



Marine Notice 15/2013

Vessel Traffic Services – Responsibilities of Authorities

This Marine Notice provides information on the responsibilities of authorities providing vessel traffic services (VTS) as set out in international instruments and as prescribed in *Marine Order 64 (Vessel Traffic Services) 2013* (MO 64).

MO 64 is in effect from 1 September 2013. This Marine Order identifies AMSA as the Competent Authority for VTS in Australia and indicates how VTS Authorities can be appointed in the Australian Legal Framework.

International Framework

The International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) is implemented in Australia by the *Navigation Act 2012*.

Regulation 12 of SOLAS Chapter V permits Australia to arrange for the establishment of vessel traffic services where the volume of traffic or the degree of risk justifies such services.

Australia follows the *Guidelines for vessel traffic services* (IMO Resolution A.857(20)), which provide for the operation of VTS Authorities under instruments of authority issued by the Competent Authority.

Areas of Responsibility

The IMO Guidelines define the responsibilities of a Competent Authority and VTS Authority as follows:

- **Competent Authority** - the authority made responsible, in whole or in part, by the Government for safety, including environmental safety, and efficiency of vessel traffic and the protection of the environment.
- **VTS Authority** - the authority with responsibility for the management, operation and co-ordination of the VTS, interaction with participating vessels and the safe and effective provision of the service.

Competent Authority

The Competent Authority is responsible for Australia's general obligations under SOLAS and in accordance with the IMO Guidelines, associated IALA Recommendations and

Guidelines and any other standards established. Key responsibilities include:

- leading on national policy for VTS in Australia;
- providing advice to government on legislation with respect to the establishment and operation of VTS in Australia;
- establishing and reviewing national standards for VTS;
- authorisation of VTS Authorities;
- auditing and reviewing the performance of the VTS;
- establishing the need for a coastal VTS outside the areas of jurisdiction of State Authorities;
- establishing and reviewing training standards for all VTS personnel;
- providing accreditation of organisations involved in VTS training and conducting a regular review of training and training standards;
- promulgating declared VTS and their characteristics.

VTS Authorities

The VTS authority is responsible for the operation of the service type(s) prescribed within the area designated for each individual VTS in accordance with the IMO Guidelines, associated IALA Recommendations and Guidelines and any standards established by the Competent Authority for VTS. Key responsibilities include:

1. In the context of establishing a VTS:
 - establishing the need for the VTS;
 - establishing the service type/s to be delivered, based on the outcome above;
 - ensuring that a legal basis for the operation of a VTS is provided for;
 - applying to AMSA for designation of its VTS and approval of its VTS Area in accordance with current regulations.
2. Where authorised by the Competent Authority, operate the VTS within national legislation and international guidelines, including:
 - ensuring the objectives of the VTS are met;

- ensuring that the VTS is operated in conformity with requirements;
- maintaining appropriate standards of communications on channels assigned for VTS purposes;
- ensuring that sufficient staff, appropriately qualified and suitably trained, are available to provide the type of service declared;
- ensuring that equipment appropriate to the type of service declared is available;
- ensuring that VTS personnel are vested with the appropriate authority and / or delegations required to fulfil their duties.

Australian legal framework

Section 213 of the *Navigation Act 2012* allows regulations to be made in relation to vessel traffic services. MO64 is made for this purpose.

MO64 establishes AMSA as the Competent Authority for VTS in Australia and as a result AMSA can provide for the following:

- authorisation and auditing of VTS Authorities;
- accreditation and auditing of VTS training organisations;
- provision of reports and information to a VTS Authority by specified persons in relation to matters including the identity, intended passage and geographical location of vessels.

Marine Order 64 also provides for the recognition of training organisations previously accredited by AMSA.

For further information on the requirements see: www.amsa.gov.au/navigation/services/vessel-traffic-services/

Marine Order 64 (Vessel Traffic Services) 2013 - www.amsa.gov.au/vessels/standards-regulations/marine-orders/

IMO *Guidelines for vessel traffic services* (Resolution A.857(20)) - www.imo.org/knowledgecentre/indexofimoresolutions/Pages/Default.aspx

IALA Recommendation V-103 *Recommendation on Standards for Training and Certification of VTS Personnel* - www.iala-aism.org/iala/index.php

Where additional information is required queries may be sent to:

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