

# Getting Started

This manual is somewhat outdated. It is essential to read the summaries of updates to versions 4.8.8, 5.0.0 and 5.2.0 mentioned below, to understand how OpenCPN works nowadays. [OpenCPN Website](#)  
[Download Page](#)

## OpenCPN 5.2.4

OpenCPN version 5.2.4 was released on October 18, 2020. It is a bug fixing release with some graphical and user interface improvements.

## OpenCPN 5.2.0

OpenCPN version 5.2.0 was released on July 15 , 2020. A summary of the changes is available <https://opencpn.org/OpenCPN/about/ver520.html>

## OpenCPN 5.0.0

OpenCPN version 5.0.0 was released on March 23, 2019. A summary of new features as well as retired features is available <https://opencpn.org/OpenCPN/about/ver500.html> or as an [Ebook .epub](#) . Using this document together with the old 4.8.8 manual it's possible to gain information on (almost) all features in 5.0.0. A rewrite of this manual is required to fully document the new version.

Required reading YachtValhalla's PDF Tutorial for the new user starting up [Exploring OpenCPN \(v5\).pdf](#)

## OpenCPN 4.8.8

Welcome! This is the Documentation for the OpenCPN 4.8.8 stable release. There are still areas that are not fully updated, however an excellent summary of [Improvements since v4.8.0](#) is available. It is very easy and intuitive to get started with OpenCPN. The different menus, including the clever context-sensitive right-click menu, make it likely that you will find what you need. The program contains a lot of options to fit users with special demands and hardware.


Required reading YachtValhalla's PDF Tutorial for the new user starting up [Exploring OpenCPN \(v4\)](#)

## HELP, FAQ & OpenCPN User Manual

The most frequently asked questions by new users, seen in the [OpenCPN Forum](#), are, in most cases, already answered in the **OpenCPN USER MANUAL**. If you are going to use this program for actual navigation, you need to read through this document to fully understand the scope of the program, as well as all the details.

If you have difficulties finding a particular subject, please **use your browser's built-in search**

**ability**, often called just “**Find**”. This works best using the stable release which is all on one web page.

In the Program “OpenCPN” Press  and then the **Help Tab** to access the built-in version of this document. The installed documentation will open in your default browser. **This is the first place to go for help, read the documentation please.**

## Android Opencpn Manual App

Download the OpenCPN User Manual App from Playstore, and run it directly. It has an embedded eBook reader, so no need for lithium. The Playstore app is here:

- <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.opencpn.opencpnusermanual&hl=en>

## User Manual Download

HTML files and directories. Uncompress into a new folder and use your browser to access the help files:

- [OpenCPN-4.8.2.7z \(doc482.7z\) 20mb](#)

Epub Book Reader can be used Calibre Reader or Firefox Epub Extension:

- [OpenCPN-4-8-6-Sept-18-18-compress-lossy-2-70pc.epub mb \(16mb\)](#)

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- [OpenCPN-4-8-6-Sept-18-18-medium-compressed.pdf \(25mb\)](#)

The other way to download/mirror the html help files is to use [HTTrack Website Copier](#). Download it and make mirror a copy of the current manual to your computer. Don't forget too add filters so that file links are not downloaded! See [FAQ](#) For example, add file filters for `/*.zip`, `/*.7z` and any other linked files you do not want downloaded.


## To help you get started:

- Links in *italic* are internal to this document. Placing your cursor over a link will cause the link to be underlined.
- External links may be **Bold**, Underlined, or in the “`http://...`” format and need an Internet connection.
- **Marks** and **Waypoints** may have somewhat different definitions; however, in this document they generally mean the same thing.




## Copy Settings File & Log File to Clipboard

If you encounter difficulties in using OpenCPN you may be asked to submit your **Settings File** and/or your **Log File**. This data will help the developers to diagnose your problem.

To locate these files, in the program "OpenCPN" Press  and then the **About Tab** and two tabs will show as shown below:

Copy Settings File to Clipboard	Copy Log File to Clipboard	Donate
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Use these tabs for an easy way to copy these files, and then paste the clipboard contents to a document and attach it to a Cruiser's Forum post.

As you can see above,  also documents the people contributing to OpenCPN and a copy of the license OpenCPN uses, GNU GENERAL PUBLIC LICENSE Version 2. We are always looking for volunteers.

## Agreement Before Using OpenCPN

Here is the note that all users have to approve when installing the program.

OpenCPN is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,  
but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of  
MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.  
See the GNU General Public License for more details.  
OpenCPN must only be used in conjunction with approved paper  
charts and traditional methods of navigation.  
DO NOT rely upon OpenCPN for safety of life or property.

This is not a text on general navigation. We assume that you are familiar with nautical navigation. Reading this text and using OpenCPN will not in itself make you a "navigator".

## IMPORTANT NEXT STEPS

**Getting started using OpenCPN consists of 4 basic steps:**

- [OpenCPN Installation](#) Will lead you through installing OpenCPN on your particular OS and computer.
  - [Chart Installation](#) of Charts to be read by OpenCPN (OpenCPN does not include charts)
  - [Charts](#) Basic Features - Main Source for using charts
  - [GPS Setup](#) to communicate with your computer and OpenCPN (Optional, but very useful)
- Completing these 4 steps will get you started and allow you to check out the program.

There is also a very useful PDF Tutorial for the new user starting up called [Exploring OpenCPN \(v4\)](#)

If you still have questions or would just like to get in touch with other OpenCPN users, there is a large community behind OpenCPN. You can find us in this [Cruisers Forum](#).

If you are an advanced users with programming experience we recommend the [Developers Manual](#).

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Last update: **2021/01/26 23:37**

