

Operational Policies Manual

VTSSFINST M5401.2

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CHAPTER I: FOUNDATION

A. MISSION STATEMENT.

The primary mission of Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco is to coordinate the safe and efficient transit of vessels in San Francisco Bay and its tributaries and approaches in an effort to prevent accidents and the associated loss of life and damage to property and the environment. Secondary missions include: to assist other Coast Guard units in the discharge of their missions, such as Aids to Navigation, SAR, Law Enforcement, and Maritime Defense Zone operations; and to carry out Captain of the Port (COTP) responsibilities for anchorage administration, ocean dumping activities, and the movement of certain dangerous cargoes within our area of responsibility.

B. PHILOSOPHY.

People who receive information from VTS by any means shall be considered VTS customers. VTS shall provide information to customers so they can make the best possible decisions. All customers, regardless of economic size, the physical size of the vessels they pilot, or any other consideration shall be treated with respect and shall be given the information they seek whenever possible. VTS personnel shall consider themselves assistants to vessels' bridge navigation teams.

C. VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE AUTHORITY.

1. Authority to establish and operate VTS.

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) San Francisco was established under authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (PWSA) of 1972, PL 92-340. This law, passed by Congress on 10 July 1972, is codified in Title 33, Sections 1221-1227 of the U.S. Code. Title I of the law specifically authorizes the Coast Guard to establish, operate, and maintain vessel traffic services for ports, harbors, and other waters subject to congested vessel traffic.

The PWSA has been amended twice since its inception, first by the Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1976 and then by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

2. Area of responsibility established.

33 CFR Table 161.12(b) establishes VTS SF's area of responsibility. (See page14, **B. Area of Responsibility**.)

3. Authority to require participation and reports.

VTS has the authority within U.S. territorial waters to require participation of certain vessels and to require these vessels to make various reports to VTS. (33 CFR 161.2.)

Outside of U.S. territorial waters these vessels are encouraged to participate and may be required to participate as a condition of port entry.(33 CFR 161.2, NOTE.)

a. National VTS Regulations.

The National VTS Regulations (NVTS Regulations) require certain categories of vessels to participate in the Vessel Traffic Service within U.S. territorial waters. The NVTS Regulations, which went into effect in 1994, are in 33 CFR 161.

(1) Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) Users.

These vessels must actively participate (check in) with VTS.

- Power-driven vessels 40 or more meters in length
- Towing vessels 8 or more meters in length while towing
- Vessels certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire (while engaged in trade).

(2) VTS Users

Vessels that fit this category as stated below but none of the categories in C.3.(a)(1) above must monitor the appropriate VTS channel but are not required to check in with VTS.

- Vessels 20 or more meters in length
- Vessels of 100 or more gross tons carrying 1 or more passengers for hire
- Dredges or floating plants operating near channels.

(3) Reports.

The NVTS regulations:

require VMRS Users to make Sailing Plan reports, Position reports, Sailing Plan Deviation reports, and Final reports;

authorize VTS to establish reporting points and promulgate them through the VTS Users Manual.

The VTS Users Manual:

requires VMRS Users to give route intentions before passing specific points;

establishes required reporting points for VMRS Users.

b. Other regulations requiring participation.

(1) Anchored vessels.

When sustained winds exceed 25 knots, vessels greater than 300 gross tons at anchor in any anchorage from 4 through 14 are required by 33 CFR 110.224 to maintain a continuous radio guard on VHF-FM channel 13 and channel 14.

(2) Vessels transporting certain dangerous cargoes.

COTP Public Notice 5-90 requires vessels transporting certain dangerous cargoes to participate in the VTS and adhere to the Traffic Routing Measures.

(3) Vessels transporting dredge spoils.

All vessels transporting dredge spoils are required as a condition of their Army Corps of Engineers permits to participate in the VTS.

(4) Marine events.

Marine event permit holders sometimes may be required by the conditions of their permits to check in with VTS.

4. Authority to direct vessel movements.

The Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1972 and the NVTs Regulations give VTS the authority to control vessel movements.

a. Ports and Waterways Safety Act.

This Act (as amended) authorized the Secretary of the Department which operates the Coast Guard to order any vessel to operate or anchor in a manner he directs if such a directive is in the interest of safety.

b. National VTS Regulations.

The NVTs Regulations authorize VTS to control vessels.

(1) VTS Measures.

The NVTs Regulations authorize VTS to issue "VTS Measures" as follows:

- designating temporary reporting points and procedures;
- imposing vessel operating requirements;
- establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.

(2) Other VTS controls of traffic.

The NVTs Regulations further authorize VTS to control, supervise, or otherwise manage traffic by specifying times of entry, movement, or departure to, from, or within a VTS area during conditions of vessel congestion, restricted visibility, adverse weather, or other hazardous circumstances.

5. VTS exercising COTP Authority.

a. Delegation of COTP Authority to VTS.

COTP authority is delegated to the CO of VTS under 33 CFR 160.5(d). Commanding Officers of VTSs are delegated authority to discharge the duties of the Captain of the Port that involve directing the operation, movement, and anchoring of vessels within a Vessel Traffic Service area. It says that Vessel Traffic Center personnel may exercise this authority.

b. Regulations establishing COTP authority.

The following regulations and instructions establish COTP authority.

(1) Marine Safety Manual, Volume VI, Ports and Waterways Activities (COMDTINST M16000.11).

Chapter 1, Ports and Waterways Safety, discusses: Anchorage Administration; Control of Vessel Movements; Regattas and Marine Parades; and Limited Access Areas.

Chapter 4, Vessel Traffic Management, discusses: Vessel Routing Systems; Regulated Navigation Areas (RNA); and Vessel Traffic Service.

(2) Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations (33 CFR), Navigation and Navigable Waters.

Subchapter G, Regattas and Marine Parades, discusses: Opening Day Marine Parade; Sacramento Water Festival; and the Budweiser Western States Championships on the San Joaquin River.

Subchapter I, Anchorages, discusses: Special Anchorage Areas in San Francisco Bay; and Anchorage Grounds for San Francisco/San Pablo/Suisun Bay, Carquinez Strait, and the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers.

Subchapter P, Ports and Waterways Safety, discusses: Special Orders; Navigation Regulations; Regulated Navigation Areas and Limited Access Areas; Shipping Safety Fairways; and Offshore Traffic Separation Schemes.

6. Other Laws and Regulations Relevant to VTS's Operation

a. Bridge to Bridge Radiotelephone Act.

This law, passed by Congress on 4 August 1971 as PL 92-63, requires certain vessels to carry a radiotelephone on the navigation bridge to be used to communicate movement intentions to the bridge of other vessels. Implementing regulations by the Coast Guard and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated VHF-FM channel 13 (156.65 MHz) as the bridge-to-bridge frequency, established technical requirements, and set penalties for non-compliance with the Act or Regulations.

b. Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs).

Seven areas in San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, and Carquinez Strait have been designated Regulated Navigation Areas under authority of 33 CFR 165.1114. These RNA regulations, which became effective 3 May 1995, organize traffic flow; reduce meeting, crossing, and overtaking situations; and limit vessels' speeds.

CHAPTER II: OPERATIONS CENTER MANAGEMENT

A. WATCHSTANDER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. Supervisor.

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all watchstanders perform in accordance with established standards, policies, and procedures. The supervisor shall also at all times personally maintain an accurate and complete knowledge of vessel traffic within the VTS area, and shall keep the supervisor's display up to date.

The supervisor is responsible for those duties assigned the OOD in Coast Guard Regulations. Whenever the Commanding Officer is not present at the VTC, the supervisor is the direct command representative.

The supervisor is directly responsible for ensuring that the following standards (A.1.a-i) are kept.

a. Operational policies.

The watch shall be conducted in accordance with prescribed unit policies.

b. Surveillance equipment.

(1) Radar.

Radars shall be tuned and adjusted for the appropriate weather settings.

(2) Closed-circuit television cameras.

Closed-circuit television cameras (CCTVs) shall be configured for best effect.

(3) Displays.

ODPs and other display devices shall be set up according to prescribed unit policy.

(4) VHF radios.

VHF radios shall be configured and monitored in a manner that ensures that VTS maximizes surveillance of VTS and other appropriate frequencies.

c. Monitoring traffic.

The supervisor shall keep informed of the present and anticipated traffic in the AORhb .

d. Radio frequencies.

The supervisor shall monitor channels 10, 12, 13, 14 and 16.

e. Monitoring the watch.

(1) Traffic summaries.

The supervisor shall ensure that traffic summaries broadcast by controllers are timely, accurate, and pertinent.

(2) VDCs, OpNotes, and other documentation.

The supervisor shall routinely check VDCs and OpNotes for accuracy and completeness, and shall ensure that vessels' screen representations have correct icons.

(3) Attentiveness.

Supervisors shall ensure that watchstanders remain attentive to the projected and actual traffic in the AOR.

(4) Training.

The supervisor shall ensure that personnel in training are closely supervised and are treated with respect.

f. Maintaining the Prospective list.

The supervisor shall ensure that the Prospective List (P List) of scheduled arrivals, departures, and intrabay moves is up to date and provided to controllers.

(1) Updating.

Supervisors shall update the P List through the end of the succeeding watch each time a new Pilot List is received.

A report need not be printed if few or no changes occurred since the last P List was printed.

(2) Other sources of information for the list.

In keeping the P List up to date, the supervisor shall check the following at least once per watch.

- Marine Exchange List
- Chevron Shipping Tape
- message board (for military vessels).

g. Creating and updating display information (overlays).

(1) Marine Events.

The midwatch supervisor shall prepare overlays for the coming day's marine events.

(2) AtoN.

Upon receiving reliable information of an AtoN discrepancy the supervisor shall ensure that an overlay that provides the latest information is created.

(3) Op Notes.

The midwatch supervisor shall review all Op Notes, both active and inactive, and shall delete those that are no longer needed.

(4) Passdown log.

The supervisor shall ensure that notes on anything affecting present or future operations, including current visibility conditions in the AOR, are entered in the passdown log.

(5) Broadcast Notice to Mariners summary sheet.

The midwatch supervisor shall update the Broadcast Notice to Mariners (BNM) sheet and post it in the Operations Center.

h. Logs and records.

The supervisor shall ensure that recordings are being made of VTS radio and telephone communications and of the VTS radar picture.

2. Controllers.

VTS Controllers (sector operators) act as the primary interface between VTS and VTS Users. Each controller shall at all times maintain an accurate and complete knowledge of vessel traffic within his/her sector and within portions of other sectors whose traffic may affect or be affected by traffic in his/her own sector.

(a) Radios.

Controllers shall monitor the appropriate VTS sector frequencies and VHF-FM channels 13 and 16.

(b) Monitor traffic.

Controllers shall monitor traffic and traffic-related operations by all available means including VHF radio, CCTV, and radar.

(c) Receive reports from vessel operators.

Controllers shall receive and document the information in reports in accordance with the VTS Operational Procedures Manual.

(d) Provide information.

Controllers shall provide information to vessel operators in accordance with the VTS Operational Procedures Manual. Generally, this is information which may affect a vessel's transit.

(e) Document events.

Controllers shall document events in the AOR in accordance with the VTS Operational Procedures Manual. Events to document include the following.

- Departures from an RNA or a TSS;
- issuance of a VTS Measure or recommendation;
- a report or observation of any accident or mishap involving or affecting vessel traffic;
- failure to comply with National VTS Regulations.

(f) Presence at the VTC.

Personnel on duty shall remain on the grounds of the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) readily available to resume watchstanding duties.

B. WATCH RELIEF.

Watchstanders shall begin familiarizing themselves with current and projected traffic and conditions affecting traffic so as to effect relief on time.

1. Information sources to check.

Relieving watchstanders shall check the following information sources as part of relieving the watch. If any possible discrepancies such as lack of needed information are noted the relieving watchstander shall get the information from the off-going watchstander.

(a) Watch To Watch Notes.

The relieving watchstander shall read the Watch To Watch Notes entries made during the previous 24 hours.

(b) Broadcast Notice to Mariners summary sheet.

The relieving watchstander shall read the BNM summary sheet.

(c) Prospective list.

The relieving watchstander shall read the P List and note scheduled moves.

(d) Vessel Data Cards.

The relieving watchstander shall open and read the Vessel Data Card (VDC) for each VMRS User in the sector he or she is relieving and shall ensure that the correct icon is selected for each vessel.

(e) Op Notes.

The relieving watchstander shall open and read all active Op Notes.

(f) Other overlays.

The relieving watchstander shall open and read the list of scheduled marine events.

2. Discussion with off-going watchstander.

The relieving watchstander shall talk with the off-going watchstander to ascertain the following.

(a) Passing arrangements and other transmissions.

The off-going watchstander shall tell the relieving watchstander what passing arrangements have been made between participants. He/she shall also tell the relieving watchstander of any other significant transmissions between participants.

(b) Route and other transit-related intentions.

The off-going watchstander shall tell the relieving watchstander about all route and other transit-related intentions (such as intention to stem the current awaiting a berth) of which VTS is aware.

(c) Traffic reports made.

The off-going watchstander shall tell the relieving watchstander what each VMRS User has been informed of.

(d) Conditions in the AOR.

The off-going watchstander shall tell the relieving watchstander about any significant conditions in the AOR. Significant conditions include visibility, wind, and other weather information.

(e) Equipment.

The off-going watchstander shall apprise the relieving watchstander of VTS equipment problems and conditions.

3. Supervisors.

The supervisor relieving the watch shall, in addition to reviewing all information that controllers review on relieving, check the message board and make a round of VTS grounds and spaces.

CHAPTER III: COMMUNICATIONS

A. RADIO CALL SIGN.

VTS's radio call sign is "COAST GUARD VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE SAN FRANCISCO." Once contact has been established the abbreviated call sign "TRAFFIC" or "VESSEL TRAFFIC" may be used.

B. FREQUENCIES.

1. VTS working frequencies.

VTS's working frequencies are designated in 33 CFR 161, Table 161.12(b).

a. Offshore area.

Channel 12 VHF-FM (156.60 MHz) is the working frequency for the offshore area. This excludes the San Francisco Offshore Precautionary Area. Within the Offshore Precautionary Area and shoreward the working frequency is channel 14.

b. Bay Left and Bay Right sectors.

The designated working frequency is channel 14 VHF-FM (156.70 MHz).

c. Delta area.

The designated working frequency is channel 14 VHF-FM.

2. Other frequencies.

a. Channel 16 VHF-FM (156.80 MHz).

47 CFR 80.148 relieves VMRS users of the responsibility for listening to and monitoring channel 16. The supervisor shall ensure that at all times at least one watchstander is monitoring channel 16.

b. Channel 13 VHF-FM (156.65 MHz).

This channel is mandated for bridge-to-bridge radio traffic. 33 CFR 26 requires certain vessels to be equipped with this frequency. The law also restricts its use specifically to "...information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels...."

c. Channel 10 VHF-FM (156.50 MHz).

Channel 10 is designated by federal regulations to be a commercial-use frequency. It is used by the San Francisco Bar Pilots and Marine Exchange. The supervisor shall ensure that channel 10 is always monitored.

d. Channel 21A VHF-FM (157.05 MHz).

This is a Coast Guard working frequency.

e. Channel 22A VHF-FM (157.10 MHz).

Channel 22A is reserved for traffic between private vessels and Coast Guard units.

C. BASIC COMMUNICATION.

Watchstanders shall follow these guidelines when transmitting on the radio.

1. Radiotelephone Communications Manual.

Use the prowords, formats, and guidelines in the Radiotelephone Communications manual (COMDTINST M2300.7).

2. Jargon.

Avoid jargon.

3. Brevity.

Be as brief as possible without leaving out useful information.

4. Casual conversation.

Avoid being drawn into casual conversation.

5. Embarrassment.

Avoid making comments which might embarrass a mariner, VTS, the Coast Guard, or yourself.

CHAPTER IV: VESSEL TRAFFIC ADMINISTRATION

A. CONTINUUM OF CONTROL.

VTS works on four levels of a continuum of control as described here.

1. Monitor.

Watchstanders use radar, CCTV, radio communications and any other available means to maintain an accurate picture of vessel traffic within the AOR. "Monitoring traffic" means keeping aware of current and future activities and vessel movements in the AOR.

(a) Reports directly to VTS.

Watchstanders shall document these reports as prescribed in the VTS Operational Procedures Manual.

(b) Passing arrangements.

Watchstanders shall, to the best of their abilities, monitor passing arrangements between vessels.

(c) Operational plans.

Watchstanders shall keep abreast of vessels' and commercial and public agencies' operational plans in the AOR as much as possible.

(1) VHF-FM channel 10.

This designated commercial-use frequency is monitored by VTS as a means of keeping abreast of San Francisco Bar Pilots and Marine Exchange communications.

(2) Telephone inquiries.

The supervisor shall make telephone calls to appropriate agencies to find out about expected or delayed vessel movements; law enforcement activities; construction or dredging operations; and any other known or suspected activities that may affect navigation in VTS's AOR.

2. Inform.

VTS shall inform vessel operators of factors affecting their transits far enough in advance so that vessel operators can effectively plan their transit routes and can make appropriate passing arrangements with other vessels so as to effect safe and efficient transits while adhering to traffic routing measures. It is the policy of VTS San Francisco to keep interactions with customers on the level of informing as much as possible.

3. Recommend.

VTS may recommend a course of action to a mariner when necessary. Recommendations shall be in the form of a desired outcome (e.g. "recommend you make passing arrangements with...") vice engine and rudder commands. VTS shall recommend a course of action to a vessel operator only after careful consideration of all factors involved and after discussing the situation with the involved parties.

4. Direct.

VTS watchstanders may direct a vessel only when necessary due to an emergent unsafe situation. Directions shall be in the form of a desired outcome vice engine and rudder commands. VTS may issue VTS Measures or VTS Directions. No watchstander shall issue a VTS Measure except by the direction of the watch supervisor. Controllers may issue VTS Directions as in paragraphs 4.(b)(1) and 4.(b)(2) at their own discretion. A VTS Direction in the form of 4.(b)(3) requires the watch supervisor's approval. In the event of a VTS Direction in the form of category 4.(b)(3) the supervisor shall notify the commanding officer.

(a) VTS Measures.

A VTS Measure is not directed at a specific vessel; it applies to any vessel transiting affected waters. Measures shall be in the form of a desired outcome vice engine and/or rudder commands.

(b) VTS Directions.

A VTS Direction is given to a specific vessel. Direction shall be in the form of a desired outcome.

(1) Direction to notify VTS.

VTS may direct a vessel operator to provide notification of specific conditions or arrival at specific positions.

(2) Direction to make contact.

VTS may direct a vessel operator to contact another vessel.

(3) Direction to operate the vessel in a specific way.

VTS may direct a vessel to operate or to not operate in a specific manner. This includes: specifying avoidance of a channel or route; directing a vessel to anchor; or directing a vessel to remain at a dock or anchorage.

(c) Issuing a VTS Measure or direction.

The following discussion refers to VTS Measures or to VTS Directions in the form of paragraph 4.(b)(3).

(1) Alternatives.

The supervisor must be convinced that no better alternatives exist.

(2) The nature of the direction.

(i) General terms.

VTS directions shall be stated in the form of a desired outcome.

(ii) Courses and speeds.

VTS shall not dictate a course or speed.

(iii) Specific actions.

Specific actions to be taken shall be left up to the mariner to the greatest extent possible.

B. AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

VTS's area of responsibility (AOR) encompasses: the ocean area within a 38-nautical-mile radius of Mount Tamalpais; the navigable sections of San Francisco Bay north of Dumbarton Bridge; San Pablo Bay including the Petaluma River markers 19 and 20 and below; Mare Island Strait as far as the Mare Island Causeway Bridge; and the waterways serving the ports of Redwood City, Stockton and Sacramento. This area, also known as the VTS area, is divided into sectors.

1. Ocean-Delta.

The Ocean-Delta controller handles all transactions in the Ocean-Delta sector. This sector comprises two sub-sectors.

a. Ocean sub-sector.

This sub-sector is all the ocean waters that are outside the COLREGS Line of Demarcation (33 CFR 80.1142) and within a 38-nautical-mile-radius circle that is centered on Mount Tamalpais. The arc of that circle's perimeter runs from just above Bodega Head in the north, through a point about 12 nautical miles west of the Southeast Farallon Islands to just north of Pescadero Point.

b. Delta sub-sector.

The Delta sub-sector includes the navigable waters from New York Point through the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel to the Port of Sacramento; and up the San Joaquin River and Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel to the Port of Stockton. It includes the waters of Broad Slough, Middle Slough, and Three-Mile Slough.

2. Bay Left.

This sector includes waterways on the San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay, bounded by the COLREGS Demarcation Line (33 CFR 80.1142) to the west and Dumbarton Bridge to the south. In the north, the sector is bounded by Petaluma River entrance channel markers 19 and 20 and the Mare Island Causeway Bridge. The sector extends east to New York Point on the Sacramento River. When the Bay Right sector is staffed, the Bay Left sector controller primarily handles transactions with towing vessels and piloted vessels.

3. Bay Right.

The Bay Right sector includes the same geographic area as the Bay Left sector. The Bay Right controller handles transactions with non-VTS users, ferries, and agencies calling to request opnotes.

C. PARTICIPANTS.

Certain vessels are required to participate with VTS (See Chapter I); however, vessels not required to participate may do so.

1. Desired non-required participants.

VTS desires the participation of certain activities or vessels, even though they may not be required to by regulation. These include:

- Vessels over 300 gross tons
- Vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire
- Vessels which by reason of the nature of their operations affect the navigation of other vessels.

2. Passive users.

Watchstanders shall assume that there are "passive users" monitoring the VTS frequencies and shall keep the needs of passive users in mind as they collect information, perform readbacks and formulate traffic reports.

D. REGULATED NAVIGATION AREA MANAGEMENT.

Seven Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) are established in the Bay region to reduce risk of collision where maneuvering room is limited. VTS is responsible for administering these RNAs.

1. Gross tonnage.

a. Tows.

Watchstanders shall ascertain from the person operating a towing vessel whether the total gross tonnage of the tow is greater than 1600 gross tons.

b. Other vessels.

The registered gross tonnage shall be entered into vessel records in the database whenever available. Vessels' icons shall be pre-set to match their RNA-applicability categories. When a vessel record with no gross tonnage entered has an UNK icon, or its length or appearance on VTS equipment leads to suspicion of an error in the assigned icon, watchstanders shall use their best judgment in assigning an icon. Using best judgment includes asking the operator of the vessel for gross tonnage.

2. High-risk vessels.

Watchstanders shall ascertain whether each VMRS User is a high-risk vessel.

3. Prohibited meetings, crossings, or overtakings.

Watchstanders shall look ahead for potential prohibited meeting, crossing, or overtaking situations. When the possibility of such a situation exists, watchstanders shall ascertain from the vessel operators how they intend to avoid the prohibited situation.

4. Speed limit.

When a vessel appears to be speeding in an RNA the watch shall ascertain the tidal current in the RNA and shall use that information to calculate the vessel's estimated speed through the water.

5. Union Pacific Railroad Bridge RNA.

When weather conditions make the development of fog in Carquinez Strait likely, watchstanders shall periodically check on the visibility at the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge. When a vessel that will transit the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge RNA checks in during a fog-prone period VTS shall advise the mariner of the current visibility in the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge RNA.

E. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT.

1. Receiving and recording information.

(a) Sailing Plan reports.

(1) Response time.

The controller shall open a vessel's record prior to responding to the vessel.

(2) Data recording.

The controller shall record all data that is needed for traffic management and all data that may be of interest to VTS users.

(3) Readback.

The controller shall read back the information in the Sailing Plan report and, when able, shall read back Deviation and Position Reports.

(4) Round robin.

After completing the readback of a Sailing Plan or Deviation report the controller shall perform a round robin including each vessel that may be affected by the transit of the vessel reporting.

(b) Position reports.

The controller shall read back a position report when the level of traffic permits, or when necessary to help prevent an unsafe traffic situation from developing.

(c) Deviation reports.

(1) Evaluate.

The watch shall evaluate for safety the intentions stated in the Sailing Plan Deviation report. If the stated intentions are deemed unsafe or a violation of an RNA the watch shall prompt the mariner for an alternate course of action.

(2) Readback.

When a VTS participant gives a Sailing Plan Deviation report the controller shall read back:

- the name of the vessel giving the report
- the vessel's position
- the new information that the report contained.

(3) Round robin.

The controller shall perform a traffic turnaround including each vessel that may be affected by the transit of the vessel making the Sailing Plan Deviation report.

(4) Failure to report.

If a VMRS User fails to make a required Sailing Plan Deviation report, VTS shall prompt the VMRS User for the information.

(Required Sailing Plan Deviation reports are listed in the VTS Communications Guide under "Amplifying the Sailing Plan.")

(d) Final reports.

When a VTS participant makes a Final report the controller shall close the transit record of the vessel.

If the vessel is not fast at a dock, out of the VTS AOR, or anchored the controller shall direct the vessel operator to call again at the proper time.

2. Forming and issuing traffic reports.

The controller may call any VTS participant and give a traffic report at any time he/she deems it prudent to do so. The controller need not wait for any specific event or time in order to give a traffic report.

(a) Required traffic reports.

The controller shall give a traffic report upon receiving a Sailing Plan report.

(b) Forming traffic reports.

Traffic reports shall include all of the following which may affect the report recipient's transit.

- traffic
- anticipated traffic
- operations in or near the channels to be transited
- weather conditions.

3. Unsafe situations.

If the declared intentions of any vessel appear to be unreasonable or unsafe then VTS watchstanders shall follow the procedures in CHAPTER V: INCIDENTS.

4. Deviations.

When a mariner states an intention to deviate from a regulation, COTP order, or VTS Measure or Direction the watch shall do the following.

(a) Evaluate.

The supervisor and controller(s) shall evaluate the safety of the proposed deviation. In doing so they shall consider the following.

(1) Equivalence of safety.

The watch shall consider whether the proposed deviation is at least as safe as adhering to the regulation would be.

(2) Necessity.

The watch shall consider whether the proposed deviation is necessary for safe navigation under the circumstances.

(b) Approve or disapprove.

If the supervisor decides that the proposed deviation is safer than following the regulation, Measure, or Directive in effect then VTS shall authorize it. If the supervisor decides that the proposed deviation is less safe than following the regulation, Measure, or Direction in effect then VTS shall recommend that the mariner comply with the regulation or come up with an acceptable alternate course of action. VTS may suggest acceptable alternatives. If the mariner indicates his intention to deviate anyway, then VTS shall remind him that this is contrary to the regulation, Measure, or Direction.

(c) Document.

In the case of approved deviations the watch shall document the deviation through the VAM:Violation function.

In the case of a disapproved deviation the watch shall document the deviation through the VAM:Violation function and in an incident report.

D. SCHEDULED TRAFFIC ADVISORIES.

The Ocean-Delta controller shall make the Offshore Vessel Traffic Advisory in the prescribed format at minute 15 and minute 45 of each hour.

CHAPTER V: INCIDENTS

A. GENERAL.

1. Incidents.

Incidents are defined as events that have the potential to drastically affect the transit of one or more vessels, cause damage to property and the environment, or cause injury or loss of life.

2. Emergencies.

An emergency occurs when there has been actual injury or loss of life, damage to property, and/or damage to the environment. See **CHAPTER VII: EMERGENCIES.**

3. VTS objectives.

VTS operations are intended to prevent incidents by following prescribed traffic management policies and procedures. When incidents do occur, the following policies apply.

B. ACTION IN A SITUATION INVOLVING A "FINITE" SET OF VESSELS.

When VTS personnel determine that a developing traffic encounter is unsafe they shall follow the procedures below.

1. VTS Recommendation.

VTS shall contact the vessels involved and recommend an appropriate course of action. VTS shall determine whether the vessels intend to comply with the recommendation.

2. VTS Direction.

If a vessel declines to take appropriate action the watch supervisor shall use VTS authority and direct the vessel to take action in order to rectify the situation.

C. ACTION IN A SITUATION THAT AFFECTS ANY VESSEL TRANSITING A GEOGRAPHIC AREA.

When VTS determines that transit of a given geographic area is unsafe or is safe only under specific conditions VTS shall issue a VTS Measure prohibiting transit of the geographic area or stating the conditions a vessel must meet to transit the area.

Upon issuing a VTS Measure VTS shall do the following.

1. Broadcast.

VTS shall broadcast the VTS Measure on channels 13, 14, and 16. The broadcast shall include the geographic area, the prohibition to transit or the conditions under which a vessel may transit, and the categories of vessel to which the VTS Measure applies.

2. Direct notification.

(a) Vessels.

VTS shall contact participating vessels and ensure that they are aware of the VTS Measure.

(b) Agencies.

VTS shall contact the Bar Pilots office, the Marine Exchange, and MSO and notify them of the VTS Measure.

D. CONSULTATION AND NOTIFICATION.

When any incident occurs the supervisor shall contact and brief MSO and CO VTS as soon as possible.

E. DOCUMENTATION.

1. Recording.

The supervisor shall ensure that a video tape of applicable CCTV pictures are made.

2. Incident report.

When an incident occurs the supervisor shall draft an incident report and submit it to OPS within 72 hours.

2. Watch to Watch Notes.

The supervisor shall enter notes about the incident in the Watch To Watch Notes book including the essence of any VTS Directives of Measures issued.

CHAPTER VI: NAVIGATIONAL ASSISTANCE

A. RESPONSIBILITY

VTS shall not assume responsibility for navigating a vessel.

B. ACCOMMODATING REQUESTS.

1. Navigational information.

Navigational information is printed information from a recognized source such as published charts, Local Notice to Mariners, Light Lists, and Coast Pilots. VTS watchstanders shall accommodate requests for navigational information.

2. Navigational assistance.

Navigational assistance is information derived from VTS's display. VTS shall provide navigational assistance to the greatest extent possible without interfering with traffic management and without giving a vessel courses to steer or speeds at which to steam.

CHAPTER VII: EMERGENCIES

A. GENERAL

VTS's responsibility in an emergency is to help stabilize the situation by taking preliminary reports, notifying vessels and agencies whose operations may be affected, and handing the case over as soon as possible to the appropriate Coast Guard unit or other agency.

B. GATHERING INFORMATION.

1. First response.

Keep emergency transmissions on the initial call-up frequency. Do not shift to a working frequency until certain that the situation is not life-threatening.

2. Initial Information.

Obtain the following information.

- Name of vessel
- nature of distress
- position of vessel
- number of people on board
- Life-saving and signaling equipment on board.

C. PASSING INFORMATION.

The VTS watch section must quickly determine which Coast Guard unit or other agency is best suited to respond to the emergency and then relay the information to that unit or agency.

The search and rescue (SAR) resources in VTS's AOR follow.

1. Group San Francisco.

Group San Francisco is responsible for SAR in U.S. territorial waters and 60 miles out from the coast between Point Año Nuevo and the Gualala River.

2. District 11 Operations.

District 11 Operations is responsible for SAR in all maritime areas outside Group San Francisco's AOR.

3. Municipal police and fire departments.

Municipal police and fire departments have jurisdiction in all emergencies on land. The supervisor shall determine which jurisdiction applies to an emergency.

D. MONITORING THE SITUATION.

VTS shall monitor emergency operations and keep all VTS customers apprised of the situation as much as necessary to ensure that emergency operations are not interfered with and that vessels may navigate safely.

E. NOTIFYING OTHER AGENCIES.

If the COTP orders any channel closed to navigation the watchstanders shall proceed as follows.

1. Telephone notifications.

The supervisor shall ensure that the following agencies are notified.

- Bar Pilots
- CO and XO
- Marine Exchange
- tug companies (as appropriate)
- ferry companies (as appropriate).

2. Radio notification.

a. Sécurité broadcast.

VTS shall make a sécurité broadcast on VHF-FM channels 13 and 14.

b. Direct notification.

VTS shall notify any participants whose transits may be affected by the emergency or who may be able to assist.

3. Message traffic.

The supervisor shall draft and send a marine casualty message.

4. Report.

The supervisor shall write an incident report.

CHAPTER VIII: ANCHORAGES

A. ANCHORAGE WATCH.

VTS shall maintain a watch so as to detect vessels dragging anchor.

B. SAFETY OF ANCHORED POSITIONS.

Watchstanders shall not give opinions as to the safety of an anchored position. They may offer factual information as to what VTS display shows.

C. ANCHORAGE BERTHS.

VTS shall not assign specific anchorage berths.

D. DEEP-DRAFT ARRIVAL NOTIFICATION.

When a vessel is bound for Anchorage 9 VTS shall inform the vessel of any other vessels of draft greater than 40 feet which are expected to anchor in Anchorage 9 during the next 48 hours.

E. VESSELS TOO CLOSE.

1. Determining the distance.

When VTS's display shows that a vessel may be anchored less than 750 yards from any other vessel the watch shall contact the vessels involved and ascertain what distance their radars show them apart.

2. Directing vessels to move.

(a) Authorization.

If that distance between vessels is less than 750 yards the supervisor may direct one of the vessels to move.

(b) Notification of MSO.

Before directing the vessel to move the supervisor shall contact MSO, the Marine Exchange, and the Bar Pilots.

F. PERMISSION TO REMAIN AT ANCHOR.

1. General anchorages.

VTS shall not grant permission or clearance to a vessel to remain in any anchorage berth for a specified length of time except as noted in the following paragraph.

2. Temporary anchorages.

VTS may grant one extension only of up to six hours for a vessel to remain in a temporary anchorage beyond the time limit.

When VTS grants an extension the supervisor shall notify MSO.

Requests for extensions in excess of six hours shall be forwarded to the COTP.

G. HIGH WINDS.

When sustained winds in an anchorage exceed 25 knots VTS shall ensure that each vessel at anchor in that anchorage is monitoring the VTS frequency.

H. DEAD SHIP OR COLD IRON.

When a vessel indicates that it will go dead ship or cold iron in an anchorage VTS shall notify the MSO.

CHAPTER IX: PUBLIC INFORMATION

A. VESSEL INFORMATION.

1. Current traffic.

VTS shall provide information on a ship's position, intended route, destination, and stated or projected time of arrival to anyone who calls for such information.

2. Past traffic.

Requests for information about past traffic that will take more than 10 minutes to compile shall be forwarded to the XO.

B. RECORDINGS.

1. Holds.

VTS shall hold any tape or recording upon receiving a verbal request to do so. The person taking the request shall inform the requester that he or she must confirm the request in writing as soon as possible.

2. Requests to use recordings.

Requests to come to VTS to hear, view, or copy a recording shall be forwarded to the XO.

C. VISITORS AND TOURS.

VTS shall normally welcome visitors, whether scheduled or not, to see the Vessel Traffic Center.

CHAPTER X: MARINE EVENTS

A. INCLUSION.

VTS shall include relevant marine event information in traffic reports.

B. VTS ASSISTANCE.

When a marine event may affect the transit of a VMRS User VTS shall work with the marine event committee unit and the VMRS User to facilitate the VMRS User's safe transit.

APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

- CFR..... Code of Federal Regulations.
- High-risk vessel ... Any vessel over 1600 gross tons that is (1) a tank vessel in ballast, (2) or that is carrying bulk petroleum products, or (3) that is carrying certain dangerous cargoes (as defined in 33 CFR 160.203).
- Mariner..... The person directing the movements of a vessel.
- Op Note..... An abbreviation for operational notice. An Op Note contains information about operations or conditions that may affect navigation, or may be of interest or concern to mariners, or which may be affected by passing vessels.
- Plugged in A watchstander is plugged in when he or she is wearing a headset which is plugged in to an audio outlet which is set up to convey the VTS frequency(ies) of the appropriate sector(s).
- USC..... United States Code.
- Vessel..... This term is used in this manual variously to mean (a) the person directing the movements of a vessel
; (b) a water craft.
- Vessel operator..... This is the person directing the movements of a vessel.
- Watch..... The VTS supervisor and controllers on duty.

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

CHAPTER I

33 CFR 110
33 CFR 160
33 CFR 161
33 CFR 165
33 USC 1221-1227
COTP Public Notice 5-90

CHAPTER III

33 CFR 161
33 CFR 26
33 CFR 80
47 CFR 80
COMDTINST M2300.7

CHAPTER V

33 CFR 1.01-30 (b)
33 CFR 110.224
33 CFR 160.5 (d)
Coast Pilot 7, Chapter 7.
COTP Advisory 04-95 Pollution Prevention Regulations dated 04 May 1995
COTP Letter of Instruction dated 06 May 1993

CHAPTER IX

Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)
Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 5)
Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts Manual (COMDINST M5260.2)
Public Affairs Manual (COMDINST M5728.2A)

APPENDIX C: EQUIPMENT

A. RADARS.

There are four radar sites, each with a working and a back-up radar system.

1. Point Bonita.

This radar provides coverage from the Golden Gate Bridge west to the Farallon Islands, south to 37° 18' north latitude, and north to Point Reyes.

2. Yerba Buena Island.

This site covers the waters east of the Golden Gate Bridge south to the San Mateo Bridge and north to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

3. Point San Pablo.

Together with the Mare Island radar, the Point San Pablo radar covers San Pablo Bay almost to the east end of Pinole Shoal Channel.

4. Mare Island.

This site covers Pinole Shoal Channel and Carquinez Strait to Dillon Point.

B. CCTVs.

VTS has five closed-circuit television cameras at three sites. Note: the extent of coverage reported is for daylight hours with good visibility.

1. Yerba Buena Island.

Two cameras are mounted on the VTS radar antenna and the other camera is on the State antenna. These cameras together provide full 360-degree coverage of central San Francisco Bay. Vessels can be seen in San Bruno Shoal Channel to the south, just beyond the Golden Gate Bridge to the west, and just above the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to the north. The Oakland-Alameda Estuary is partially visible.

2. Mare Island.

This camera covers all of Pinole Shoal Channel and Carquinez Strait to Dillon and Carquinez points.

3. Ozol.

This camera picks up where the Mare Island camera leaves off at Dillon and Carquinez points. It shows vessel traffic above the Benicia-Martinez Highway Bridge as far as Shore Terminal.

C. VHF-FM RADIOS.

VTS has four radio antenna sites:

1. Mount Tamalpais.

This is the primary site for the Ocean sub-sector. The two transceivers are usually tuned to VHF-FM channel 12. This site can be used to cover most parts of the VTS AOR when other sites malfunction. Guard receivers at Mount Tamalpais are on channels 16 and 13.

2. Point Bonita.

This radio is used mostly for communications in the Offshore Precautionary Area and the Main Ship Channel. Its range is limited due to the geographical surroundings; it has limited use as a back-up site for Mount Tamalpais and for Yerba Buena Island. The primary transceiver frequency is VHF-FM channel 14. Guard frequencies at Point Bonita are VHF-FM channels 10 and 13.

3. Yerba Buena Island.

The primary site for central San Francisco Bay is Yerba Buena Island. It covers the areas from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Carquinez Bridge and south beyond Redwood City. The primary transceiver frequency is VHF-FM channel 14. Guard frequencies are VHF-FM channels 16 and 13.

4. Bay Point.

This radio site serves the Delta sub-sector of the AOR. It covers the waterways between the Carquinez Bridge and to the ports of Sacramento and Stockton. This site is powered by wind and solar panels. Therefore, during periods of extended cloud cover and little wind, this radio may not be of use until a generator restores the batteries. Its primary transceiver frequency is VHF-FM channel 14. Its guard frequencies are VHF-FM channels 16 and 13.

