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Statutory basis  
Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005), section 8

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Provisions on sanctions for non-compliance are laid down in:  
Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005), sections 28 b and 29

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Implemented EU legislation:  
Directive 2002/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system and repealing Council Directive 93/75/EEC

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Modification details:  
Revokes the Annex to the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency's decision on the amendment of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency's decision on the establishment of vessel traffic services on 7 December 2021

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## **Annex to the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency's decision "On the amendment of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency's decision on the establishment of vessel traffic services"**

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## **1 The VTS service provider operating the vessel traffic service**

The VTS service provider operating the vessel traffic service is Fintraffic Vessel Traffic Services Ltd.

The Vessel Traffic Service is maintained on the basis of an agreement between the VTS service provider and the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency. In areas managed by other fairway operators, the vessel traffic service is maintained on the basis of cooperation agreements referred to in section 16 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005).

## **2 Cooperation agreements of VTS service providers**

### **2.1 Cooperation agreements of the VTS areas in the Gulf of Finland**

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Helsinki of 1 July 2008

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Sköldvik of 1 June 2014

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Tolkinen of 1 June 2014

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of Hanko of 1 November 2019

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of HaminaKotka of 1 December 2020

### **2.2 Cooperation agreements of the VTS areas in Western Finland**

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Pori of 1 November 2016

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Turku of 1 January 2012

Cooperation agreement between the Finnish Transport Agency and the Port of Naantali of 1 June 2011

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of Pietarsaari of 1 October 2019

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of Vaasa of 1 October 2019

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of Rauma of 1 October 2020

Cooperation agreement between Vessel Traffic Services Finland Ltd and the Port of Oulu of 1 January 2021

### **3 Provided vessel traffic service**

The VTS service provider maintains vessel traffic services in the VTS areas.

Vessel traffic services are provided in the merchant shipping fairways (VL 1 and VL 2) and in the associated water areas. In other water areas, VTS centres provide vessel traffic services as specified in the agreement between the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency and Traffic Management Company Fintraffic Ltd.

The service availability targets are specified in more detail in the agreement between the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency and Traffic Management Company Fintraffic Ltd. In its operating manual, the VTS service provider must describe the procedures for implementing changes in the availability of the service in the VTS areas during disruptions.

The VTS service provider must have an operating manual referred to in section 19 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act on the service laid down in this decision to establish a VTS and on other matters laid down in the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

#### **Languages used in vessel traffic services**

Under section 4 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act, vessel traffic services are provided in Finnish, Swedish or English. In order to improve safety and achieve a uniform situational picture, English is the primary language used in communication in the VTS areas along the Finnish coast. If necessary, the service is also provided in Finnish and Swedish.

The primary use of English is based on the need to ensure that the masters of foreign vessels have the opportunity to comply with the rules and regulations of the VTS area regarding reporting and traffic management and to report any safety issues they have observed also when the vessel has a pilot or the master has a Pilotage Exemption Certificate licence in English in accordance with the Pilotage Act.

#### **Information**

The VTS service provider must provide the vessel with information that may affect its movement and decision-making upon reporting, at regular intervals, whenever necessary or when the vessel requests it. Information is provided on all the matters laid down in section 5 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

The VTS Centres provide information on winter navigation and icebreaking services to vessels sailing to Finnish ports in accordance with the Act on the Ice Classes of Ships and Icebreaker Assistance (1121/2005) and the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency's up-to-date winter navigation guidelines.

#### **Addressing developing and existing incidents**

The VTS service provider must assist a vessel at its request or when the VTS service provider finds it necessary in the event of a threat of a hazardous situation. The possible incidents are specified in section 6 (2) of the Vessel Traffic Service Act. The VTS service provider may intervene in developing and existing incidents in the manner specified in section 6 (3) of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

The VTS service provider must describe the practices for intervening in developing and existing incidents in the operating manual. The VTS service provider will provide more information on the implementation of the intervention in developing and existing incidents.

## **Vessel traffic organisation**

The VTS service provider must organise traffic in the VTS area. Under section 7 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act, the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency issues the regulations on permanent traffic arrangements in the VTS areas. In addition to permanent vessel traffic arrangements, vessel traffic can be temporarily managed in accordance with section 17 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

Separation of traffic arrangements is used in the operating areas of the VTS centres of the Gulf of Finland and Western Finland and in the Saimaa VTS area. The separation arrangement may be based on the prevailing conditions, such as poor visibility, exceptional wind conditions, water level and ice conditions, or traffic conditions, such as congestion, special transport, or other factors that restrict or endanger traffic. The separation may be based on time or distance. The VTS service provider provides information on the separation arrangements and the used separation method.

The VTS service provider must describe traffic arrangements in the operating manual and provide more detailed information on the implementation of vessel traffic arrangements and management.

## **4 VTS areas and traffic notifications**

### **4.1 Traffic notifications**

The vessel must issue a notification to the VTS Centre of the following:

- notification of arrival to the VTS area
- notification before anchoring
- notification of departure before departure from anchorage
- notification after docking
- notification of departure before undocking
- notifications at notification points in the VTS area

Specifications and exceptions for specific areas related to traffic notifications are described in sections 4.2 and 4.3 if necessary.

### **4.2 Western Finland VTS Centre**

The VTS Centre for Western Finland in Turku maintains vessel traffic services in the areas of Bothnia VTS, West Coast VTS, Archipelago VTS and Saimaa VTS.

The VTS Centre maintains vessel traffic services in the VTS area, including the administrative areas referred to in the cooperation agreements in section 2.2.

#### **4.2.1 Bothnia VTS area**

The corner points of the areas:

- 1) From Ritgrund lighthouse, 63° 25.5' N, 021° 30.5' E
- 2) to the territorial sea boundary at 63° 40.0' N, 021° 31.0' E
- 3) observing the territorial sea boundary to Tornio

**4.2.2 West Coast VTS area**

The corner points of the areas:

- 1) Hylkkari sector light, 60° 57.2' N, 021° 09.5' E
- 2) to the west at 60° 57.2' N, 020° 46.5' E
- 3) to the territorial sea boundary at 61° 07.6' N, 020° 46.5' E
- 4) observing the territorial sea boundary to 62° 36.5' N, 020° 30.0' E
- 5) 63° 21.5' N, 020° 30.0' E
- 6) Valassaaret lighthouse 63° 25.3' N, 021° 04.1' E
- 7) Ritgrund lighthouse, 63° 25.5' N, 021° 30.5' E

**Notification points**

Southbound vessels must notify Archipelago VTS on Channel 71 twenty minutes before passing Hylkkari.

Northbound vessels must notify West Coast VTS on Channel 9 twenty minutes before passing Hylkkari.

**4.2.3 Archipelago VTS area**

The outer boundaries of the VTS area:

- 1) On Isokari from Hylkkari sector light, (60° 57.2' N, 021° 09.5' E) to the west, to point 60° 57.2' N, 020° 46.5' E and from there to Rannö lighthouse (60° 31.7' N, 020° 11.9' E)
- 2) 6 nautical miles from Marhällan sector light, (60° 01.9' N, 019° 52.3' E)
- 3) 6 nautical miles from Nyhamn lighthouse, (59° 57.6' N, 019° 57.3' E)
- 4) 12 nautical miles from Utö lighthouse, (59° 46.9' N, 021° 22.1' E)
- 5) In the east, from Fläckgrund sector light, (59° 52.4' N, 022° 50.2' E) to point 59° 55.0' N, 022° 53.0' E and from there to the Port of Förby (60° 06,5' N, 022° 53,0' E)

**Notification points**

Vessels arriving at, departing from, or crossing a merchant shipping fairway must give notification 10 minutes before arrival, departure or crossing.

Commuter ferries and ferries in archipelago traffic operating to the east of Kihti lighthouse (60° 04,6' N, 021° 08,3' E) and equipped with a functioning and operational automatic identification system (AIS) must only issue a notification of arrival, departure or crossing when visibility is less than 1 nautical mile or at the request of the VTS service provider.

The vessel must give notification 20 minutes before passing the following points:

1. Fagerholm
2. Lövskär\*
3. Smörgrund
4. Hylkkari\*\*
5. Ljungö
6. Långnäs\*\*\*
7. Ledsund or the southern side of Ledskär
8. Fläckgrund \*\*\*\*
9. Askgrund
10. Marhällän or Korsö \*\*\*\*\*

The vessel must give notification when passing the following point:

11. Orhisaari, when the ship is heading west. The notification must indicate the planned route alternative.

\* The notification must indicate the planned route alternative.

\*\* Southbound vessels must notify Archipelago VTS on Channel 71 twenty minutes before passing Hylkkari.

\*\* Northbound vessels must notify West Coast VTS on Channel 9 twenty minutes before passing Hylkkari.

\*\*\*Vessels bound from Godby or to Godby must report 10 minutes before passing the Port of Långnäs.

\*\*\*\* Westbound vessels must notify Archipelago VTS on Channel 71 twenty minutes before passing Fläckgrund.

\*\*\*\*Eastbound vessels must notify Hanko VTS on Channel 67 twenty minutes before passing Fläckgrund.

\*\*\*\*\* Vessels bound to Mariehamn must report 20 minutes before passing either Marhällän or Korsö, depending on which fairway they intend to use. Vessels departing from Mariehamn must indicate which fairway they intend to use when giving a notification of departure.

### **4.3 Gulf of Finland VTS Centre**

The Gulf of Finland VTS Centre, located in Helsinki, maintains vessel traffic services in the areas of Kotka VTS, Hanko VTS and Helsinki VTS. The Helsinki VTS area is divided into two sectors.

The VTS Centre maintains vessel traffic services in the VTS area, including the administrative areas referred to in the cooperation agreements in section 2.1.

#### **4.3.1 Hanko VTS area**

The coordinates of the corner points of the area:

- 1) 59° 55.0' N, 022° 53.0' E
- 2) 59° 52.4' N, 022° 50.2' E
- 3) 59° 40.5' N, 022° 50.2' E
- 4) 59° 40.5' N, 023° 22.3' E
- 5) 59° 42.0' N, 023° 33.0' E
- 6) 59° 52.1' N, 023° 33.0' E

##### **Notification points**

Westbound vessels must notify Archipelago VTS on Channel 71 twenty minutes before passing Fläckgrund.

Eastbound vessels must notify Hanko VTS on Channel 67 twenty minutes before passing Fläckgrund.

Vessels must give notification 20 minutes before passing the Koverhar fairway (Nyberska) when arriving from the direction of Barösund.

#### **4.3.2 Helsinki VTS area**

##### **VTS area Sector 1**

The coordinates of the corner points of the area:

- 1) 60° 08.7' N, 024° 43.5' E
- 2) 59° 55.5' N, 024° 43.5' E
- 3) 59° 58.2' N, 025° 20.0' E
- 4) 60° 10.3' N, 025° 20.0' E
- 5) 60° 15.5' N, 025° 25.0' E

##### **VTS area Sector 2**

The coordinates of the corner points of the area:

Sector 2 Western (Porkkala)

- 1) 59° 52.1' N, 023° 33.0' E
- 2) 59° 42.0' N, 023° 33.0' E
- 3) 59° 55.5' N, 024° 43.5' E
- 4) 60° 08.7' N, 024° 43.5' E

**Sector 2 Eastern (Emäsalo)**

- 1) 60° 15.5' N, 025° 25.0' E
- 2) 60° 10.3' N, 025° 20.0' E
- 3) 59° 58.2' N, 025° 20.0' E
- 4) 59° 59.5' N, 025° 44.5' E
- 5) 60° 12.5' N, 025° 41.2' E

Vessels in local traffic operating off Helsinki with a functional and operational automatic identification system (AIS) must issue a traffic notification only when visibility is less than 1 nautical mile.

**Notification points**

Sector 1: The vessel must give notification 15 minutes before arriving at Kustaanmiekka strait or Särkänsalmi strait.

Sector 1: The vessel must give notification when passing Itätoukki on the way to the Port of Vuosaari.

Sector 1: The vessel must give notification on the shore fairway 15 minutes before passing Kuiva Hevonen.

Sector 2 Vessels must give notification 15 minutes before arrival at Barösund.

**4.3.3 Kotka VTS area**

The coordinates of the corner points of the area:

- 1) 60° 12.5' N, 025° 41.2' E
- 2) 60° 05.6' N, 025° 43.0' E
- 3) 60° 10.3' N, 026° 39.0' E
- 4) 60° 12.1' N, 026° 45.9' E
- 5) 60° 12.0' N, 027° 17.6' E
- 6) National border between Finland and Russia

**Notification points**

Vessels must give notification 10 minutes before arrival at Ruotsinsalmi.

**4.3.4 National waters of the Gulf of Finland**

The Gulf of Finland Reporting (GOFREP) registration system is maintained outside the areas listed above, in the national waters of the Gulf of Finland, being limited to Finland's territorial waters.

**4.4 Saimaa VTS area**

The Western Finland VTS Centre operates the Saimaa VTS area.

The Saimaa VTS area covers deep-water routes in the Saimaa region, starting from the mouth of the Saimaa Canal. The Saimaa Canal is not part of the VTS area.

**Notification points**

Vessels operating in the area must give notification 10 minutes before passing the following points:

1. Kuhaluoto, when the vessel is heading south
2. Vekaransalonsalmi
3. Hätingvirta
4. Puumalansalmi
5. Pahikka
6. Vekaransalmi
7. Härkinsalo, when the vessel is heading north
8. Kommersalmi, when the vessel is heading south
9. Laitaatsalmi
10. Matarinsalmi
11. Haponlahden kaivanto, when the vessel is heading north
12. Sorsavirta, when the vessel is approaching from the Joensuu direction
13. Virtasaari, when the vessel is approaching from the Varkaus direction
14. Tappuvirta
15. Tahkosalmi
16. Sinikonniemi, when the vessel is heading south
17. Muuraispuro, when the vessel is heading north
18. Patasalmi, when the vessel is heading north
19. Kolikon kaivanto, when the vessel is heading south
20. Kortessalmi, when the vessel is heading north
21. Aittoluoto, when the vessel is heading south
22. Hanhivirta
23. Vihtakanta
24. Vuosalmi, when the vessel is heading north
25. Vuoharju, when the vessel is heading south

## **5 Minimum number and qualifications of VTS service provider personnel**

The VTS service provider must ensure that the VTS centres have a sufficient number of personnel to maintain vessel traffic service.

VTS service providers must ensure that all VTS operators and VTS supervisors are trained and qualified in accordance with the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

The required number of vessel traffic service personnel in Finland is at least seven person-years per workstation and one manager per centre.

## **6 Operating methods and working hours of the VTS service provider**

VTS centres maintain vessel traffic services 24 hours a day.

Vessel traffic services are provided in Lake Saimaa during the period of operation of the Saimaa deep-water route. The Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency provides information on the period of operation of the Saimaa deep-water route. The VTS service provider provides separate information on the beginning and end of the Saimaa VTS period of operation.

The operating practices of the VTS service provider are described in the operating manual referred to in section 19 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act, which is maintained by the VTS service provider. The operating manual is based on the Vessel Traffic Service Act, the establishment decision and the standards, recommendations and guidelines of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).

## **7 The location of the VTS centre and the technical systems of the VTS centre and the VTS area**

The VTS centres are located in:

- The Western Finland Vessel Traffic Centre (Archipelago VTS, West Coast VTS, Bothnia VTS and Saimaa VTS), Turku
- The Gulf of Finland Vessel Traffic Centre (Hanko VTS, Helsinki VTS and Kotka VTS), Helsinki

The technical systems of the VTS centres and VTS areas must comply with IALA standard S1040.

The vessel traffic service is based on the situational picture of the VTS area and the marine VHF connection.

On the coast, the situational picture of the VTS area is based on a radar image and the vessels' Automatic Identification System (AIS).

In Lake Saimaa, the situational picture of the VTS area is based on the vessels' Automatic Identification System (AIS).

In addition, the Vessel Traffic Service uses official water, wave height and ice data as well as marine weather data and forecasts.

The situational picture in the VTS area and VHF radio traffic are recorded as required by section 16 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act in all VTS centres.

## **8 Radio channels used in vessel traffic services and more detailed instructions on vessel notifications**

### **Used radio channels**

The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency has allocated VHF channels 9, 67 and 71 to the Vessel Traffic Service. The channels used by the VTS areas are:

Channel 9: West Coast VTS, Helsinki VTS sector 2 and Saimaa VTS

Channel 67: Bothnia VTS, Hanko VTS and Kotka VTS

Channel 71: Archipelago VTS and Helsinki VTS Sector 1

### **More detailed instructions on vessel notifications**

Vessels give notifications as provided for the VTS areas in section 4 of this decision.

In addition, on request, vessels must provide the information referred to in Annex I to Directive 2002/59/EC Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system.

The master of the vessel must report incidents and accidents referred to in section 23 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act using the radio channels specified for the VTS areas.

## **9 Reporting**

The VTS service provider must report to the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency any significant deviations in the service specified in this decision (service level and technical disruptions affecting the service).

The VTS service provider must report to the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency any negligence and violations detected in supervision referred to in section 28 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.