



IALA GUIDELINE

1071

ESTABLISHMENT OF A VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE BEYOND TERRITORIAL SEAS

Edition 1.0

December 2009



DOCUMENT REVISION

Revisions to this IALA Document are to be noted in the table prior to the issue of a revised document.

Date	Page / Section Revised	Requirement for Revision



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. BACKGROUND	4
3. OPTIONS AVAILABLE	4
4. TYPES OF SERVICE	4
5. CONCLUSIONS	4
6. ACRONYMS.....	5
ANNEX A EXAMPLES OF ESTABLISHED VTS BEYOND TERRITORIAL SEAS	6
ANNEX B PROCEDURES AND GUIDES FOR IMO APPROVAL.....	8



1. INTRODUCTION

SOLAS Chapter V/12 (Vessel Traffic Services) paragraph 3, specifically states that ‘The use of VTS may only be made mandatory in sea areas within the territorial seas of a coastal state.’ However, instances have arisen where the need to extend or establish a VTS beyond territorial seas has been identified. This document provides guidance on how this may be achieved under current regulations which remain consistent with SOLAS Chapter V/12.

2. BACKGROUND

Five examples, Great Belt VTS (Denmark), Sound VTS (Denmark/Sweden), Turkish Straits VTS, Off the coast of Portugal VTS (Portugal) and Vardoe VTS (Norway), have been identified in which a VTS manages a Ship Reporting System or monitors a Traffic Separation Scheme, approved by IMO and that is operating partially or solely beyond territorial seas or in an international strait. These examples are listed at 0.

3. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

From the examples in 0, the following methods have been identified which provide VTS beyond territorial seas and avoid conflict with SOLAS Chapter V/12:

- 1 Voluntary use of VTS. SOLAS specifically relates to the establishment of a mandatory VTS. There is no reason why a 'voluntary VTS' should not be established if mandatory participation is not necessary. For example, where full participation by vessel traffic is considered to be likely to meet the needs of the mariner or where subsequent mandatory participation can be exercised once a vessel moves into territorial waters. This concept is the basis of the part of the Turkish Straits VTS that is beyond territorial seas and in the Sound VTS, which is an international strait (see 0).
- 2 Approval under the provision of SOLAS Chapter V/10 (Ships' Routeing). Application for a Ship Routeing System may include reference to the monitoring of the scheme being exercised through a VTS. This process has been effectively utilised in the establishment of the Vardoe TSS (see 0). Such applications are made through IMO using the procedures set out in General Provisions on Ships' Routeing (GPSR) and typically take some 18-24 months for approval to be achieved (see Annex 2).
- 3 Approval under the provision of SOLAS Chapter V/11 (Ship Reporting System). Application for a Ship Reporting System may include reference to the management of the system being exercised through a VTS Centre. This process has been effectively utilised in the establishment of the Great Belt VTS (0). Such applications are made through IMO using the procedures set out in General Provisions on Ships' Routeing (GPSR) and typically take some 18-24 months for approval to be achieved (see ANNEX B).

4. TYPES OF SERVICE

Where a VTS is established utilising these methods, careful consideration should be given to the type of service that is to be provided. An Information Service (INS) will always be appropriate for a VTS, but the provision of a Traffic Organisation Service (TOS) and/or a Navigational Assistance Service (NAS), when deemed necessary by the VTS, should take into account the implications of non-compliance particularly where compliance with the VTS is on a voluntary basis (see IALA VTS Manual for definitions). The legal basis and liability should also be considered.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Authorities identifying the need to establish or extend a VTS beyond territorial seas, either individually or on a multi-national basis, should note that this can only be achieved under current regulation through the establishment of voluntary use of VTS or a VTS that is part of, and in support of, a Ship Reporting System.



6. ACRONYMS

Circ.	Circular (IMO)
COLREG	Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (1972) (as amended)
COPREP	Coast of Portugal Ship Reporting System
GPSR	General Provisions on Ships' Routeing
IALA	International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INS	Information Service
MSC	Maritime Safety Committee (IMO)
NAS	Navigational Assistance Service
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (IMO)
TOS	Traffic Organization Service
TSS	Traffic Separation Scheme
VTS	Vessel Traffic Service(s)
WETREP	Western European Tanker Reporting System



ANNEX A EXAMPLES OF ESTABLISHED VTS BEYOND TERRITORIAL SEAS

A 1. GREAT BELT VTS (DENMARK)

This international strait uses a mandatory Ship Reporting System and Traffic Separation Scheme, under the authority of IMO Resolution MSC.230(82). The objective of Great Belt VTS is to facilitate the exchange of information between the shipping and the shore in order to ensure safe passages of the bridges, support safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment.

A VTS is used to manage this ship reporting system by means of an Information Service (INS). If necessary, this VTS can provide individual information to a ship particularly in relation to positioning and navigational assistance or local conditions.

This system enables the efficient monitoring and improved safety and better pollution prevention as shown from comparing statistics before and after implementation. For further information see www.beltrep.org.

A 2. SOUND VTS (SWEDEN/DENMARK)

This system is similar to the Great Belt VTS but operates on a voluntary basis. Although this system is not mandatory it experiences 97% compliance from vessels due to the benefits received regarding efficient traffic movement. For further information see www.soundvts.se.

A 3. TURKISH STRAITS VTS

The international waters at the extremity of the Turkish Straits VTS area experiences significant traffic congestion and the VTS has implemented a slot management system to organise ships entering the Turkish Straits. A Ship Reporting System and Traffic Separation Scheme have been implemented to advise vessels intending to enter the Turkish Straits. The VTS uses Information Service (INS) and Traffic Organization Service (TOS) to manage traffic. IMO Resolution A.827(19) refers.

Although this system is not mandatory for all vessels it experiences almost 100% compliance from vessels due to the benefits received regarding safe and efficient traffic movement. A Navigational Assistance Service (NAS) can also be provided on request by vessels within the international waters portion of the VTS area.

This arrangement allows for the efficient management of vessel movements and the ability to prioritise the passage of certain types of vessels, e.g. passenger ships and livestock carriers. For further information see www.coastalsafety.gov.tr.

A 4. VARDOE VTS (NORWAY)

The Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) Vardoe to Roest, for vessels of more than 5,000 tons is implemented under the authority of IMO Maritime Safety Committee as notified in document COLREG.2/Circ.58.

This TSS is 30nm outside territorial waters. Vardoe VTS monitors this TSS, provides an Information Service (INS) and utilises a voluntary reporting system. The main objectives for this service are to improve maritime safety and protect the marine environment from pollution, exchange information between vessels and Vardoe VTS, and provide emergency response for pollution incidents. For further information, see www.kystverket.no.

A 5. OFF THE COAST OF PORTUGAL

A coastal VTS (Roca Control) is used to monitor vessel traffic up to 50nm from the coast of Portugal on a voluntary basis and to monitor and manage vessel traffic in two Traffic Separation Schemes 'Off Cape Roca' and 'Off Cape S. Vicente', approved by MSC 79/23/Add.2/Annex 28 and Annex 29. Roca Control provides INS, NAS and TOS, and



monitors two Ship Reporting Systems: COPREP, (approved by IMO Resolution MSC.278(85)) and WETREP (approved by IMO Resolution MSC 190(79)), all beyond territorial seas.



ANNEX B **PROCEDURES AND GUIDES FOR IMO APPROVAL**

Listed below are the procedures and guides to obtain IMO approval for Ship Reporting Systems, incorporating VTS.

- 1 Guidance Note on the Preparation of Proposals on Ship's Routing Systems and Ship Reporting Systems for Submission to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, (IMO MSC/Circ.1060).
- 2 General principles for Ship Reporting Systems and Ships Reporting Requirements, including Guidelines for reporting Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods, Harmful Substances and/or Marine Pollutants (IMO Resolution A.851(20)).
- 3 IMO Guidelines and Criteria for Ship Reporting Systems (IMO Resolution MSC.43(64)). Adoption of Amendments to Guidelines and Criteria for Ship Reporting Systems (IMO Resolution MSC.111(73)) and (IMO Resolution MSC.189(79)).