IALA GUIDELINE

1083

STANDARD NOMENCLATURE TO IDENTIFY AND REFER TO VTS CENTRES

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Page / Section Revised</th>
<th>Requirement for Revision</th>
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</table>
## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 4  
2. PURPOSE ........................................................................................................................................... 4  
3. NOMENCLATURE TO IDENTIFY VTS CENTRES ............................................................................. 4  
   3.1. Vessel Traffic Services .................................................................................................................. 4  
      3.1.1. Sectors within a VTS area ...................................................................................................... 4  
   3.2. Other Services ............................................................................................................................. 5  
4. LOCAL PORT SERVICES .................................................................................................................. 5  
5. ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS ........................................................................................................... 5  
   5.1. Acronyms ..................................................................................................................................... 5  
   5.2. Definitions .................................................................................................................................... 5
1. INTRODUCTION

IMO Resolution A.857(20) recommends that Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) centres in an area or sector to use a name identifier.

It has been noted that there is a lack of consistency in the use of name identifiers by VTS centres. These include such terms as: ‘VTS’, ‘VTIS’, ‘traffic’, ‘control’, ‘coastguard’, ‘harbour control’, ‘harbour’, ‘port control’.

There may be cases where a Ship Reporting System (implemented by a Competent Authority under the provisions of IMO Resolution A.851 (20)) also makes use of such name identifiers, therefore causing possible confusion to mariners.

2. PURPOSE

This document aims to provide guidance to promote consistent nomenclature amongst VTS around the world.

3. NOMENCLATURE TO IDENTIFY VTS CENTRES

The naming policy for a VTS should ensure consistency for mariners. The name identifier should include two key elements, namely the geographical location of the VTS and its capability.

3.1. VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES

IMO recommends that a VTS should comprise at least an information service (INS), and may also include others, such as a navigational assistance service (NAS) and/or a traffic organization service (TOS). The prerequisites for a VTS include:

- be implemented by a Competent Authority;
- be staffed with trained and qualified personnel according to IALA Recommendation V-103 standards;
- be equipped to provide INS/NAS/TOS, as appropriate;
- be capable to generate a traffic image in order to:
  - interact with traffic;
  - respond to traffic situations.

Where a VTS has been implemented by a Competent Authority it is recommended that the name identifier includes the prefix or suffix ‘VTS’.

The geographical location should also be included to ensure that the mariner will be confident of the exact VTS centre being interacted with.

The order is optional and it is recommended that the name identifier is always used in full.

Therefore, the standard recommended VTS centre name identifier should be ‘Location VTS’ or ‘VTS Location’.

3.1.1. SECTORS WITHIN A VTS AREA

In the situation where a VTS area is divided into sectors, there are two options for the location part of the name identifier:

- sectors within a VTS area are identified separately; or
- sectors within a VTS area have the same name identifier.

Careful consideration should be given to the operational environment when evaluating the advantages and disadvantages relating to the choice of the options above.
Considerations include the possibility that confusion may arise to both the mariners and VTS operators from using a variety of identifiers within a limited area, but equally a competent authority may decide that there is a need to identify each of the sectors within the VTS area separately.

3.2. OTHER SERVICES

Other supporting services may be conducted from a VTS centre. Any service that is not authorised as a VTS should not use the term ‘VTS’ in its name identifier, e.g. ‘Location PILOTS’.

4. LOCAL PORT SERVICES

IALA makes provision for Local Port Services, but makes it clear that it is not an authorised VTS and therefore should not use the term ‘VTS’ in its name identifier.

However, it is recommended that the same format be used with location forming part of the name identifier with a prefix or suffix other than VTS.

5. ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS

5.1. ACRONYMS

IALA International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities
IMO International Maritime Organization
INS Information Service
NAS Navigational Assistance Service
TOS Traffic Organisation Service
VTS Vessel Traffic Service(s)
VTIS Vessel Traffic Information Service

5.2. DEFINITIONS

INS An information service is a service to ensure that essential information becomes available in time for on-board navigational decision-making.

NAS A navigational assistance service is a service to assist on-board navigational decision-making and to monitor its effects

TOS A traffic organization service is 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.