

Former *Annual New Zealand Notice to Mariners, No. 18*, published 1 July 2025 is cancelled. Additions and amendments to the former notice are indicated by sidelines.

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**Please also refer to:** Chapter 2 of the Admiralty publication *The Mariner's Handbook* (NP100).

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is one of a number of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) that are either fully operational or are in the process of being developed. This notice is specific to the use of GPS. If another GNSS such as GLONASS, Galileo, QZSS or BeiDou is being used, the user should seek advice as to the significance of the issues detailed below relative to that system.

### Status

1. The Global Positioning System (GPS) constellation is complete and available for civil use. GPS has a baseline constellation of 24 satellites, but up to 31 satellites may be operational at one time.
2. Mariners are advised to use GPS with the same caution they apply to other aids to navigation and to ensure that positions are checked by all available means.

### Derived Positions and Charts

3. GPS is referenced to the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) datum. This datum relates positions on the Earth's surface, or in space, to a mathematically defined figure, in this case the WGS84 spheroid (often referred to as an ellipsoid), which is used to approximate, or to model, the complex shape of the Earth. Its origin is the Earth's centre of mass and it provides positional reference throughout the world. WGS84 is referred to as a global, geocentric geodetic datum. The current New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 (NZGD2000) is an example of a geocentric datum that is closely aligned with WGS84.
4. Some local or regional geodetic datums, such as the obsolete New Zealand Geodetic Datum 1949 (NZGD49), use different, non-geocentric, spheroids which provide close approximation to the shape of the Earth over a selected area but become progressively less accurate beyond that region.

**It is essential** that the datum to which positions are referred is compatible with the datum used for the chart on which the position is to be plotted.

5. Charts referred to the WGS84 datum enable GPS positions derived in terms of WGS84 to be plotted directly. Note that the user must ensure that the GPS unit is set to display coordinates in terms of WGS84.

### Chart Scale

6. Positions plotted on, or extracted from a chart will contain an element of imprecision related to the scale of the chart. Thus, for example, at a scale of 1:500,000, a chart user who is capable of plotting to a precision of 0.2 millimetres must appreciate that this represents approximately 100 metres on the ground. However the same plotting precision on a chart at scale 1: 25,000 represents about five metres on the ground.