old chart datum

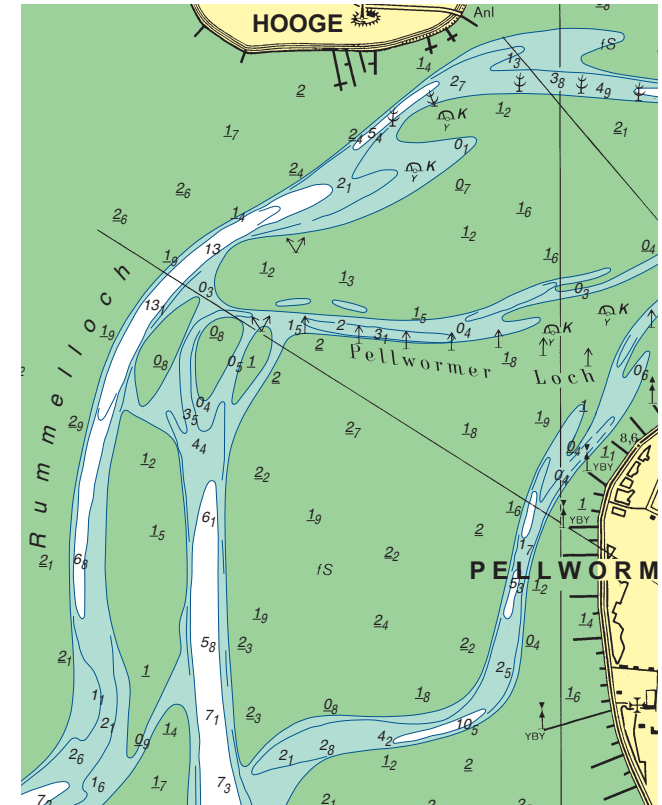
Old chart datum \cong MLWS (until 2004)



Depths (in metres) shown at their geographical position. Underlined figures are heights (in metres) above chart datum.

Example of a chart referred to the new chart datum

New chart datum \cong LAT (since 2005)



What changes do you need to consider?

- As the new chart datum is below the level of the former datum, North Sea charts now show shallower water depths. Charted heights are higher than before, which means that the tidal flats area shown in the charts has increased in size.
- The tide tables now show higher predicted heights (since 2005).

- The height of the water column does not change, but the shown depths appear shallower on the chart. Thus, you can continue navigating the usual routes.

How did the conversion take place?

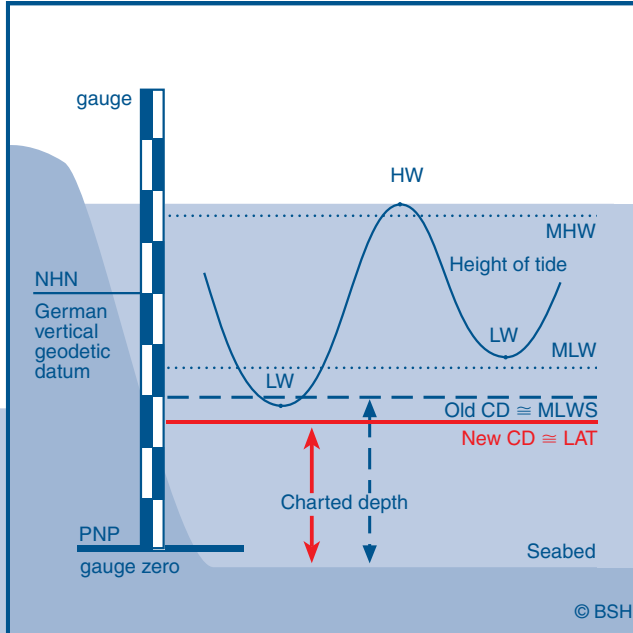
- In all New Editions of charts, we have changed the charted depths to LAT datum. All charts were converted between 2005 and 2013.
- Since 2005, the German Tide Tables have been changed completely to lowest astronomical tide (LAT) datum.
- Also the tidal signal stations have been changed to LAT since 2005.

LAT – Simple and user-friendly

The Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) provides the following navigational advantages:

1. Common chart datum in the entire North Sea
2. Common reference level for international charts
3. No negative values in tide tables
4. It is safer to navigate with depths based on LAT, because these depths can only occur after prolonged periods of offshore wind

Comparison of Mean Low Water Springs and LAT



Note: Official notifications on maximum allowed draughts and the BSH's water level forecasts will continue to be referenced to mean high water or mean low water.

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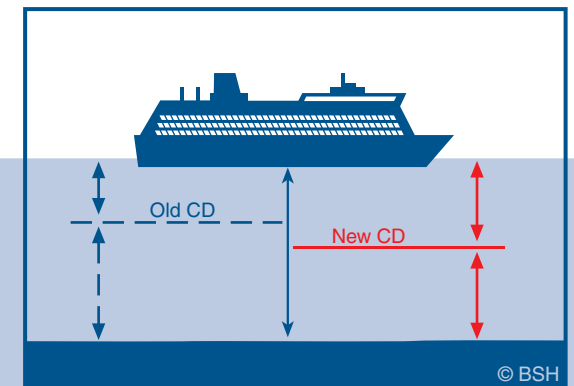
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Federal Ministry
of Transport and
Digital Infrastructure

Since 2005

New Chart Datum



The water depth remains