

3. Movement notification and traffic procedures

3.1 General

Maritime Safety Queensland, through the authority of the Regional Harbour Master, has jurisdiction over the safe movement of all shipping within the pilotage area.

The scheduling of ship movements is initiated by the agent submitting movement details for a vessel to Cairns Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) via the QSHIPS ship planning programme in accordance with this section.

All vessels, whether commercial or recreational, are to maintain a listening watch on VHF16 and if equipped on VHF12, whilst within the Thursday Island Pilotage Area.

All vessels within the Thursday Island Pilotage Area are to listen out on VHF16 for announcements made by the Thursday Island port control, regarding movements within the port. These announcements will be advised on VHF16, and full details are given on VHF12.

3.2 Port control

Port Control (Thursday Island) is a local port service and is the principal tool by which the Regional Harbour Master manages the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic approaching, departing and operating within the Thursday Island pilotage area.

Port Control (call sign “Thursday Island Port control”) is delivered from the VTS centre at Cairns and is manned by trained and qualified Vessel Traffic Service Operators, under the management of the Manager (Vessel Traffic Management) and the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

3.2.1. Port control role

Maritime Safety Queensland provides a Port Control as a traffic information service in accordance with International Maritime Organization guidelines.

The Port Control will:

- wherever possible interact with vessel traffic by VHF radio;
- interact with port services;
- inform participating vessels of current traffic and safety information pertaining to the pilotage area;
- where necessary communicate the directions of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) or delegate;
- monitor compliance with the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994*](#) and [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016*](#);
- record the details of shipping movements in the QSHIPS programme in real time;

- maintain a situational awareness of traffic in the pilotage area to the extent of the available information;
- participate in emergency procedures; and
- In the event Cairns VTS deems that a situation demands a higher level of interaction, the functions of a traffic organisation and navigational assistance may be enabled.

3.3 Port control communications

Ships of 35 metres and over in length are not to move within the pilotage area unless satisfactory two-way communications are maintained with Thursday Island port control.

Thursday Island port control maintains a continuous listening watch; contact can also be made with the Regional Harbour Master's office and pilot station via VHF radio, telephone, facsimile and email.

Ships are required to establish two-way radio communications with Thursday Island port control on VHF channel 16.

Channel	Call sign	Service
VHF 16	User	Distress and initial calling
VHF 12	Thursday Island port control	Port control calling/port operations
VHF 13	Thursday Island Harbour control	Harbour operations

Table 3 – Port control communications

The Cairns VTS centre has telephone, fax and email services for administrative and emergency purposes. Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be reported immediately to Thursday Island port control on VHF channel 16.

3.4 Language

The English language is to be used in all communication. The International Maritime Organization's Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) 2001 will be used.

3.5 Voice recordings

All voice communications with the VTS centre and all radio communications on the channels monitored are recorded against a date and time stamp.

3.6 Distress and emergency

Thursday Island port control (Cairns VTS) is not a coast radio station; Maritime Safety Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the Australian Coastguard have an agreement that the VTS will monitor channels 16 when VMR is not operational for emergency and distress calls only. A distress call should, in the ordinary course of events, be referred to Water police.

Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be immediately reported to Thursday Island port control on:

VHF radio: channel 16

Phone: +61 7 4033 3670

Fax: +61 7 4052 7460

3.7 QSHIPS (Queensland Shipping Information Planning System)

The movement of all vessels of LOA 35 m or more arriving at Cairns is recorded in an internet based program known as [QSHIPS](#).

The program is operated from the VTS centre; shipping agents submit booking information online in accordance with the reporting requirements and record their requisitions for tugs, pilot and linesmen. The ancillary services respond online to acknowledge the booking and allocate their resources; the movement then assumes the confirmed status. Work permits (section 10) requests should be submitted online and to the respective agencies if required. QSHIPS will indicate when the approval has been granted and the agent is then able to print the permit for the vessel.

Since the program is live, port service providers, agents, government agencies and the general community are able to view scheduled movements in any Queensland port in real time.

3.8 Ship movement reporting requirements

All movements of ships 35 metres LOA or more are to be reported.

Sections 171 to 176 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) require that all ship movements for vessels 35 metres in length or more within the Thursday Island pilotage area are reported to Maritime Safety Queensland.

The use of the QSHIPS program is mandatory for notification of the impending arrival and subsequent movements of a vessel unless exceptional circumstances preclude this.

The report shall be made using the QSHIPS program and be submitted to Cairns VTS at least 72 hours before the arrival movement and at least 72 hours prior to any subsequent movement.

If an agent is unable to submit a booking via QSHIPS the [Arrival / Departure Report](#) must be faxed or emailed to the VTS centre on +61 7 4033 3670 (24/7) or email vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au.

3.9 Passenger ship bookings

Prior to submitting a report of arrival and departure for a passenger vessel, an email must be completed and sent to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) in sufficient

time for an appropriate forward assessment of the proposed voyage to be conducted. Please ensure that full ships particulars are included, including propulsion type and steering configuration together with proposed maximum draft details.

The vessel movements must also be reported in accordance with 2.6.

Ships agents are to ensure anchorage bookings are confirmed to the Cairns VTS Centre no later than 96 hours prior to arrival.

3.10 Reporting defects

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulations 2016](#) requires the master of a ship that is

- underway and entering, or about to enter a pilotage area; or
- navigating a ship from a berth or anchorage,

must report to VTS by VHF radio details of damage to, defects and deficiencies in, the ship that could affect the safety of the ship, a person or the environment;

VTS will notify the Regional Harbour Master and AMSA of the damage to, defects and deficiencies.

In addition, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires notification of any deficiencies or suspected deficiencies on ships visiting Australian ports. Deficiencies are to be reported to AMSA using AMSA [Form 18](#) and [Form 19](#). Reports of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution Conventions – [Report of marine safety concern \(form 355\) | Australian Maritime Safety Authority \(amsa.gov.au\)](#)

Deficiencies are also to be reported to the Regional Harbour Master, VTS centre.

Vessels without serviceable bridge equipment will not be allowed to enter the port until assessed and authorisation given by the Regional Harbour Master – Cairns.

3.10.1. Reporting Requirements – Arrival reporting requirements

All ships greater than 24m LOA shall obtain approval from Thursday Island port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Cairns pilotage area.

All ships greater than 10m LOA and less than 24m LOA must advise Thursday Island port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Thursday Island pilotage area.

The master of a ship entering, or about to enter the pilotage area must report to Thursday Island port control by VHF radio according to the following table.

Report	Information to report	
1	Ship master to VTS Two hours prior to entry into the pilotage area Entry to VTS/Port limits	Ships name, position, fore & aft draft, changes to ship details, defects, ETA to pilot boarding ground Master advises Port control passing limits
2	Port control to ship master Pilot transfer instructions Anchoring instructions	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions. Instructions will include anchorage allocation and latitude/longitude if required
3	Ship master to Port control Arrival at pilot boarding ground	Ships name, at pilot boarding ground, time of arrival
4a	Ship master to Port control On anchoring	Ships name, anchor position, time of anchoring.
4b	Ship master to Port control Departing anchorage	Ships name, anchor aweigh time
5	Port control or pilot to ship master Confirmation of pilot transfer and instructions for the ship	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions.
6	Pilot to Port control Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot onboard, pilot onboard time, pilot name, ETA at entrance beacons or port limits, Ships fore and aft draft, changes to ship details
7	Pilot to Port control Entering Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons or port limits
8	Ship master to port control Secured alongside	Ships name, secured at (berth name), first line time, side to, all fast time

Table 4 - Inbound Reporting Requirements

Exempt masters must call Cairns VTS before proceeding past the pilot boarding ground to obtain clearance before entering the channel and then report their movements as per the above table.

3.10.2. Departure and removal reporting requirements

The master of a ship that is departing, moving or about to depart or move within the pilotage area must report to Thursday Island port control by radio according to the following table requirements.

Report	Information to report	
1	Ship master/pilot to Port control Pilot on board and ship ready to depart (not less than 30 minutes prior to ETD)	Ships name, pilot on board time, pilot name, fore and aft drafts, changes to scheduled movements
2	Ship master/pilot to Port control Departing berth	Ships name, anchor aweigh/last line time, destination
3	Ship master /pilot to Port control Exiting Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons or port limits
4	Ship master to Port control Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot disembarked, pilot off time
5	Ship master to Port control Exiting port limits	Ships name, vessel clear of port limits

Table 5 – Departure and Removal Reporting Requirements

3.11 Movement scheduling

3.11.1. Confirmation of schedules

On receipt of an intended vessel movement, Thursday Island port control will cross check for vessel suitability in the port, ensure applicable marine services are resourced in QSHIPS (IE tugs, lines boats, workboats, pilots etc), verify suitable tidal windows in accordance with the parameters of the Port Procedure Manual.

Vessels that do not meet Port Procedure Manual parameters are to be referred to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) for approval.

3.11.2. Schedule changes

Changes requested by the master/agent to scheduled movements must be made via QSHIPS, phone or email and are to be communicated to the vessel traffic service centre and marine services as soon as practicable advising the revised schedule. Changes to QSHIPS will be made as they occur. Changes within 24 hours of the scheduled start time must be made by phone.

3.12 Movement clearance notification

All ships require a clearance from the Regional Harbour Master in order to enter, depart or move within the pilotage area. It is the responsibility of the master or pilot to contact Thursday Island port control to obtain the necessary clearance and information prior to the movement.

Clearances are valid for uninterrupted passage to a specified location or until the voyage is interrupted, completed (for example, by anchoring, berthing or due to a breakdown) or cancelled by the Regional Harbour Master. Ships will require a new clearance for any subsequent movement.

Refer to arrival / departure and removal reporting requirement table for applicable timings.

3.13 Master/Pilot responsibilities

Masters and owners of vessels are responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) (the Act) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) (the Regulation).

When a vessel is under the direction of a pilot, the pilot is responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the Act and Regulations, however the responsibility of the pilot does not relieve the master and the owner of a vessel of their responsibility.

Arising from these responsibilities is the obligation of persons directing the navigation of vessels to comply with directions of the Regional Harbour Master. The duty Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO) is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the Regional Harbour Master.

3.14 Harbour contact details

Cairns VTS centre (callsign Thursday Island Port Control)

Phone: +61 7 4033 3670

Fax: +61 7 4052 7460

Email: vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au

VHF: 16 and 12

Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

Phone: +61 7 4052 7400

Fax: +61 7 4052 7451

Email: RHMCairns@msq.qld.gov.au

FNQPC Port Supervisor

Phone: +61 7 4069 1702

Email: Belford.lui@portsnorth.com.au

FNQPC Emergency Response (24/7)

Phone: +61 7 4051 2558