



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1796 (M+F)

Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) - Designation of VTS Stations in the United Kingdom

Notice to all shipowners, Port and VTS Authorities, VTS Operators, Masters and Deck Officers of Merchant Vessels and Skippers and Watchkeepers of Fishing and recreational Vessels.

This notice should be read with the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004

Summary

1. This notice identifies and designates UK VTS for the purpose of requiring compliance by shipping with regulations 6 and 7 of the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004, implementing European Parliament and Council Directive 2002/59/EC.
2. Provides the formal identification of UK vessel traffic services (VTS) within UK waters for the benefit of the compliance of shipping with the Regulations and SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 12.
3. VTS contributes to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment, adjacent shore areas, work sites and offshore installations.

1. Statutory requirements

- 1.1 Regulation 2(1) of the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004 (the "2004 Regulations") defines a vessel traffic service as a service:
 - “(a) which is designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment and which is capable of interacting with that traffic and responding to traffic situations developing in the VTS area; and
 - (b) which, in relation to a service operated by the United Kingdom, either alone or in conjunction with one or more States, is a service provided from within the United Kingdom which has been designated by the MCA in writing and is specified in a Merchant Shipping Notice.”
- 1.2 This notice is the Merchant Shipping Notice to which those Regulations refer.
- 1.3 Schemes which are designated for the purposes of the 2004 Regulations are listed in the annex to this MSN.

- 1.4 Where the MCA designates a VTS, which is operated in accordance with the IMO Guidelines, those vessels which are subject to the 2004 Regulations must comply with the rules of that VTS

2. Application

The Rules of the 2004 regulations apply to all ships except:

- .1 all ships less than 300 gross tonnage;
- .2 warships, naval auxiliaries and other ships owned or operated by the Government of an EEA State which are used for non-commercial public service;
- .3 fishing vessels;
- .4 traditional ships;
- .5 recreational craft having a length of less than 45 metres.

However all vessels irrespective of size and type may be required to comply with VTS rules within port limits because of local port legislation.

3. Rules of the VTS

- 3.1 When passing through a VTS area, ships shall make reports and respond to calls on the designated radio channel for that VTS.
- 3.2 Additional “rules” for each designated VTS are in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volume 6.

4. Maintenance of standards in accordance with IMO Guidelines

- 4.1 The port authority identified in the designation is responsible for ensuring that the VTS is operated in accordance with IMO Guidelines on Vessel Traffic Services (Resolution A.857).

5. Requests by port authorities to become “designated” VTS

- 5.1 Application is made by the authority to the MCA at the address given at the end of this notice. The MCA will inform the authority if MCA officials intend to visit the VTS centre, and will confirm in writing whether the VTS is designated or if the MCA intends to remove or amend details of an existing designation.
- 5.2 Designation by the MCA will be subject to the receipt of:
- .1 confirmation by the port and VTS authority that the VTS will be operated in accordance with the IMO Guidelines on Vessel Traffic Services (Resolution A.857);
 - .2 satisfactory details about the VTS; and
 - .3 confirmation of the statutory UK powers required for operation of the VTS in question.

6. Promulgation of information on designated VTS

- 6.1 Ships cannot be expected to comply unless the VTS is properly identified and information on additional rules is made fully available by the normal means of promulgating such information to the mariner.

- 6.2 Information will be published in subsequent versions of the annex attached to this notice and the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volume 6 updated in Weekly Notice to Mariners.

More Information

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Annex 1

PORT VTS CENTRE	SERVICE LEVEL
Aberdeen	TOS, INS
Belfast	TOS, INS
Bristol Channel (Severn VTS)	INS
Bristol Port (Avonmouth & Portbury)	TOS, INS
Cardiff, Barry, Swansea, Newport, P Talbot	INS
Dover (Channel Nav Inf Service)	INS
Dover Port Control	TOS, INS
Forth and Tay Navigation Service	TOS, INS
Harwich Haven	TOS, NAS, INS
Humber Estuary	TOS, NAS, INS
Larne	TOS, INS
Liverpool	INS
London Port Control Centre (Gravesend)	TOS, NAS, INS
London Thames Barrier Nav. (Woolwich)	TOS, NAS, INS
Medway	TOS, INS
Milford Haven	TOS, INS
Nab	INS
Peterhead	TOS, INS
Plymouth	TOS, INS
Poole	INS
Portsmouth	TOS, INS
Southampton	TOS, NAS, INS
Sullom Voe	TOS, NAS, INS
Sunk (Precautionary Area)	INS
Tees and Hartlepool	TOS, INS
Tyne	INS

TOS = Traffic Organisation Service: A service to prevent the development of dangerous maritime traffic situations and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic within the VTS area.

NAS= Navigational Assistance Service: A service to assist on-board decision making and to monitor its effects, especially in difficult navigational or meteorological circumstances or in the case of defects or deficiencies.

INS=Information Service: A service to ensure that essential information becomes available in time for on-board navigational decision making.

(See MGN 238 as amended for full description of service levels)