

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.

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

All vessels within the Abbot Point VTS Area are to listen out on VHF16 for announcements made by the Abbot Point Vessel Traffic Service, call sign Abbot Point VTS regarding movements within the port. These announcements will be advised on VHF16 and full details are given on VHF12.

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.
- 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 Abbot Point VTS area

The part of the Abbot Point pilotage area that is the area of—

- (a) waters bounded by an imaginary line drawn—
 - starting at the high-water mark on the eastern shoreline of the mainland at longitude 147° 59.070' east
 - then north to latitude 19° 48.999' south, longitude 147° 59.070' east
 - then east to latitude 19° 48.999' south, longitude 148° 07.000' east
 - then south to the high-water mark on the shoreline of the mainland at longitude 148° 07.000' east
 - then along the shoreline of the mainland at the high-water mark to the starting point; and
- (b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters mentioned in paragraph (a). (b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters referred to in paragraph (a)

3.2.2 VTS Role

The role of the Abbot Point Vessel Traffic Service ('call sign: Abbot Point VTS') is to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of shipping within the VTS area, ensuring a continual program of shipping movements is impartially delivered to the advantage of all commercial shipping.

Abbot Point VTS is a 24 hour, seven days a week marine operations service provided by Maritime Safety Queensland. Abbot Point VTS is situated at the Regional Harbour Master's office.

Enquiries relating to Ship traffic scheduling should be directed to Abbot Point VTS. Ship traffic movements may be accessed on the [QSHIPS](#) website.

Reports regarding marine pollution incidents, marine incidents, defective navigation aids, defective ship navigational equipment or propulsion machinery should be directed to Abbot Point VTS.

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

3.3 VHF Communications

Ships intending to navigate within the pilotage area must establish two-way communications with Abbot Point VTS on marine VHF channel 16 or VHF channel 12.

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	Abbot Point VTS	Distress and initial calling
VHF channel 12	Abbot Point VTS	Mandatory reporting, vessel traffic management and Port working channel
VHF channel 6	User	Pilot and tugs
VHF channel 8	User	Pilot and tugs

Table 3 – Port VHF communications

3.3.1 Language

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

3.3.2 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.

3.4 Harbour contact details

Organisation	Telephone	Mobile	Email
Abbot Point VTS	1300 721 263	VHF 12	vtstownsville@msq.qld.gov.au
Abbot Point Port Superintendent	+61 7 4786 4187	0428 180 243	
Regional Harbour Master Townsville	+61 7 44218100	+61 7 47212028	RHMTownville@msq.qld.gov.au
Manager Pilotage Services	+61 7 47811561	+61 7 4781525	marinepilots@townsville-port.com.au

Table 4 – Harbour contact details

3.5 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 3.5 in this section)
	24 hours prior to removal or departure	
Transport of dangerous goods in pilotage area	48 hours prior to entry	Dangerous Cargo Report (Form)
	3 hours prior to departure	
Commencement of a movement in a pilotage area	3 hours prior to entry	VHF channel 12 or 16
	3 hours prior to departure	

3.6 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 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;

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.

[AMSA 18](#) – incident alert

[AMSA 19](#) – incident report

[AMSA 355](#) - Report of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution conventions

A copy of the AMSA form must be sent to the RHM.

3.7 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 2 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#).

3.8 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
- Towing Operation requiring a pilot will be permitted only during daylight hours.

3.8.1 Operation conditions

All tugs and tows, ocean going or coastal, will be handled in the Port of Abbot Point 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.
- 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 3.9 "The length of tow".

3.8.2 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.

3.9 Scheduling of ship movements

The Regional Harbour Master will ensure the integrity of the prioritisation process by monitoring the planning and movement of shipping and will arbitrate on matters relating to the scheduling of ship movements.

It is important that the master and agent nominate realistic movement times and keep authorities informed of any changes. Ships Masters failing to provide timely updates to a movement may incur delays and/or cancellation charges and unnecessary inconvenience

3.9.1 Schedule changes

Maritime Safety Queensland may make changes to the approved schedule of ship movements up to two hours prior to the commencement of the movement in order to ensure the safe and most efficient movement of shipping.

Changes requested by the master/agent to scheduled movements may be made via QSHIPS, phone or email and are to be communicated to Abbot Point VTS as soon as practicable advising the revised schedule. Changes in QSHIPS will be made upon advice from the agents and relevant service providers notified.

Changes within 24 hours of the scheduled start time must be made by contacting Abbot Point VTS:

Telephone:	1300 721 263
VHF channel:	12, 14 or 16
Email:	vtstownsville@msq.qld.gov.au

3.10 Anchoring

Abbot Point has 18 designated anchorages located outside the compulsory pilotage area. refer Map C2-370 Abbot Point designated anchorages. Appendix 16.2

Abbot Point VTS will direct a ship to a vacant anchorage at the 3 hours' notice. Upon anchoring, ships are to advise Abbot Point VTS of their anchoring time. Ships at anchor must maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF channel 16 and 12 and report if dragging their anchor.

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

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

3.11.1 Arrivals – Permission to proceed

Arriving at the VTS area.

The master is to contact to 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 [8.4 – Pilot boarding position](#)).

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.

3.11.2 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.

3.11.3 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.

3.12 Arrival reporting requirements

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

Sequence	Report	Information to report
1	Ship master to 'Abbot Point VTS' two hours prior to entry into the pilotage area Request "Permission to proceed"	Ship's name, position, ship's fore and aft draft, changes to ship details, defects, estimated time of arrival to pilot boarding ground Request "Permission to proceed"
2	'Abbot Point 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 'Abbot Point VTS' On anchoring	Ship's name and anchor position
3b	Ship master to 'Abbot Point VTS' Departing anchorage Request "Permission to proceed"	Ship's name, Request "Permission to proceed" anchor aweigh time
4	Pilot to Abbot Point 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 draft, changes to ship details; MPX completed Request "Permission to proceed"
5	Pilot to 'Abbot Point VTS' Vessel secure alongside	Time of first line and when secured alongside, berth and direction and pilot disembarkation time.

Table 6 – Inbound reporting requirements

3.13 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 drafts.

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

Sequence	Report	Information to report
1	Ship master to 'Abbot Point VTS' - Clearance prior to movement	Ship's name, radio check, destination port/anchorage, ship's fore and aft draft, changes to ship details
2	Pilot to 'Abbot Point VTS' Pilot onboard and ship ready to depart Request "Permission to proceed"	Ships name, pilot onboard time, pilot name, fore and aft draft, changes to scheduled movements; MPX completed Request "Permission to proceed"
3	Pilot to Abbot Point VTS Departed berth	Time of last line.
4	Pilot/Ship master to 'Abbot Point 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

3.14 Detained Vessels

Confirmed bookings for vessels under Port State Control detention will not be accepted until clearance from AMSA is received. This is to ensure efficient application of port resources. A tentative booking may be accepted to aid in future scheduling, but no timings will be allocated.

3.15 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 AMSA using Report of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution Conventions –

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/general-incident-reporting/suspected-non-compliance-reporting-form>

3.16 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.