



## Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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April 23, 2014

### Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Port Arthur Regulations and Operations

**VTS Port Arthur Regulations.** Final regulations establishing requirements for certain vessels operating in Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Port Arthur Area became effective on 20 September 2013. The requirements of [Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Part 161](#) are now mandatory. These include the mandatory participation for certain vessels, requirement to monitor the VTS frequency and make various reports to the VTS. The VTS Watch Supervisor is available to 24-hours a day to answer any questions. They can be reached at (409) 719-5070.

**VTS Port Arthur User Manual.** An updated VTS User Manual has been posted on the [VTS Port Arthur website](#). We do not intend to offer printed versions at this time. The manual includes chartlets depicting the locations of VTS Reporting Points and facilities on the Sabine-Neches Waterway. Updates will be posted on the VTS Website as needed describing the new information and pages that have been updated.

VTS regulations define two categories of VTS participants: 1) VTS Users; and 2) Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) Users. Operating requirements for each category of user can be found in 33 CFR 161 and are reprinted in the VTS User Manual available on our [website](#). Vessel masters operating in the VTS monitoring area should determine which category of user the vessel is and comply with the appropriate operating and reporting requirements.

**VTS User Orientation Program.** For those mariners or companies that would like more in-depth information about VTS regulations and services, we offer a VTS User Orientation Program upon request. Lasting about 4—5 hours, this program includes a brief history of the VTS program followed by a comprehensive discussion of VTS' purpose, mission, regulations, and vessel operating requirements. The program concludes with time in the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) shadowing a VTS operator as they perform their duties. VTS Port Arthur is also available to present an abbreviated orientation presentation at your location. To schedule a VTS User Orientation, contact Mr. Scott Whalen at (409) 719-5086.

**Temporary New Procedure.** In response to requests to provide more information to VTS Users and to minimize the number of overtaking events in the Sabine-Neches Canal, VTS will provide a ship report to westbound tows at Mile Mark 268 ("268 Highlines") on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). The report will provide information on the number of ships

moving towards the Neches River Intersection and an estimated time they are expected to clear it. This information is intended to provide inland towboats additional relevant information to plan their transit through the intersection and minimize overtaking situations in the narrowest portions of the waterway.

This procedure will begin immediately and will run for 60 days at which time the effectiveness of the procedure will be assessed and a determination made if it will be continued or modified in some way. VTS Port Arthur solicits any and all input on the effectiveness of our procedures and suggestions on improving them so as to improve our services.

**This notice will be posted on the Coast Guard HOMEPORT website at <http://homeport.uscg.mil> as well as on the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Website at [www.uscg.mil/d8/vtsportarthur](http://www.uscg.mil/d8/vtsportarthur). If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call the VTS Port Arthur Watch Supervisor at (409) 719-5070.**



**G. J. PAITL**  
**Captain, U.S. Coast Guard**  
**Captain of the Port**