



Hydrographic Transfer Format

The Australian Hydrographic Service (AHS) officially adopted the Hydrographic Transfer Format (HTF) in February 2000. HTF is now the preferred distribution format for AHS sounding data and will be used by all Hydrographic Surveying Force (HSF) Units to render digital sounding data to the AHS as well as to exchange data between HSF Units.

Agencies are encouraged to use HTF when submitting hydrographic survey data to the AHS.

HTF is a particularly versatile format since it contains more than just sounding data. One feature of HTF is that the metadata about soundings is kept in the same file as the soundings. A fully-attributed HTF file should contain enough information to support nautical charting action. Metadata can include data quality polygons and survey boundaries.

HTF is an ASCII format in which the first 63+ lines of the file contain metadata about the survey, such as datums, positioning systems, depth sounders etc. The remainder of the file contains soundings and attributes. The sounding data is self-describing, with the first line of the sounding data defining the accompanying attributes. Thereafter each line of the file contains a sounding and attributes, until the end of file.

The international format for the exchange of hydrographic charting data is International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) S57. The AHS will now be working towards ensuring that future HTF versions will align with IHO standards for the exchange of hydrographic survey data.

HTF Builder

HTF Builder is a software program developed by the AHS to assist manipulating ASCII sounding files into Hydrographic Transfer Format (HTF). The program automates many of the re-formatting and metadata functions required to convert an ASCII file to HTF. It incorporates routines to check if a HTF file is compliant with the HTF specification, and to visualise HTF soundings on the screen. Recent functionality-improvements include the ability to break output files into user-defined file sizes, and to re-tide HTFs with single or multi-zone tidal model.

HTF Builder, HTF specifications and test datasets are freely-available for download from the AHS website www.hydro.gov.au/tools/tools.htm

HYDROGRAPHIC TRANSFER FORMAT

