



# IALA GUIDELINE

## G1142 THE PROVISION OF A LOCAL PORT SERVICE OTHER THAN A VTS

**Edition 1.1**

January 2022

**urn:mrn:iala:pub:g1142:ed1.1**



# DOCUMENT REVISION

---

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

| Date          | Details   | Approval   |
|---------------|---|------------|
| December 2018 | First issue.  | Council 68 |
| January 2022  | Edition 1.1 Approved by Council December 2021 and published January 2022, in alignment with IMO Resolution A.1158(32) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services. | Council 74 |
|               |   |            |
|               |   |            |
|               |   |            |
|               |   |            |
|               |   |            |



# CONTENTS

---

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>                                  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b>                           | <b>4</b> |
| <b>3. BACKGROUND</b>                                    | <b>5</b> |
| 3.1. Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)                       | 5        |
| 3.2. Local Port service                                 | 5        |
| 3.3. Distinction between a VTS and a Local Port Service | 6        |
| <b>4. PRINCIPLES FOR OPERATING A LOCAL PORT SERVICE</b> | <b>6</b> |
| 4.1. Identifier   | 7        |
| 4.2. Voice Communications                               | 7        |
| 4.3. Promulgation                                       | 7        |
| 4.4. Qualifications and Training                        | 7        |
| <b>5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>                          | <b>7</b> |
| <b>6. DEFINITIONS</b>                                   | <b>8</b> |
| <b>7. ABBREVIATIONS</b>                                 | <b>8</b> |
| <b>8. REFERENCES</b>                                    | <b>8</b> |



## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

There are many waterways where the Contracting Government(s) are of the opinion that the volume of traffic or the degree of risk does not justify exercising their rights under the *International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea 74/78 (SOLAS)* [1] to establish a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).

Where a VTS is not required, other measures may be implemented to attain the expected level of safety and efficiency of the maritime traffic in the area, noting the associated volume of traffic and degree of risk. Such measures may include:

- Passive traffic management measures such as:
  - Improvements to visual and radio aids to navigation
  - Pilotage for all or certain categories of vessels
  - Space allocation policy for distinctive maritime user functions, incorporated, if necessary, in local by-laws, etc.
  - Ships' routing measures, on the basis of SOLAS V/10 and its associated IMO resolution A.572(14) [2] as amended
  - Ship reporting on the basis of SOLAS V/11 and the associated IMO resolutions A.851(20) [3] and MSC.433(98)[4].
- Provision of a local port service for co-ordination of services within the area by dissemination of information to vessels, berth or terminal operators and other stakeholders. A local port service is often described in terms such as "Local Port Service", "Port Control" or "Harbour Control".
- A combination of the above

Passive traffic management measures do not involve communication/interaction with the mariner from the shore.

In contrast, a local port service generally involves voice communication between the entity ashore and the mariner. In these situations, it is important that mariners are in no doubt as to whether they are communicating with a VTS, which can be expected to provide all the associated functions of a VTS, or whether they are communicating with an entity providing only information concerned with the management of the port or facility. It is unlikely that staff operating a local port service will have been trained to the standards required by a VTS.

It is, therefore, considered best practice for Contracting Governments/competent authorities to ensure that a clear differentiation exists between a VTS and a local port service, and that this is clearly communicated to mariners.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

---

The aim of this document is to provide guidance to:

- Assist Governments/competent authorities to ensure the difference between a VTS and a local port service is clearly communicated to mariners, allied services and other stakeholders.
- Assist entities operating a local port service to enhance efficiency and safety in a globally harmonized manner.



## 3. BACKGROUND

---

### 3.1. VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE (VTS)

---

A Vessel Traffic Service is a service implemented by a competent authority and should have the capability to interact with the traffic and to respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

A VTS is recognized internationally as a navigational safety measure through the *International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea 74/78 (SOLAS)*. In particular, the provisions in *SOLAS Chapter V (Safety of Navigation) Regulation 12* provides for Vessel Traffic Services and states that:

- “Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) contribute 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 from possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.”
- “Contracting Governments undertake to arrange for the establishment of VTS where, in their opinion, the volume of traffic or the degree of risk justifies such services”.

IMO Resolution *A.1158(32) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services* [5] describes the purpose of a VTS, the regulatory and legal framework, the VTS responsibilities of contracting governments, competent authorities and VTS providers, the requirements of participating ships in a VTS area and the general principles of a VTS.

The establishment and on-going operation of a VTS is a considerable investment in terms of meeting the international obligations associated with establishing the services under national law and the equipment and associated qualifications and training for staff in both establishment and on-going operations.

IALA Recommendation *R0119 Establishment of a VTS* [6] is a normative provision within IALA Standard *S1040 Vessel Traffic Services* [7]

IALA Guideline *G1150* [8] provides more detailed guidance on establishing, planning and implementing a VTS to attain the desired level of safety and efficiency of the maritime traffic in the area, noting the associated volume of traffic and degree of risk.

### 3.2. LOCAL PORT SERVICE

---

Where a Contracting Government is of the opinion that the navigational complexity, volume of traffic or the degree of risk does not justify exercising their rights to establish a VTS under provisions of *SOLAS*, there may be a need for information to be exchanged between ship and shore to ensure efficient handling of shipping and in-port processes. In such circumstances, it is particularly important that mariners are left in no doubt that they are communicating with a local port service and not with a VTS.

Personnel providing such a local port service should restrict communications to the provision of basic factual information and avoid opinion, advice or instruction that might be provided through a VTS by personnel who have undertaken specialist VTS training.

The functions of a local port service may include:

- Information relating to entry and departure such as:
  - Berthing
  - Pilot arrangements
  - Line handling arrangements
  - Meteorological conditions



- Hydrological conditions.
- Status of aids to navigation.
- Local warnings and restrictions.
- Information relayed from other allied services and in support of in-port operations such as:
  - Berth and mooring details
  - Waste handling arrangements
  - Fuel/bunkers
  - Crane and other cargo handling arrangements
  - Provisioning
  - Water supply
  - Customs and Immigration
  - ISPS information
  - Reporting formalities

### **3.3. DISTINCTION BETWEEN A VTS AND A LOCAL PORT SERVICE**

---

There are significant differences between a local port service and a VTS. In particular:

- International Framework – There is no international convention for the implementation and operation of a local port service such as that provided by *SOLAS* for a VTS.
- Staff Qualifications and Training – There is no requirement for a local port service to conform to international standards for qualifications and training such as that provide for a VTS by IALA Standards for Training and Certification of VTS Personnel and associated Recommendations.
- Capability - There is no requirement for a local port service to have the capability to:
  - Generate a comprehensive overview of traffic in its service area combined with all traffic influencing factors.
  - Compile a traffic image to enable staff to evaluate situations and make decisions accordingly.
  - Respond to traffic situations developing in the area and to decide upon appropriate actions.
  - Employ suitably qualified and trained staff to international standards.

## **4. PRINCIPLES FOR OPERATING A LOCAL PORT SERVICE**

---

To assist entities operate a local port service in a globally harmonized manner, the following principles are recommended as international best practice:

1. Identifier
2. Voice Communications
3. Promulgation
4. Qualifications and Training



## 4.1. IDENTIFIER

---

To avoid confusion to the mariner, the IALA Guideline *G1083 Standard Nomenclature to Identify and Refer to VTS Centres* [9] states that any service that is not authorized as a VTS should not use the term “VTS” in its name identifier.

For global harmonization, the title “Local Port Service” is strongly recommended, although it is recognized that alternative titles may be more appropriate under certain circumstances.

It is therefore recommended that a local port service clearly distinguishes that it is not a VTS in communications with masters and stakeholders through adoption of a similar format using a “name identifier” and an associated “location” suffix or prefix to identify a local port service for example “Port Z LPS”.

## 4.2. VOICE COMMUNICATIONS

---

The following principles for voice communications are recommended when operating a local port service:

- Staff using radio communications equipment should be licenced and trained appropriately, for example, with a national radio operator’s certificate.
- Communications should be in the form of concise factual information and staff should be aware of their authorization powers.

## 4.3. PROMULGATION

---

The details of any local service provided by an entity should be clearly described and promulgated in the appropriate navigational publications.

## 4.4. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

---

While there are no international standards relating to the qualifications and training for the provision of a local port service it is recommended that training should give due consideration to:

- The equipment in use
- Operational procedures
- The level of operator competence required
- The complexity of the information required to be exchanged

For global consistency, it is suggested that training be based on the selection of appropriate and relevant modules (or elements within modules) from the C0103-1 (V-103/1) syllabus.

Particular emphasis should be given to ensuring staff clearly understand the limitations of the local service being provided to ensure that the service delivered will not be mistaken for that of an authorized VTS.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

---

An entity operating a local port service should give due consideration to the legal framework they operate under and possible implications that may arise as a result of the provision of information to individual vessels in the event of a shipping incident where staff may have failed to carry out their duty competently.



## 6. DEFINITIONS

---

The definitions of terms used in this Guideline can be found in the International Dictionary of Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA Dictionary) at <http://www.iala-aism.org/wiki/dictionary> and were checked as correct at the time of going to print. Where conflict arises, the IALA Dictionary should be considered as the authoritative source of definitions used in IALA documents.

## 7. ABBREVIATIONS

---

VTS A vessel traffic service or vessel traffic services (dependent on context)

## 8. REFERENCES

---

- [1] IMO. International Convention for the Safety of Life At Sea, 1974 as amended
- [2] IMO. Resolution A.572(14) General Provisions on Ships' Routing
- [3] IMO. Resolution A.851(20) General Principles for Ship Reporting Systems and Ship Reporting Requirements
- [4] IMO. Resolution MSC.433(98) Guideline and Criteria for Ship Reporting Systems
- [5] IMO. Resolution A.1158(32) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services
- [6] IALA. Recommendation R0119 (V-119) Establishment of VTS
- [7] IALA. Standard S1040 Vessel Traffic Services
- [8] IALA. Guideline G1150 Establishing, Planning and Implementing VTS
- [9] IALA. Guideline G1083 Standard Nomenclature to Identify and Refer to VTS Centres