

ANNEX

DRAFT ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON GUIDELINES FOR VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety and the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships,

RECALLING ALSO regulation V/12 of the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 ("the Convention"), on vessel traffic services,

BEARING IN MIND the responsibility of Governments for the safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment in areas under their jurisdiction,

BEING AWARE that vessel traffic services are provided worldwide and make a valuable contribution to safety of navigation, improved efficiency of traffic flow and the protection of the marine environment,

RECOGNIZING that various organizational, operational and technological developments have taken place globally in a rapidly changing maritime domain since the adoption in 1997 of resolution A.857(20) on *Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services* and the revision of the current Guidelines became necessary,

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the level of safety and efficiency in the movement of maritime traffic within an area covered by a vessel traffic service is dependent upon close cooperation between those operating the vessel traffic service and participating ships,

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that the use of differing procedures may cause confusion to ship masters, and that vessel traffic services should be established and operated in a harmonized manner and in accordance with internationally approved guidelines,

NOTING that the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) has contributed significantly to the development of internationally harmonized guidance for vessel traffic services,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its [102nd] session,

1 **ADOPTS** the revised *Guidelines for vessel traffic services* set out in the annex to the present resolution;

2 **RECOMMENDS** Contracting Governments and Members of the Organization which are not Contracting Governments to the Convention to take into account the ~~annexed~~ Guidelines contained in the annex when planning and implementing a vessel traffic service in accordance with ~~SOLAS~~ regulation V/12 of the Convention;

3 ~~ALSO RECOMMENDS~~ ALSO Governments to encourage masters of ships navigating in an area for which a vessel traffic service is provided to make use of such a service;

4 **AUTHORIZES** the Maritime Safety Committee to keep the ~~annexed~~ aforementioned Guidelines under review and amend them, as appropriate;

5 **REVOKES** resolution A.857(20).

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 These Guidelines are associated with regulation V/12 of the ~~International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS)~~ and should be ~~complied with~~taken into account by Contracting Governments when planning, implementing and operating a vessel traffic service under national law. Members of the Organization which are not Contracting Governments to the Convention are also encouraged to ~~comply with~~take these guidelines into account.

1.2 IMO, in its role in regulating the planning, implementation and operation of vessel traffic services, is responsible for providing guidance on its establishment, operation, qualification and training. This includes a leadership role in providing a forum and framework for cooperation among Governments to facilitate the consistent and harmonized delivery of vessel traffic services worldwide.

1.3 IALA is recognized as an important contributor to IMO's role and responsibilities relating to vessel traffic services.

1.4 In complying with these Guidelines, Contracting Governments should take account of applicable IMO instruments and refer to the relevant international guidance prepared and published by appropriate international organizations.

2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used in connection with a vessel traffic service:

2.1 *Vessel traffic service (VTS)* means a service implemented by a Government with the capability to interact with vessel traffic and respond to developing situations within a vessel traffic service area to improve the safety and efficiency of navigation, contribute to safety of life at sea and support the protection of the environment.

2.2 *Competent authority* means the ~~authority~~entity made ~~legally~~ responsible by the Government for vessel traffic services.

2.3 *VTS provider* means the organization or entity ~~legally empowered~~authorized by the Government or ~~Competent authority~~ for the provision of to provide a vessel traffic service.

2.4 *VTS area* means the delineated, formally declared area for which the vessel traffic service provider is authorized~~legally empowered~~ to deliver a vessel traffic service.

2.5 *VTS personnel* means persons performing tasks associated with vessel traffic services, trained in vessel traffic service operations and appropriately qualified.

2.6 *Allied services* means services other than VTS involved in the safe and efficient passage of a ship through a VTS area, such as pilotage, tugs and linesman.

2.7 *Participating ship* means a ship ~~legally~~ required to participate with the VTS.

3 PURPOSE OF A VTS

3.1 The purpose of VTS is to contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and the protection of the environment within the VTS area by mitigating the development of unsafe situations through:

- .1 the provision of timely and relevant information on factors that may influence the ship's movements and assist on-board decision making. This may include:
 - .1 position, identity, intention and movements of ships;
 - .2 maritime safety information;
 - .3 limitations of ships in the VTS area that may impose restrictions on the navigation of other ships (e.g. manoeuvrability), or any other potential hindrances;
 - .4 other information such as reporting formalities and International Ship and Port Facility Security (~~ISPS~~) eCode details; and
 - .5 support to, and cooperation with, allied services;
- .2 the monitoring and management of ship traffic to ensure the safety and efficiency of ship movements. This may include:
 - .1 forward planning of ship movements;
 - .2 organizing ships underway;
 - .3 organizing space allocation;
 - .4 establishing a system of traffic clearances;
 - .5 establishing a system of voyage or passage plans;
 - .6 providing route advice; and
 - .7 ensuring compliance with and enforcement of regulatory provisions for which they are empowered;
- .3 responding to developing unsafe situations, which may include:
 - .1 a ship unsure of its route or position;
 - .2 a ship deviating from the route;
 - .3 a ship requiring guidance to an anchoring position;
 - .4 a ship that has defects or deficiencies, such as navigation or manoeuvring equipment failure;
 - .5 severe meteorological conditions (e.g. low visibility, strong winds);
 - .6 a ship at risk of grounding or collision; and
 - .7 emergency response or support to emergency services.

3.2 To achieve its purpose, a VTS should provide information or issue advice, warnings and instructions as deemed necessary.

4 REGULATORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 VTS is recognized internationally as a navigational safety measure through SOLAS regulation V/12 of the Convention.

4.2 Under the general provisions of treaty law and of IMO conventions, Contracting Governments are responsible for promulgating laws and regulations and for taking all other steps which may be necessary to give those instruments full and complete effect.

4.3 The establishment of a VTS is dependent on national law and relevant international conventions, recognizing factors such as the volume of traffic, degree of risk, geographic and environmental conditions.

4.4 ~~A VTS may be established beyond the territorial seas of a coastal State on the basis of voluntary participation. Such a~~ VTS may be established in association with an IMO adopted ships' routing system or mandatory ship reporting system, in accordance with ~~SOLAS~~ regulations V/10 and V/11 of the Convention, respectively.

4.5 A VTS may be established beyond the territorial seas of a coastal State to provide information and advice on the basis of voluntary participation.

~~4.6~~5 Contracting Governments should ensure that ships flying their flag comply with the requirements of VTS. Those Contracting Governments which have received information of an alleged violation of a VTS by a ship flying their flag should provide the Government which has reported the offence with details of any appropriate action taken.

5 VTS RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Contracting Government should:

- .1 establish a legal basis for VTS that gives effect to ~~SOLAS~~ regulation V/12 of the Convention;
- .2 appoint and authorize a competent authority for VTS;
- .3 take appropriate action against a ship flying its flag that is reported not to have complied with the provisions of a VTS; and
- .4 take account of future technical and other developments recognized by the Organization relating to VTS.

5.2 The Competent authority for VTS should:

- .1 establish a regulatory framework for establishing and operating VTSs in accordance with relevant international conventions and IMO instruments, IALA standards and national law;
- .2 authorize a VTS provider to operate a VTS within a delineated VTS area;
- .3 ensure that VTS training is approved and VTS personnel are certified; and
- .4 establish a compliance and enforcement framework with respect to violations of VTS regulatory requirements.

5.3 The VTS provider should:

- .1 ensure the VTS conforms with the regulatory framework set by the Competent authority for VTS;
- .2 set operational objectives for the VTS that are consistent with improving the safety and efficiency of ship traffic and protection of the environment. The objectives set should be routinely evaluated to demonstrate they are being achieved;
- .3 ensure that appropriate equipment, systems and facilities for the delivery of VTS are provided;
- .4 ensure that a VTS is adequately staffed and that VTS personnel are appropriately trained and qualified; and
- .5 ensure that information regarding requirements and procedures of the VTS and the categories of ships required to participate in the VTS are promulgated in appropriate nautical publications.

6 PARTICIPATING SHIPS

6.1 In a VTS area, participating ships should:

- .1 provide reports or information required by the VTS;
- .2 take into account the information provided, or advice and warnings issued, by the VTS;
- .3 comply with the requirements and instructions given to the ship by the VTS unless contradictory safety and/or marine environment protection reasons exist; and
- .4 report any pollution or dangers to navigation to the VTS.

6.2 Ships not designated as participating ships may take part in a VTS subject to complying with the requirements of the VTS and any guidance issued by the VTS provider.

6.3 Masters may be required to report on their actions should they decide to disregard any instruction given by a VTS.

7 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

7.1 Nothing in these Guidelines change the Master's ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the operation of the ship including the responsibility for safe navigation.

7.2 The need for VTS should be assessed and reviewed through risk assessment.

7.3 VTS communications should be timely, clear, concise and unambiguous.

7.4 VTS operates within a comprehensive environment in which ships, ports, allied services and other organizations fulfil their respective roles, as appropriate.

7.5 Effective harmonized data exchange and information sharing is fundamental to overall operational efficiency and safety. VTS providers are encouraged to make use of automated reporting where possible.

7.6 VTS operations should be harmonized with ship reporting systems, ship routeing measures and allied services as appropriate.

7.7 Where two or more Governments have a common interest in establishing a VTS in a particular area, they should develop a coordinated vessel traffic service on the basis of an agreement between them. Where a coordinated vessel traffic service is established, it should have uniform procedures and operations.

8 QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

8.1 A major factor in the operation of a VTS is the competence of its personnel.

8.2 VTS personnel should only be considered competent when appropriately trained and qualified for their VTS duties. This includes:

- .1 satisfactorily completing generic VTS training approved by a Competent Authority;
- .2 satisfactorily completing On-the-Job training at the VTS where the person is employed;
- .3 undergoing periodic assessments and revalidation training to ensure competence is maintained; and
- .4 being in possession of appropriate certification.

9 IALA STANDARDS

9.1 IALA publishes standards and associated recommendations, guidelines and model courses specifically related to the establishment and operation of VTS to contribute to achieving worldwide harmonization of VTS.

9.2 Contracting Governments are encouraged to take into account IALA standards and associated recommendations, guidelines and model courses.