



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

MARINE GUIDANCE NOTE

MGN 401 (M+F) Amendment

Navigation: Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and Local Port Services (LPS) in the United Kingdom

Notice to all Port and VTS Authorities, VTS Personnel, Masters and Deck Officers of Merchant Vessels, and Skippers and Watch Keepers of Fishing and Recreational Craft.

This notice should be read with MGN 401

PLEASE NOTE:-

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

The table and explanatory notes on LPS/VTS equipment and capability contained within MGN 401 Annex 1 has been replaced with updated information.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The information contained in Annex 1 of MGN 401 has been revised and replaced with the attached Annex.
- 1.2 The dates of published documents listed in Annex 2 have been removed.



More Information

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LPS / VTS EQUIPMENT AND CAPABILITY TABLE (MINIMUM RECOMMENDATIONS)

Annex 1

Service/Category	Equipment ¹														Capabilities					
	Communications					Traffic Image ²				Sensors										
	VHF	VHF / DF	Telephone	Facsimile	Email	Manual Plotting Facility	Stand-alone Radar Display with ARPA	Unofficial Electronic Charts with Radar Display and ARPA	Official Electronic Charts with Radar Display and ARPA	Radar	AIS	CCTV	Meteorological	Hydrological	Equipment Performance Monitoring	Redundancy	Data Recording	Data Management System	Data Export	Log & Record Keeping
Local Port Service	✓	○	✓	✓	○	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	✓	✓	○	○	○	✓
Information Service (INS)	✓	○	✓	✓	○	○	✓	○	○	✓	○	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Traffic Organisation Service (TOS)	✓	○	✓	✓	○	X	○	✓	○	✓	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Navigational Assistance Service (NAS) ³	✓	○	✓	✓	○	X	○	○	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key:

✓ Recommended ○ Optional X Not Recommended

The above table is provided as a guideline and VTS authorities are responsible for defining their equipment requirements based on risk assessment.

Notes:

1. The use of equipment carries with it the requirement that its operators are appropriately trained.
2. Traffic Image systems marked Optional, can either exceed recommended minimum capability or be assessed through Risk Assessment as a possible acceptable alternative.
3. NAS may be provided in addition to either INS or TOS.

EXPLANATION OF EQUIPMENT AND CAPABILITIES

Automatic Identification System (AIS)

Indicates the use of AIS in the provision of service type declared.

Close Circuit Television (CCTV)

Indicates the use of CCTV in the provision of service type declared.

Data export

Indicates the capability to meet the requirements of the EU Directive on Vessel Traffic Monitoring. In this respect, it is recommended that the MCA should be consulted about future developments.

Data management system

Indicates the use of a fully integrated system that effectively manages all of the information necessary to provide the declared service type.

Data recording

Indicates the ability to record all operational data concerned with the compilation of the traffic image. This will typically include radar / AIS data and all communications, and will permit the replay of data in support of incident analysis.

Electronic Navigation Chart (ENC) or Geographic Information System (GIS)

Indicates the use of an electronic chart display showing the dynamic traffic image in addition to the physical and navigational characteristics of the area.

Email

Indicates availability of this service, which is connected to the internet system.

Equipment performance monitoring

Indicates the ability to monitor the performance of all equipment used in provision of the service type declared, including a planned maintenance system.

Facsimile (FAX)

Indicates availability of this service, which is connected to the shore-side telecommunications network.

Hydrological sensors

Indicates the availability of the necessary hydrological sensors to provide real-time hydrological information to stakeholders.

Log and record keeping – automatic or manual

Indicates a means of recording all activities within the area, which may be either electronic or manual. In more sophisticated systems this is likely to be incorporated in the data recording / data management system.

Manual plotting facility

Any means for manually maintaining a traffic image i.e. magnetic board or paper chart.

Meteorological sensors

Indicates the availability of the necessary sensors to provide real-time meteorological information to stakeholders.

Official Electronic charts

Charts issued by or on the authority of a Government, authorized Hydrographic Office or other relevant government institutions are official and may be used to fulfill carriage requirements (provided they are kept up to date). (definition from SOLAS V and IHO S-66)

Unofficial Electronic charts

These are often referred to as private charts. These charts are not accepted as the basis for navigation under the SOLAS convention. (definition from SOLAS V and IHO S-66)

Radar

Indicates stand-alone marine radar without ARPA

Automatic Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA)

ARPA equipment

Redundancy

Indicates the presence of sufficient equipment to ensure continuity of the service type declared under realistic fault conditions.

Telephone – Landline

Shore-side telecommunications network with the capability to deal with all operational and emergency demands, including Allied Services.¹

Very High Frequency (VHF) – Marine band

VHF radio, capable of working in the marine band on the channels identified and in sufficient numbers to provide the service and channels declared for the area.

VHF Direction Finding (VHF DF)

VHF radio direction finding equipment in sufficient numbers and at appropriate locations to assist in the confirmation of the source of VHF transmissions.

¹ IMO Resolution A.857(20) Annex 1, paragraph 1.1.10

The following documents provide the framework for VTS Operations:

Source Publication	Title
IMO International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS V) – Regulation 12	Vessel Traffic Services
IMO Resolution A.857(20)	Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services
European Union Vessel Traffic Monitoring Directive (VTMD) 2002/59/EU (as amended)	
Statutory Instrument 2004/2110	The Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004 (as amended)
IALA VTS Manual Edition 4.0	
IALA Recommendation V-103	Standards for Training and Certification of VTS Personnel
IALA Recommendation V-119	Implementation of Vessel Traffic Services
IALA Recommendation V-127	Operational Procedures for VTS
IALA Guideline 1018	Guidelines on Risk Management
IALA Guideline 1068	Provision of a Navigational Assistance Service by VTS
Harbours Act	
Harbours Act (Northern Ireland)	
Acts, Orders and Byelaws pertaining to individual ports.	
Port Marine Safety Code	
Guide to Good Practice	Supplementary information concerning the Port Marine Safety Code
IMO Resolution A.918(20)	Standard Marine Communication Phrases
IMO Resolution A.851(20)	General principles for ship reporting systems and ship reporting requirements.
IMO MSC/Circular 952	IALA Standards for training and certification of VTS personnel.
IMO MSC 83/INF.2	Guidelines for Formal Safety Assessment (FSA) for use in the IMO rule-making process (MSC/Circ.1023–MEPC/Circ.392)
MGN 318	Training and Certification of VTS Personnel