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Agenda item 8.5

Technical Domain / Task Number 1.3.1

Author(s) / Submitter(s) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Task 1.3.1. Produce a Recommendation / Guideline on VTS Communication

# Summary

## Purpose of the document

The purpose of this paper is to provide input for the consideration of the VTS Committee in the development of a Recommendation / Guideline on VTS Communication as part of its 2014-18 Work Programme.

# Background

The development of a Recommendation / Guideline on VTS Communication (Task 3.3.1) commenced at VTS39 in March 2015.

The objective of this Task is to provide common phraseology and procedures for the delivery of precise, simple and unambiguous communications from a VTS to the bridge team and allied services.

The scope of this Task includes:

* It should be a working document that is practical, limited in length and user friendly.
* The document should, where possible, be harmonised with other existing relevant documentation that provide communication guidance. It will review and supplement the IMO SMCP VTS section. It should also provide fresh advice that is not only coaching new VTS personnel but guards against complacency with more experienced operators.
* Key areas included in this document will be ground rules, message structure and a limited number of common phraseology.

IALA hosted a Workshop on Common Phraseology and Procedures for VTS Communications in February 2017. The purpose of the workshop was:

* Facilitate the exchange of best practices, ideas and knowledge amongst a wide range of VTS professionals and those from other sectors.
* To provide the VTS Committee with proposals, concepts and examples of best practice to assist in the development of IALA documentation and associated material addressing the delivery of VTS communications with a view to improving its effectiveness in both routine communications and in developing situations.

# Discussion

Noting that the new IALA Standards Scheme includes a Recommendation on VTS Communications a draft skeleton for the Recommendation (Attachment 1) has been prepared for the Committees consideration in progressing the information collated and documented at the IALA workshop in February 2017 (VTS43-3.2.8) and the draft Guideline currently under development by the Committee (refer VTS43-8.5.1 and VTS43-8.5.2) at VTS43.

# Action requested of the Committee

That the Committee give consideration to the draft skeleton for a Recommendation on VTS Communications (Attachment 1) in its consideration of:

* The information collated and documented at the IALA workshop in February 2017 (VTS43-3.2.8).
* The development of the IALA Guideline on VTS Communication (VTS43-8.5.1 and VTS43-8.5.2).

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| * IALA RECOMMENDATION |

V-XXXX

VTS communications

* **Edition 1.0**
* **Document date**

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

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| **Date** | **Page / Section Revised** | **Requirement for Revision** |
| 1. XXXXX | 1. All sections | 1. Initial release as Edition 1 under the title “xxxxxxxx” |
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* **THE IALA COUNCIL**

**RECALLING** Article 8 of the IALA Constitution regarding the authority, duties and functions of the Council,

**RECOGNISING** that IALA fosters the safe, economic and efficient movement of vessels through improvement and harmonisation of aids to navigation, including vessel traffic services, world-wide,

**RECOGNISING ALSO** that the level of safety and efficiency in the movement of maritime traffic within an area covered by a vessel traffic service would be enhanced by ensuring that VTS communications are harmonised through common phraseology, procedures and technology for the delivery of precise, simple and unambiguous communications to the bridge team and allied services.

**RECOGNISING ALSO** that under the general provisions of treaty law and IMO conventions Contracting Governments are responsible for giving effect to SOLAS Chapter V (Safety of Navigation) with respect to the implementation and delivery of VTS.

**RECOGNISING ALSO** that (SOLAS) Chapter V (Safety of Navigation) Regulation 12 Vessel Traffic Services requires Contracting Governments planning or implementing VTS, wherever possible, to follow the guidelines adopted by the Organization by Resolution A. 857(20) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services.

**RECOGNISING ALSO** that IMO Resolution A. 857(20), Annex section 2.1.3 of states that:

*“The efficiency of a VTS will depend on the reliability and continuity of communications and on the ability to provide good and unambiguous information.”*

**ADOPTS** Recommendation V-XXX on VTS Communications.

**RECOMMENDS** that Competent Authorities providing Vessel Traffic Services take into consideration the practices for communications and phraseology contained in this recommendation to ensure delivery of precise, simple and unambiguous communications to the bridge team and allied services.

**RECOMMENDS ALSO** that VTS authorities consider this recommendation, in conjunction with the standards set by the Competent Authority.

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that Competent Authorities, VTS Authorities and VTS training organisations consider this recommendation when planning personnel training.

**Annex**

**VTS Communications**

1. **OVERVIEW**

VTS is recognised 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 contracting Governments planning and implementing VTS shall, wherever possible, follow the guidelines developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The establishment and on-going operation of a VTS is a considerable investment. A significant proportion of this investment is ensuring the capability to interact and communicate with the traffic and to respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

A key factor to interacting with traffic is ensuring communications are effective and harmonised through common phraseology, procedures and technology for the delivery of precise, simple and unambiguous communications to the bridge team and allied services. This applies to both routine communications and in developing situations.

1. **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this document is to provide guidance for Competent Authorities and VTS Authorities to meet their obligations under SOLAS for the establishment and operation of VTS.In particular, it provides practices for interacting with traffic in a harmonised manner through common phraseology, procedures and technology for the delivery of precise, simple, standardised and unambiguous communications to the bridge team and allied services.

1. **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**3.1 Responsibilities**

A VTS system should provide the capability to monitor traffic within the VTS area, interact with the vessel traffic and respond to developing situations in a manner that enables the objectives of the VTS to be achieved.

IMO Resolution A.857(20) recognises that the use of differing vessel traffic service procedures may cause confusion to masters of vessels moving from one vessel traffic service area to another. With regards to communications between the VTS and a vessel, the following excerpts from IMO Resolution A.857(20) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services are applicable:

*The efficiency of a VTS will depend on the reliability and continuity of communications and on the ability to provide good and unambiguous information. The quality of accident prevention measures will depend on the system's capability of detecting a developing dangerous situation and on the ability to give timely warning of such dangers (2.1.3).*

*Communication between a VTS authority and a participating vessel should be conducted in accordance with the Guidelines and Criteria for Ship Reporting systems and should be limited to information essential to achieve the objectives of the VTS (2.4.1).*

*To respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area and to decide upon appropriate actions the acquired data should be processed and evaluated. Conclusions from the evaluation need to be communicated to participating vessels (2.5.2.3).*

**3.2 Practices**

A major contribution to the effective operation of a VTS is that communications with traffic is provided in harmonised manner through common phraseology, procedures and technology for the delivery of precise, simple and unambiguous communications to the bridge team and allied services. Key practices to ensure this include:

Summary list of key practices to be carried out in order to comply with this recommendation:

**For example:**

* Language
* Compiling a Message
* Delivering a Message
* Preparing to interact/communicate
* Speed
* Interpreting a Message
* Common Phraseology

**3.3 Implementation.**

Detailed information on implementing the practices specified in this Recommendation is provided in:

* IALA Guideline XXXX on Common Phraseology and Procedures for VTS Communications.
* <any future guidelines)