

VTS as an Extension of Vessels' Bridge Navigation Teams

VTS San Francisco has authority through U.S. federal regulations to direct and control ship movements in the San Francisco Bay area. However, VTS SF policy is that VTS watchstanders think of themselves and perform like members of vessels' bridge navigation teams.

A vessel transit in San Francisco Bay is not seen as a shipboard-only evolution being aided by VTS; it is viewed as a carefully orchestrated team effort in which VTS has an important role.

To support this team-oriented effort, VTS SF actively promotes the concept of VTS as bridge team member. In VTS SF's aggressive outreach program, VTS watchstanders make at least 10 ship rides a year and visit various marine facilities. Pilots, ships' masters, and pilot candidates stand familiarization watches in the VTS operations center. VTS SF provides traffic management training for more than 3000 small-vessel operators a year.

Evidence of success in developing the VTS-mariner team approach may be found in the fact that in 2004, VTS SF successfully handled more than 100,000 transits without issuing ANY ship control directions.

Principal author: [REDACTED]

Position: VTS San Francisco Training Coordinator

Organization: U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco

Postal address: Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco
Bldg. 278 Yerba Buena Island
San Francisco, CA 94130
USA

Telephone: [REDACTED] extension [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

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