



A Vessel Traffic Service is a service implemented by a Competent Authority, designed to improve safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The service should have the capability to interact with traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

*IMO Guideline for Vessel Traffic Services  
Resolution A.857(20)*

## Why adopt a VTS in Guernsey?

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) has been ratified on behalf of the Bailiwick. Regulation 12 of Chapter V of SOLAS requires the contracting government to arrange for the establishment of a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) where, in their opinion, the volume of traffic or the degree of risk justifies such a service. The regulation requires that the contracting government plans and implements VTS where possible following the guidelines developed by the IMO (International Maritime Organisation).

A Statutory Harbour Authority (in this case Guernsey Harbours) is responsible for assessing the need and suitable type of VTS. A formal assessment of navigational risk, as part of the preparation for introduction of the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), has identified the need for a VTS in Guernsey.

In addition, one of the recommendations published in The Marine Accident Investigation Branch report into the grounding of Commodore Clipper in July 2014 (Report 18/2015) was for the States of Guernsey to improve the standard of Vessel Traffic Service in the Little Russel, as guided by the principles in MGN 401 - Vessel Traffic Services and Local Port Services in the UK.

## What level of VTS will Guernsey adopt?

There are 3 levels of service which can be provided under a VTS. It has been determined that the appropriate level for Guernsey is a Traffic Organisational (TOS).

A traffic organisation service is designed to prevent the development of conflicting maritime traffic situations and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic within the VTS area.

The traffic organization service entails the operational management of traffic and the forward planning of vessel movements to prevent congestion and conflicting situations. It is particularly relevant in times of high traffic density, or when the movement of special transports may affect the flow of other traffic. The service may also include establishing and operating a system of traffic clearances or VTS sailing plans or both in relation to priority of movements, allocation of space, mandatory reporting of movements in the VTS area, routes to be followed, speed limits to be observed or other appropriate measures which are considered necessary by the VTS authority.

## Do we have suitably qualified people to act as VTS Officers?

The International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) V103 publication recommends minimum standards for training and Certification of VTS personnel. This was introduced in May 1998. These recommendations now form the internationally recognised training requirements for staff that operate such services. The PMSC and Guide to Good Practice also endorse this training.

Our Port Control Officers and their Supervisors are all trained to the internationally recognised IALA V103/I standard.

## What is the participation criteria?

Although the VTS Officers will monitor all vessel movements within the VTS area, participation will be mandatory for vessels of 20 meters or more in length and/or vessels engaged in towing.

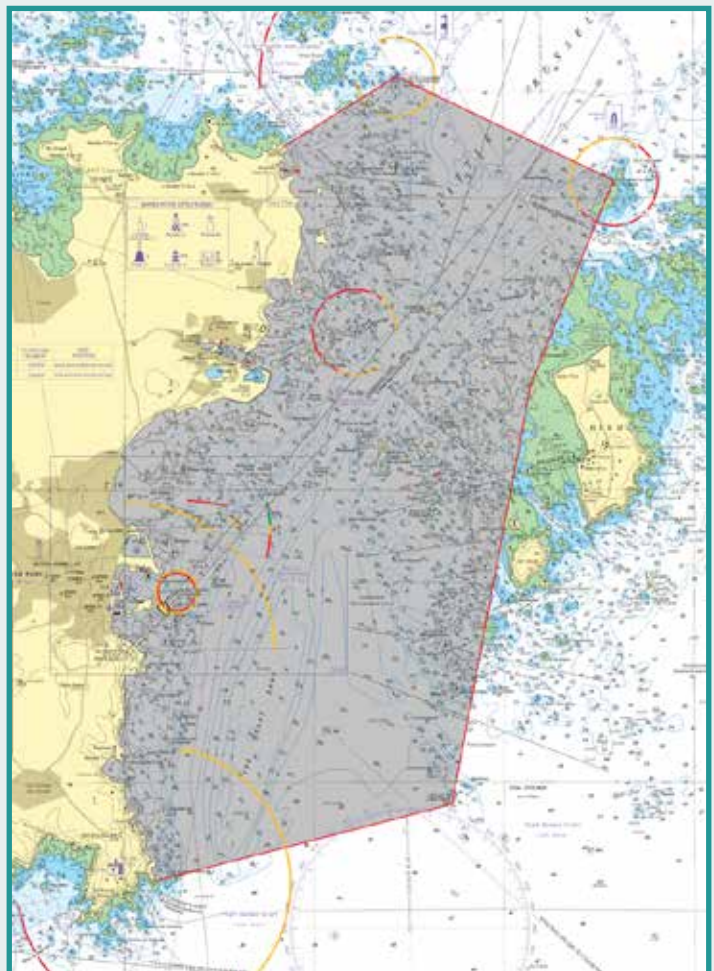
## What is the VTS area?

The Guernsey VTS area is enclosed by a line joining:

**St Martin's Point – Lower Heads Buoy – Le Plat Houmet – Tautenay – Platte Fougere – Fort Doyle**

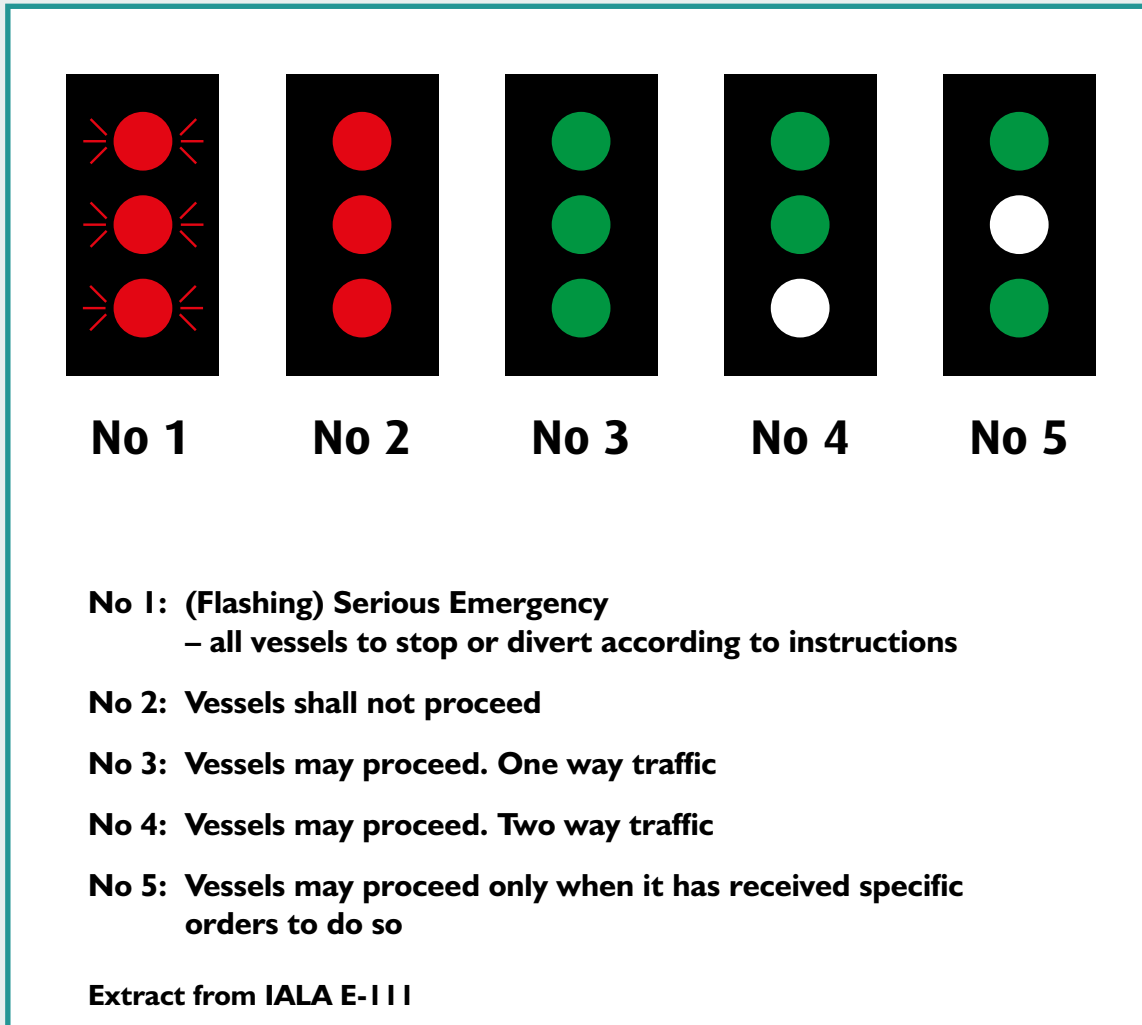
## What will be different?

The Port Control Officers (now VTS Officers) will be using Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) which will, at first, seem more formal. This language is used to remove any ambiguity or misunderstanding, particularly important for visiting vessels where English is not the first language on the bridge.



There will also be a requirement to advise Guernsey VTS when you are entering the VTS area.

We will be adopting IALA “traffic lights” in the harbour. Again these are internationally recognised signals that give the VTS Officer more flexibility in controlling harbour movements. These lights will apply to all vessels entering or leaving the harbour.



## How will the area be monitored?

The VTS area will be monitored by radar, AIS, VHF and CCTV. This monitoring will be recorded with the ability to playback periods of interest or for incident/accident investigation.

One radar scanner is sited on the White Rock Breakwater with another on a mast on the Longue Hogue reclamation site.

## What are the benefits?

Guernsey VTS will improve navigational safety within the Little Russel by gaining positive control of traffic within the Little Russel, monitoring movements, speeds and potential conflicts in all states of visibility and weather. In addition to the VTS role, radar coverage of the Little Russel would prove invaluable in search and rescue incidents, allowing quick identification and location of vessels requiring assistance, particularly at night or in restricted visibility, and providing an accurate indication of a disabled vessel adrift.



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**Further Information:**

**IALA VTS Manual (Edition 6)**

**IALA Recommendation E-111 on Port Traffic Signals**