

VTS San Francisco User Education Program

Introduction

Purpose VTS's operational philosophy is to act as part of vessels' bridge navigation teams. The VTS User Education Program is intended to help implement that philosophy by teaching mariners how VTS works and how they can work smoothly with VTS.

Contents

Topic	See page...
Program overview	2
An Introduction to VTS San Francisco	3
VMRS Reporting Procedures and RNA Regulations	4
VTS Operations Center	5
Pilotage preparation	6
VTS San Francisco	7
VTS User Education Program Completion Checklist	

Promulgation date This program is effective as of 4/9/01. It replaces the VTS Pilot Familiarization Program.

Point of contact F. Scott Humphrey
Vessel Traffic Service
Yerba Buena Island
San Francisco, CA 94130
(415) 556-2950 ext. 112
shumphrey@d11.uscg.mil

Program overview

Phases The VTS User Education Program consists of three phases. They are listed and briefly described below. Each phase is described in greater detail in the following pages.

Phase	Description	Time
1	Introduction to Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco	1 hour
2	Vessel Movement Reporting System procedures	3 hours
3	VTS Operations Center	5 hours

SF Bay Region pilotage Marine Safety Office (MSO) San Francisco requires that personnel sitting for pilotage get VTS training. To meet this requirement, pilotage candidates must complete all three phases of the VTS User Education Program.

Scheduling Phases one and two will be presented at scheduled times. For special presentations, contact VTS San Francisco at least five working days in advance.

Phase three training must be scheduled at least five days in advance. Since this training is conducted at VTS San Francisco in the Operations Center, VTS will carefully consider operational needs when scheduling this phase. Only one person at a time will be scheduled for this phase.

Certificate of completion At the beginning you will be given a performance checklist.

The completion of each program phase will be annotated on your performance checklist.

VTS San Francisco will issue a signed certificate of completion for each phase. In order to complete each phase, you must meet the phase objectives.

An Introduction to VTS San Francisco

Overview

An Introduction to VTS San Francisco is phase one of the VTS User Education Program. It is a one-hour program that is conducted at Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) San Francisco or, under special circumstances or for large groups, on-site at your location.

This phase can be customized to meet your operational needs or to meet the needs of a special project in the San Francisco Bay region.

This introduction includes an overview of the VTS mission, VTS area geographic boundaries, VTS equipment capabilities and limitations, VTS control center layout, and VTS personnel duties. You will also receive an explanation of VTS participation and communications requirements.

Target audience

- This program is perfect for anyone who desires general knowledge of VTS operations in the San Francisco Bay region.
 - This phase is a prerequisite for phases two and three of the VTS User Education Program.
-

Objectives

Upon completion of this phase you will know:

1. the overarching mission of VTS San Francisco and how VTS San Francisco's operational philosophy supports that mission;
2. how significant historical events affected the development of VTS San Francisco operations;
3. the location of VTS Area boundaries;
4. who is required to use the VTS;
5. what radio channels VTS uses to communicate with vessels and where those channels are used;
6. the locations, capabilities, and limitations of VTS radar, closed-circuit television, and radio sites;
7. how the VTS Operations Center is staffed and how the vessel traffic workload is distributed among the VTS Operations Center staff.

VMRS Reporting Procedures and RNA Regulations

Synopsis

Vessel Movement Reporting System Reporting Procedures and Regulated Navigation Area Regulations is phase two of the VTS San Francisco User Education Program. It is a three-hour program conducted at VTS San Francisco. Under special circumstances or with large groups, this phase can be held at your location.

The material in this phase is divided into two closely-related subparts.

1. VMRS Reporting Procedures: Here you will be introduced to the VMRS reporting requirements and you will be given an overview of the objectives of the VMRS. You will learn how to perform each of four VMRS reports, and you will learn the contents of the reports and the sequencing of those contents.
 2. Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) Regulations: Here you will be introduced to the RNA regulations and you will be given a brief overview of how these regulations developed. You will learn the general regulations (those that apply in all RNAs) and the specific regulations (those that impose specific restrictions in each specific area). You will also learn the deviation request procedures and VTS's role in enforcing the RNA regulations.
-

Variations of the program

This program is customized for each of the three types of VMRS users:

1. power-driven vessels of 40 or more meters
2. towing vessels of eight or more meters
3. passenger vessels certificated to carry 50 or more passengers.

Although this material is VMRS user-type-specific, special programs can be further customized to accommodate groups consisting of more than one VMRS user type.

Target audience

- An Introduction to VTS San Francisco is a prerequisite for this program.
 - This program is perfect for anyone who controls a vessel that navigates in the San Francisco Bay Region if that vessel is subject to the National VTS Regulations or to the RNA Regulations.
 - This program is required for personnel who intend to sit for pilotage. It is perfect for any bridge personnel who strive to improve their knowledge of these important regulations and procedures.
-

Objectives

Upon completion of this phase you will know:

1. how and when to make each of the four VMRS reports;
2. how to sequence the information in the Sailing Plan report;
3. the relationship of the communications that occur between the VMRS user and VTS throughout a vessel's VTS check-in process;
4. the locations and geographic boundaries of each of the seven RNAs;
5. the requirements and restrictions set forth by the three General RNA Regulations and by the five Specific RNA Regulations;
6. the communication procedure (and requirement) for requesting a deviation from a regulation;
7. the RNA-related communications requirements associated with the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge RNA;
8. the civil penalty associated with the violation of these regulations.

VTS Operations Center

Synopsis

VTS Operations Center is phase three of the VTS San Francisco User Education Program. It is a five-hour session conducted at VTS San Francisco in the Operations Center.

During this phase you will receive an in-depth look at the **Coast Guard VTS System** (the computer system and surveillance network used by VTS San Francisco). Through direct hands-on experience you will learn how the VTS operator uses database forms and lists to compile transit records and you will learn why consistent, concise communications procedures on the part of the mariners are so important in maintaining an efficient Vessel Movement Reporting System. While stationed at a live CG VTS System console, you will get experience using the CG VTS System electronic display, the remote control closed-circuit television system, and the remote control radio communications system.

During this session you will observe VTS personnel making regulatory decisions, issuing directions, enforcing regulations, and formulating traffic reports. In addition to your observations you will be given explanations of the aforementioned and given an opportunity to ask “uncensored” questions and make your own recommendations regarding VTS operations.

Target audience

- Vessel Movement Reporting System Reporting Procedures and Regulated Navigation Area Regulations is a prerequisite for this program.
 - This program is perfect for anyone who controls a vessel that is classified as a VMRS User (a vessel that must make reports to VTS) under the National VTS Regulations.
 - This program is required for personnel who intend to sit for pilotage.
-

Objectives

Upon completion of this phase you will know:

1. how VTS divides the Operations Center workload using flexible sectorization and how the CG VTS System makes this possible;
2. the VTS definition of the term “vessel transit” and how that definition relates to VTS policies and procedures;
3. the processes VTS operators go through for starting, maintaining, and ending a vessel transit;
4. how to enter a vessel’s transit information into the CG VTS System;
5. how to get vessel transit information by reading the CG VTS System computer display;
6. how different situations affect VTS’s decision points for requiring vessel-to-vessel communications and for requiring vessels to state route intentions;
7. how VTS uses decision matrices when vessels make Sailing Plan Reports or request deviations from regulations;
8. why and when communications delays are essential for VTS to maintain the VMRS.

Pilotage preparation

Program checklist

At Phase One you will be given a program performance checklist. Upon completion of each program phase, the appropriate parts of that checklist will be completed by a VTS official.

You must retain your program checklist, especially if your goal is to complete all three phases in preparation for pilotage certification. If a partially completed program checklist is lost, it will not be replaced.

Program completion

When you have completed all three phases of the program and when all three parts of your program checklist are initialed, you will be issued a letter of training completion by the VTS San Francisco Commanding Officer.

You will deliver this letter along with the program checklist to the MSO San Francisco Regional Exam Center for consideration in your overall pilotage certification package.

Exam questions

There may be questions on your MSO San Francisco pilotage exam covering the objectives outlined in the VTS San Francisco User Training Program. You are encouraged to take good notes during each phase of the program, especially if there are going to be long breaks between your program phases.

Recentness of training

The San Francisco VTS area is dynamic.

- Rules change.
- Procedures change.
- VTS San Francisco maintains an ongoing dialogue with mariners to modernize operating procedures when necessary.

Keep a close watch on the VTS San Francisco web page for messages pertaining to the VTS User Education program. Technology or procedure changes may make it necessary for VTS San Francisco to revise parts of the program as they become obsolete.

If long periods lapse between your completion of the program phases you may be required to perform supplemental training for completing the overall program.

