



# IALA GUIDELINE

## G1070 VTS ROLE IN MANAGING RESTRICTED OR LIMITED ACCESS AREAS

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# DOCUMENT REVISION

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## 1. SCOPE

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This Guideline aims at defining a special application of measures and procedures for establishing and managing vessel traffic in particular areas where limitations to normal navigation may need to be or have been established and the role of a VTS therein. This can be both on a permanent or temporary basis. In order to better consider the effects or impact to shipping the VTS authority should participate in the process of establishing and managing any kind of restrictions to navigation.

The purpose of this Guideline is to assist VTS authorities in defining appropriate procedures to manage traffic around and inside areas with particular restrictions to navigation.

## 2. ROLE OF A VTS IN ESTABLISHING A RESTRICTED OR LIMITED ACCESS AREA

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A comprehensive risk assessment should be carried out before establishing a restricted or limited access area, and in the establishing of the appropriate measures.

An authority other than a VTS may have the responsibility for establishing a restricted or limited access area (e.g., Harbour Master, Coastguard, Ministry of Environment), however the VTS should have a consultative or supportive role in the establishment process of such areas.

As VTS has the most expertise and experience regarding traffic movement in its area, it should advise the establishing authority about the consequences for shipping and for the access to harbours. In some cases, a VTS authority may advise that establishing such an area is not appropriate.

The VTS authority can provide an analysis of statistical traffic data and of potential dangerous situations that may occur in the area concerned to inform the risk assessment process and to evaluate the consequences related to shipping interests and/or the goods to be protected (e.g., shipping, human, environment, offshore installations, etc.) in terms of frequency and outcome. Consideration must be given to the location of the area, in particular, the applicability of legislation (e.g., UNCLOS).

A VTS should also participate in the evaluation process so that adjustments can be made to the areas/limitations.

While assessing the need to establish restrictions to navigation, responsible authorities should consider the necessity to make modifications to an existing VTS system or even to establish a new one, in order to minimize all the risks to as low as reasonably practicable. For example, this may include an increase in the VTS area, installation of new equipment and changes to the services that the VTS provides.

## 3. ROLE OF A VTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF A RESTRICTED OR LIMITED ACCESS AREA

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In circumstances where the risk related to navigation is increased, VTS is one of the most efficient instruments through which such a risk may be dealt with in order to reduce it to an acceptable level.

The objectives are protecting the traffic through monitoring, enforcing the regulations, protecting the marine environment and the interests of other authorities, stakeholders and third parties.

To this end, it may be necessary to adopt particular provisions such as to:

- Impose specific navigation measures (e.g., recommended route).
- Implement specific reporting obligations.
- Arrange for the exchange of related information with other organizations involved.



- Monitor/co-ordinate safety zone.
- Insert boundary co-ordinates and set appropriate alarms for the area.
- Update existing operating procedures.
- Arrange appropriate response measures.
- Provide information of violations to enforcement authorities.
- Assist in the prevention of unauthorized access.
- Establish a ship safety zone around a certain vessel.
- Promulgate the existence of such area to shipping and relevant authorities.

Examples of such areas are listed in annex A and examples of VTS management tools for these areas in annex B.

## 4. DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

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Restricted or limited access areas are intended to further enhance the common protection of shipping, other environmental interests and third party interests by addressing the unique risks and vulnerabilities in these areas. Furthermore, the establishing of such areas aim at ensuring that these interests are better protected from potential threats and that vulnerabilities are limited by those protections. Examples of such are offshore installations, offshore renewable energy installations (OREI), national parks, military exercise areas, Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA).

Frequency and/or type of shipping in the vicinity of such areas can potentially increase risks and vulnerabilities and therefore should be taken into consideration when determining the restricted or limited area. Particular care should be given to make sure that control measures will prevent/limit shipping to enter this area and to monitor and report possible violations to such limitations.

## 5. DOCUMENT DEFINITIONS

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The definitions of terms used in this Guideline can be found in the *International Dictionary of Marine Aids to Navigation* (IALA Dictionary) at <http://www.iala-aism.org/wiki/dictionary> and were checked as correct at the time of going to print. Where conflict arises, the IALA Dictionary should be considered as the authoritative source of definitions used in IALA documents.

## 6. ABBREVIATIONS

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AIS	Automatic Identification System
ATBA	Area to be avoided
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
IMO	International Maritime Organization
NtM	Notices to Mariners
OREI	Offshore renewable energy installation(s)
PSSA	Particularly Sensitive Sea Area(s)
UNCLOS	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VTS	Vessel traffic service(s)



## 7. REFERENCES

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- [1] IMO. Resolution A.1158(32) Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services
- [2] IMO. Ships' Routeing
- [3] IALA. VTS Manual
- [4] IALA. Guideline G1018 Risk Management



## **ANNEX A    EXAMPLES OF RESTRICTED OR LIMITED ACCESS AREAS**

### **A.1.    PROHIBITED ANCHORAGE**

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A prohibited anchorage (or “no anchoring” area) is an area within defined limits where anchoring is considered hazardous or could result in unacceptable damage to the marine environment. Anchoring should be avoided by all ships or certain classes of ships. An example of a prohibited anchorage may be in the vicinity of gas pipelines and other pipelines and cables. The area will be determined by an authority which has considered the risk.

### **A.2.    AREA TO BE AVOIDED (ATBA)**

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A routing measure comprising an area within defined limits in which either navigation is particularly hazardous, or it is exceptionally important to avoid casualties and which should be avoided by all ships, or certain classes of ship. An example of an ATBA would be around a critical navigation aid in a busy shipping channel which can be liable to accidental collision.

### **A.3.    SAFETY ZONE**

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A safety zone is an area usually extending 500 metres from any part of an offshore oil, gas or renewable energy installation and is established around all installations which project above the sea at any state of the tide. Subsea installations may also have safety zones to protect them.

### **A.4.    PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SEA AREA (PSSA)**

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A PSSA is an area of the marine environment that needs special protection through action by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes where such attributes may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities.

### **A.5.    MILITARY EXERCISE AREA (OR FIRING RANGE)**

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A military exercise area may involve the firing of live ammunition in an area within defined limits but may allow restricted access for vessels at designated times.

### **A.6.    NATIONAL PARK**

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A national park is a reserve of land or water, usually declared and owned by a national government, protected from most human development and pollution.

### **A.7.    EXCLUSION ZONE**

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An exclusion zone is a geographical area, within which all other vessels should remain clear unless authorized. The size and shape of the area may vary depending on the risks involved.

### **A.8.    SHIP SAFETY ZONE**

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A ship safety zone is an area around a vessel within which all other vessels should remain clear unless authorized. The size of the ship safety zone may vary depending upon such factors as the dimensions of the waterway, ship size, ship characteristics, cargo, and the degree of risk. The dimensions selected should be determined taking into account these details and a relevant risk assessment.



## ANNEX B VTS MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR RESTRICTED OR LIMITED ACCESS AREAS

Type of area		Management tool		Purpose of tool
Prohibited anchorage	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Marine Aids to Navigation	2	Indicating the position and limits of the area
	3	Navigational warnings, Notice to Mariners (NtM).	3	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
Area To Be Avoided (ATBA)	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Marine Aids to Navigation	2	Indicating the position and limits of the area
	3	Navigational warnings and NtM	3	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
Safety zone	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Guard vessel / aircraft	2	Ensure safety of vessels in the area through physical intervention with approaching vessels
	3	Marine Aids to Navigation	3	Indicating the position and limits of the area
	4	Navigational warnings and NtM	4	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
Particular Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Other associated protective measures may apply	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Marine Aids to Navigation	2	Indicating the position / limits of the area
	3	Navigational warnings and NtM	3	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
Military exercise area (or firing range)	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Guard vessel / aircraft	2	Ensure safety of vessels in the area through physical intervention with approaching vessels
	3	Marine Aids to Navigation	3	Indicating the position / limits of the area
	4	Navigational warnings, NtM	4	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
	5	Shore based marking	5	Ensure safety of shipping and pleasure craft operating near the exercise area
National Park	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Marine Aids to Navigation	2	Indicating the position and limits of the area
	3	Navigational warnings, NtM	3	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
Ship safety zone	1	Surveillance measures (e.g., radar, CCTV, AIS, and communications)	1	Identification and position of vessels
	2	Guard vessel / aircraft	2	Ensure safety of vessels in the area through physical intervention with approaching vessels
	3	Marine Aids to Navigation	3	Indicating the position / limits of the area
	4	Navigational warnings, NtM	4	Communicating any restrictions to shipping
	5	Use of text messages from vessel's AIS transponder	5	Indicating the position / limits of the area