

Vessel Traffic Services



Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) are recognised internationally to support safe and efficient movement of vessels.

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is the VTS provider in Queensland. There are 5 regional VTS centres along Queensland's coast:

Cairns; Townsville; Hay Point; Gladstone; Brisbane.

The Townsville and Gladstone centres also monitor and provide VTS services to the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait region (Reef VTS).



VTS Operations

To achieve its purpose a VTS must have the capability to maintain a comprehensive overview of the traffic in its service area, interact with vessels and respond to traffic situations to mitigate the development of unsafe situations.

The level of safety and efficiency in the movement of maritime traffic within an area covered by a VTS depends on close cooperation between those operating the VTS and participating ships, and the use of precise and unambiguous communications in accordance with internationally approved guidelines.

VTS differ significantly from routing measures and ship reporting regimes. VTS are equipped, staffed and enabled to interact with marine traffic through the provision of specific services and to respond to developing unsafe situations in the interest of safety and efficiency.

Relationships Matter

VTS is an extension to the bridge team.

The professional relationship between all involved in the transit is critical to safe and efficient transits.

VTS Providers

VTS providers are responsible for ensuring compliance within their VTS area/s, with a focus on a cooperative approach. VTS providers:

- Have a detailed knowledge of the VTS reporting requirements, procedures to be followed and the requirements of allied services within their area.
- Promulgate information regarding requirements and procedures of VTS and the categories of ships required to participate in appropriate nautical publications. For

example, in nautical charts, user guides, handbooks, the admiralty list of radio signals (ALRS).

- Have detailed information readily available about any event or incident, for example traffic image, identity of ship or voice recording.
- Have the capacity to interact immediately with ships and allied services within the VTS area, for example via VHF radio.

VTS Communications

VTS communications are harmonised through the use of standard message structure and phrases to:

- Facilitate clear, concise, and unambiguous communications that are timely and effective.
- Minimise misunderstanding of the intent of messages and reduce the time required for effective communication.

What Masters can expect from a VTS Provider

VTS operators are trained to international standards, with ongoing professional development.

VTS centres are equipped with different sensors integrated into Decision Support Tools (DST), DSTs provide the VTS operator with a mechanism to monitor and alert, in real time or near real time, on instances such as:

- Grounding
- Collision avoidance
- Route adherence
- Shallow water alerts

VTS operators communicate with ship masters to give and receive:

- Basic information, like weather warnings,
- Safety information and the position of other vessels

- More complex information for traffic management
- Support for developing unsafe situations.

VTS provide vessel masters and pilots with:

- Ship encounter information
- Maritime safety information
- Navigational support.

When can vessels be contacted by VTS operators?

- Vessels may be contacted directly by VTS operators if there is a risk of incident, or where traffic flow is regulated.

As per IMO Resolution A.1158(32) the purpose of VTS is to contribute to the safety of life at sea, improve the safety and efficiency of navigation and support the protection of the environment within a VTS area by mitigating the development of unsafe situations through:

- Providing timely and relevant information on factors that may influence ship movements and assist onboard decision- making.
- Monitoring and managing ship traffic to ensure the safety and efficiency of ship movements.
- Responding to developing unsafe situations.

To achieve their purpose, VTS will provide information or issue advice, warnings and instructions.

CONTACT US

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