

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 the Regional Harbour Master's office via the QSHIPS ship planning programme in accordance with this section

3.2 Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)

Vessel Traffic Service 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 Townsville/Abbot Point VTS area.

This service is provided by Maritime Safety Queensland on a 24 hour, seven days a week rotating roster and operates within for the declared Townsville/Abbot Point VTS area, Townsville/Abbot Point Compulsory Pilotage area and the Port of Townsville/Abbot Point Limits. The VTS will operate under with the callsign "Townsville VTS" and provides this service in accordance with IMO Resolution 1158(32).

VTS is delivered from the VTS centre in Townsville and is manned by trained and qualified vessel traffic service operators, under the management of the Manager (Vessel Traffic Services) and the Regional Harbour Master (Townsville).

The purpose of VTS is to contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and the protection of the environment within the VTS area by mitigating the development of unsafe situations through:

- The provision of timely and relevant information on factors that may influence the ship's movements and assist on-board decision making;
- The monitoring and management of ship traffic to ensure the safety and efficiency of ship movements; and
- Responding to developing unsafe situations.

In discharging this role, VTS will, within the declared VTS area provide a vessel traffic service that includes:

Timely Information

Townsville VTS will, transmit essential and timely information to assist in the on-board decision-making process, which may include, position, identity and intentions of other traffic, hazards and other factors which may affect a vessels transit

Monitoring and management of ship traffic

Townsville VTS will plan vessel movements to prevent congestion and provide for safe and efficient movement of traffic. The VTS will identify and manage potentially dangerous traffic situations and provide essential and timely information to assist the on-board decision-making process and may advise, instruct, or exercise the authority to direct movements.

Responding to developing unsafe situations

Townsville VTS may provide navigational support to an individual vessel, at the request of the vessel or when deemed necessary by the VTS, to assist the decision-making process on board the vessel concerned. This service consists of navigational matters relating to a specific vessel and may include information, warning, advice and instruction subject to the authority of the VTS. There may be occasions where Townsville VTS will be unable to provide navigational assistance and the requesting vessel will be advised of this information.

The provision of assistance does not absolve the master from of the responsibility for the safety of the vessel and, specifically, the responsibility for collision avoidance.

Note: that in the event of the VTS centre being disabled, all functions of the VTS centre will be temporarily transferred to a remote standby location. VTS will advise all parties of the new communication numbers at such a time.

3.2.1 VTS role

Townsville VTS does not maintain a delineated formally declared VTS area pursuant to IMO Resolution A.857(20) for the Port of Lucinda – however Townsville VTS will:

- 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;
- communicate the directions of the Regional Harbour Master (Townsville) 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 program in inside the 24 hour lockout period;
- 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 Townsville VTS deems that a situation demands a higher level of interaction, the functions of a traffic organisation and navigational assistance may be enabled.

In the event of an emergency, the VTS centre is the key notification and communications facility that will activate the appropriate response agencies.

3.2.2 Port VHF communications

Ships intending to navigate within the pilotage area must establish two-way communications with Townsville VTS on marine VHF channel 16 or VHF channel 13

The designated port VHF channel is to be used for the communication of all routine operational and safety information.

VHF channel	Call sign	Service
VHF channel 16	Lucinda pilots or Townsville VTS	Initial calling & Emergencies
VHF channel 6	User	Pilot and tugs

VHF channel	Call sign	Service
VHF channel 13	Townsville VTS	Pilot and tugs

Table 3 — Port VHF communications

3.2.3 Language

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

3.2.4 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.

3.2.5 Distress and Emergency

Maritime Safety Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the Australian Coastguard have an agreement that the VTS will monitor channels 16 and 67 when VMR is not operational for emergency and distress calls only. A distress call should, in the ordinary course of events, be referred to Ingham Coastguard

Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port of Lucinda, should immediately be reported to Townsville VTS on:

VHF radio: Channel 13 or 16

Phone: 1300 721 263

3.3 Harbour contact details

Organisation	Telephone	Alternate	Email
Townsville VTS	1300721263	VHF channel 16/13	vtstownsville@msq.qld.gov.au
Lucinda Port Superintendent	+61 7 47604435		
Lucinda Bulk Sugar Terminal	+61 7 47982202		
Regional Harbour Master (Townsville)	+61 7 44218 100		RHMTownville@msq.qld.gov.au
Manager Pilotage Services	+61 7 47811 861	Fax: +61 7 4781 1525	pilotmanager@townsville-port.com.au

Table 4 — Harbour contact details

3.4 Prior notification of movements

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) require that all ship movements for vessels 35 metres in length or more are reported according to the following table:

Action	Minimum notice	Approved form
Prior notification of movement in pilotage area	48 Hours prior to entry	Notification via QSHIPS (see section 2.3 - QSHIPS)
	24 hours prior to removal or departure	
Transport of dangerous goods in pilotage area	48 hours prior to entry	Dangerous cargo report (see 11 Dangerous cargo)
	Three hours prior to departure	

Table 5 — Prior notification of movements

3.5 Reporting defects

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 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 the area 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;

Defect to navigational equipment, propelling machinery, Auxillary engines, steering equipment, thrusters anchoring and mooring gear must be reported to VTS as soon as possible

VTS will notify the regional harbour master and AMSA of the damage to, defects and deficiencies.

In addition 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 Report of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution Conventions

[Report of marine safety concern \(form 355\) | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)

3.6 Movement scheduling

3.6.1 Schedule changes

Changes requested by the master/agent to scheduled movements must be made via QSHIPS as soon as practicable after learning of such change.

Changes within 24 hours of the scheduled start time must be communicated to VTS by phone or email as agents are locked out of the QSHIPS program at this time

Telephone: 1300 721 263

Facsimile: +61 7 4721 0633

Email: vtstownsville@msq.qld.gov.au

3.6.2 Pilotage delays

A delay fee is payable if the programmed ship movement is delayed by more than 30 minutes but not more than one hour for the first hour. If the ship is delayed for more than one hour but not more than two hours then for each of the first two hours; a delay in excess of two hours constitutes a cancellation. These charges can be found in Schedule 6 Part 2 Division 3 of the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016*](#).

3.7 Tug and tow requirements

For the purposes of this section the following definitions shall apply:

- The length of tow – the combined length of the vessels (prime mover and towed vessels);
- Composite unit - a vessel or barge pushed ahead by a tug lashed and secured alongside. Length overall of a composite unit is the total of the length of the vessel or barge and the length of the tug;
- Splitting a multi-unit tow – is when a tow consisting of two or more vessels and/or barges are separated to form single units; and
- Towing Operation requiring a pilot will be permitted only during daylight hours.

3.7.1 Operation Conditions

All tugs and tows, ocean going or coastal, will be handled in the Port of Lucinda under the following conditions:

- All tugs and tows will be required to engage a licensed pilot as per section [8-Pilotage](#);
- All tows are to be shortened up prior to arrival at the pilot boarding ground; and
- A multi-unit tow will require to be split and towed independently from the Pilot station to the berth.

Any tow that is in a damaged condition will not be granted entry into the pilotage area until the Regional Harbour Master is satisfied that the vessel/s does not pose a threat to the marine environment or a hazard to navigation in the port.

Note: a vessel or barge designed to have a tug (prime mover) secured astern as a composite unit shall not be deemed a tug and tow if operated in this manner, however, this combination may be required to be allocated tugs (in addition to the prime mover). The LOA of a composite unit is defined under section 3.7 “The length of tow”.

3.7.2 Notification

When a tug and tow is bound for, due to depart from or to do a removal within the port, the master, owner or agent is required to book the tug and tow in with the Regional Harbour Master via the QSHIPS program using the same arrangements as defined for other vessels. A visit for the towing vessel will need to be created in QSHIPS and then the details of the tow added by using the add convoy tab.

3.8 Anchoring

Ships are to anchor outside the pilotage area where safe to do so.

Ships waiting for pilots may anchor 1.0 nautical mile to the East or North of the pilot boarding place in approximately 20 metres of water. Upon anchoring, ships are to advise VTS of their anchoring time and position.

Ships at anchor must maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF channel 16 and 13. All ships at anchor must maintain a continuous anchor watch and report if vessel is observed to be dragging anchor.

Ships are not permitted to immobilise engines at anchor without the written approval of the Regional Harbour Master

3.9 Movement information and Permission to Proceed

All ships with LOA greater than 35 metres and all tug and tow combinations require Permission to proceed issued by the port VTS to enter, depart or move within the pilotage area or a Port VTS area.

It is the responsibility of the master or pilot to contact the VTS centre to obtain the necessary permission and information prior to the movement.

Permissions are valid for uninterrupted passage to a specified location or until the voyage is interrupted or completed (for example, by anchoring, berthing or due to a breakdown) or cancelled by the Regional Harbour Master (or the delegate).

Ships will require to request a new permission:

- for any subsequent movement;
- Vessel arriving at a VTS area; if the vessel has not entered the VTS area – **at the declared time + 30 minutes** or
- All other movements, if the movement has not commenced within **30 minutes of permission being granted**.

3.9.1 Arrivals – Permission to proceed

Arriving at the VTS area.

The master is to contact Townsville VTS to obtain permission to proceed into the VTS area and for arrival information, two hours before the estimated time of arrival at the Pilot boarding Place or Anchorage area (see section [8.3 Pilot Boarding Place](#)).

The arrival permission to proceed into the VTS area is valid for uninterrupted passage to the pilot boarding place or anchorage area, unless specified otherwise.

Arriving into the Pilotage area.

The **Pilot** or master must contact Townsville VTS to request permission to proceed:

- into the Townsville Pilotage area, and
 - for information to support a safe pilotage,
- on completion of Pilot/Bridge Team exchange.

The arrival permission to proceed is valid for uninterrupted passage from the pilot boarding place to the berth, unless specified otherwise.

3.9.2 Removals – Permission to proceed

The **Pilot** or Master (Person having the con of the vessel) must contact Townsville VTS to request permission to proceed:

- from one berth (or place) within the pilotage area to another berth (or Place) within the Pilotage area, and
- for information to support a safe pilotage,

on completion of Pilot/Bridge Team exchange.

The permission to proceed is valid for uninterrupted passage of the removal, unless specified otherwise.

3.9.3 Departures – Permission to proceed

Masters of all vessels are to call Townsville VTS, 3 hours prior to the scheduled departure to confirm readiness to depart and advise final sailing drafts.

The ship should be ready for departure, with all documentation completed not less than 30 minutes prior to the confirmed departure time

The Pilot or Master (Person having the con of the vessel) must contact Townsville VTS to request permission to proceed

- Depart from a berth (or place) within the pilotage area to sea or an anchorage outside the pilotage area, and
- for information to support a safe pilotage,

on completion of Pilot/Bridge Team exchange.

The permission to proceed is valid for uninterrupted passage of the removal, unless specified otherwise.

Ships that have departed a Townsville berth and proceeded to anchorage, must obtain Permission to proceed from VTS prior to weighing anchor and proceeding to sea.

3.10 Arrival reporting requirements

The master of a ship entering, or about to enter the pilotage area must report to Townsville VTS by VHF radio according to the following table:

	Report	Information to report
1	Ship master to Townsville VTS' Two hours prior to entry into the pilotage area Request "Permission to proceed"	Ship's name, position, ship's fore and aft draught, changes to ship details, defects, estimated time of arrival to pilot boarding ground Request "Permission to proceed"
2	Townsville VTS/pilot to ship master Confirmation of pilot transfer and instructions for the ship	Instructions will include, boarding side, course, speed, estimated time of arrival and anticipated conditions
3a	Ship master to Townsville VTS On anchoring	Ship's name and anchor position

	Report	Information to report
3b	Ship master to Townsville VTS Departing anchorage Request "Permission to proceed"	Ship's name, Request "Permission to proceed" anchor aweigh time
4	Pilot to Townsville VTS Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed) Request "Permission to proceed"	Ship's name, pilot onboard, pilot onboard time, pilot name, ship's fore and aft draught, changes to ship details Request "Permission to proceed"
5	Pilot to Townsville VTS Vessel secure alongside	Time of first line and when secured alongside, berth and direction.

Table 6 — Arrival reporting requirements

3.11 Departure and removal reporting requirements

Masters of all vessels are to call VTS 3 hours prior to ETD to confirm readiness to depart with final sailing draughts

The master of a ship that is departing or moving within the pilotage area must report to Townsville VTS by radio according to the following table:

	Report	Information to report
1	Ship Master to Townsville VTS	Call VTS 3 hours prior to ETD to confirm readiness to depart with final sailing draughts
2	Ship master to Townsville VTS	Ship's name, radio check, destination port/anchorage, ship's fore and aft draught, changes to ship details
3	Pilot to Townsville VTS Pilot onboard and ship ready to depart Request "Permission to proceed"	Ships name, pilot onboard time, pilot name, fore and aft draught, changes to scheduled movements Request "Permission to proceed"
4	Pilot to Townsville VTS	Time Last line
5	Ship master to Townsville VTS Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed from outbound ship to launch)	Ships name, pilot disembarked, pilot off time

Table 7 — Outbound reporting requirements

3.12 Access to Regional Harbour Master (Townsville)

For ordinary business, and issues arising in relation to ship scheduling, agents are to contact the VTS Centre. Agents continue to have full access to the Regional Harbour Master on any subject should circumstances warrant, however outside normal working hours this should be restricted to emergencies.