

**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
United States  
Coast Guard**



# **VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE USCG SECTOR HOUSTON-GALVESTON**



## **VTS USER'S MANUAL 2025**

## VTS User's Manual 2025

### List of Major Changes from 2017:

1. VTS Houston/Galveston changed to VTS Houston-Galveston to align with Sector Houston-Galveston naming convention.
2. Phone numbers, email addresses, and web page locations are updated.
3. References to "Operations Officer" replaced with "Operations Manager"
4. References to radio channels 05A include (1005) and 21A include (1021) per new VHF-FM radio policy.
5. References to Snake Island as a Safety Zone have been removed.
6. References to Oversized Tow Program are removed. Anticipate separate USCG District 8 and Captain of the Port Policy document.
7. Page 10. **Automatic Reporting**. VTS Directs all VMRS Users to make voice reports (check-in) at all reporting points.
8. Page 11. **Where May I Push in to the Bank with my Tow**: This section emphasizes inland tow operators to confirm dock space at their destination is available; pushing in along the channel is not permitted to resolve poor dispatch timing.
9. Page 12 and 35. Update to **Bolivar Peninsula Meeting Restrictions** for towing vessels.
10. Page 26 and 37. **Bolivar Roads Anchorage (A) East** is defined.
11. Page 34. **Shoaling in the Inner Bar Channel** note is provided.
12. Page 42. Appendix F: **Reporting Points** diagram is updated

# USER'S MANUAL

Revised March 2025

## USER GROUPS

**VMRS – Vessel Movement Reporting System.** The mandatory system operated by the VTS used to monitor and track vessel movements.

### **VMRS Users (Required Active Participation):**

These vessels must monitor the designated VTS VHF-FM frequency, make reports to the VTS, and comply with VTS operating rules:

- Every power-driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating;
- Every commercial vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length engaged in towing, while navigating;
- Every vessel certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

### **VTS Users (Required Passive Participation):**

These vessels must monitor the designated VTS VHF-FM frequency, respond if hailed, and comply with VTS operating rules:

- A power-driven vessel of 20 meters (approximately 66 feet) or more in length while navigating;
- A towing vessel (light boat) of 26 feet or more in length while navigating;
- A vessel of 100 gross tons or more carrying 1 or more passengers for hire while navigating;
- A dredge or floating plant in or near the VTS Area.

### **Non-VMRS Users / Non-VTS Users:**

If the vessel does not fall into either of the categories above, it is not required to participate with the VTS. The vessel does, however, remain subject to:

- VTS Measures (direction given by the VTS);
- All other practices of safe navigation and prudent seamanship.

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## Introduction

**Vessel Traffic Service Sector Houston-Galveston's mission is to facilitate safe, efficient waterborne commerce. Specifically, VTS Houston-Galveston exists to prevent groundings, allisions, and collisions by sharing information and implementing appropriate traffic management measures.**

This manual is intended to provide you, the mariner, with the information necessary for your participation in the Houston-Galveston Vessel Traffic Service. The purpose is to clarify required information and to make it readily available. It is not our intent here to modify or conflict with existing regulations. Any apparent conflict should be resolved in favor of the regulations. We have included excerpts from other applicable regulations, but please note that this manual does not include all of the regulations required and appropriate to your operations.

We have included supplementary text which is not part of the regulations but is meant to clarify and/or explain the regulatory text.

Carrying this manual satisfies the requirement of 33 CFR 161.4 "Requirement to carry the rules."

## ABOUT VTS HOUSTON-GALVESTON

Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Houston-Galveston is a mandatory vessel movement reporting system established under the authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1972 (PWSA). VTS Houston-Galveston was commissioned in 1975 in response to concerns for maritime safety along the Houston Ship Channel, adjacent harbors, and connecting waterways. The Vessel Traffic Service increases the good order and predictability of local ship channels, adjacent harbors, and connecting waterways by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information contributing to safe navigation. The goal is to reduce the potential for groundings, allisions, and collisions; and to protect people, property, and waterways in the Vessel Traffic Service Area (VTSA) from environmental harm, injury, or damage resulting from marine mishaps. VTS accomplishes this mission through the use of various surveillance equipment systems, the monitoring of bridge-to-bridge communications, the Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS), the proactive analysis of channel/traffic conditions, and the exchange of information with mariners.

**MARINERS ARE CAUTIONED THAT REPORTS PROVIDED BY THE VTS ARE BASED LARGELY UPON INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM VTS PARTICIPANTS. VTS REPORTS TO MARINERS CAN BE NO MORE ACCURATE THAN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MARINERS.**

The Coast Guard welcomes any suggestions from you concerning this manual that may improve it, or the services provided by VTS Houston-Galveston. Suggestions may be forwarded to the Director, VTS Houston-Galveston.

We also encourage you to visit us at the Vessel Traffic Center. Reservations are requested for large groups. Tours may be arranged by contacting the Director or the VTS Operations Manager.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

Vessel Traffic Service  
USCG Sector Houston-Galveston  
13411 Hillard St  
Houston, TX 77034

### VTS Houston-Galveston

VTS Watch Supervisor	24/7 Watch	(281) 464-4837	<a href="mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil">HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil</a>
VTS Operations Manager	Mr. Randy Scott	(218) 464-4827	<a href="mailto:Michael.R.Scott@uscg.mil">Michael.R.Scott@uscg.mil</a>
VTS Director	Mr. Alberto Hernandez	(281) 464-4826 (713)-818-4405	<a href="mailto:Alberto.Hernandez@uscg.mil">Alberto.Hernandez@uscg.mil</a>

Web: <https://homeport.uscg.mil/missions/ports-and-waterways/vessel-traffic-services/vts-houston-galveston/general-information>

VHF FM Channels: 05A(1005), 11, 12, 21A(1021)

### Local Coast Guard Contacts

Sector H-G Command Center	866-539-8114, VHF-FM CH 16, <a href="mailto:HoustonSCC@uscg.mil">HoustonSCC@uscg.mil</a>
Sector H-G Port State	281-464-4732, <a href="mailto:HoustonPSC@uscg.mil">HoustonPSC@uscg.mil</a>
Sector H-G US Flag and Towing	281-464-4733, <a href="mailto:HoustonDOM@uscg.mil">HoustonDOM@uscg.mil</a>
Sector H-G Waterways Mgmt.	713-398-5823, <a href="mailto:HoustonWWM@uscg.mil">HoustonWWM@uscg.mil</a>
Marine Safety Unit, Texas City Port State	409-978-2718, <a href="mailto:InspectionsMSUTexasCity@uscg.mil">InspectionsMSUTexasCity@uscg.mil</a>
MSU TC US Flag and Towing	409-682-1903 <a href="mailto:MSUTexasCityDOM@uscg.mil">MSUTexasCityDOM@uscg.mil</a>
MSU TC Waterways Mgmt.	<a href="mailto:MSUTexasCityWaterways@uscg.mil">MSUTexasCityWaterways@uscg.mil</a>
VTS Port Arthur	409-719-5070
MSU Port Arthur	409-723-6500
National Response Center	800-424-8802 (24hrs)

## Section I Quick Reference Guide

### 1. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **The safe operation of a vessel remains the responsibility of the vessel's master. If, in a specific circumstance, a VMRS/VTS User is unable to safely comply with a measure or direction issued by the VTS, the VMRS/VTS User may deviate only to the extent necessary to avoid endangering persons, property, or the environment. The deviation shall be reported to the VTS as soon as is practicable.**
- b. **Who must participate in the VTS?**
  - i. If the vessel is:
    1. A power-driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating;
    2. A commercial vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length engaged in towing, while navigating; or
    3. A vessel certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade,
    4. The vessel is a **VMRS User (full participation)**, must maintain a listening watch on the appropriate VHF-FM channel, all parts of the VTS regulations apply to the vessel, and it must participate.
  - ii. If the vessel is:
    1. A power-driven vessel of 20 meters (approximately 66 feet) or more in length;
    2. A vessel of 100 gross tons or more carrying 1 or more passengers for hire;
    3. A towing vessel (light boat) of 26 feet or more in length while navigating, or
    4. A dredge or floating plant,  
The vessel is a **VTs User (passive participation)** and must monitor the designated VTS VHF-FM frequency for the area in which you are operating, respond if hailed, and comply with general VTS operating rules.
  - iii. The difference between VMRS Users and VTS Users is that VTS Users are not required to make the reports required of VMRS Users under 33CFR 161.19-22. This difference does not, of course, prevent VTS Users from making reports in the interest of safe navigation and waterway security.
  - iv. If the vessel does not fall into either of the categories above, it is not required to participate with the VTS, but your vessel remains subject to VTS Measures (direction given by the VTS) and to all other practices of safe navigation and prudent seamanship.
- c. **I am a VMRS User. How do I report?**
  - i. The Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) call sign is "**HOUSTON TRAFFIC.**" VTS Houston-Galveston requires masters/towboat pilots to use the vessel's official name when calling the VTC. Houston pilots/Galveston-Texas City pilots may use their individual identification number in addition to the vessel's name. All communications must be in the English language.
  - ii. Designated Frequencies
    1. VHF-FM Channel 05A(1005) is used for **Initial Check-In** with Houston Traffic. All vessels checking in to the system must first contact Houston Traffic on this frequency to submit a Sailing Plan, prior to shifting to the appropriate working frequency (Channel 11/12/21A(1021)).



2. (Sector I) VHF-FM Channel 12 for communicating with Houston Traffic in either direction between Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoys 1B and 2B and Houston Ship Channel Lights 33 and 34.
  3. (Sector II) VHF-FM Channel 11 for communicating with Houston Traffic in either direction between Houston Ship Channel Lights 33 and 34 and Houston Ship Channel Lights 121 and 122.
  4. (Sector III) VHF-FM Channel 21A(1021) for communicating with Houston Traffic in either direction between Houston Ship Channel Lights 121 and 122 and the Buffalo Bayou Railroad Bridge.
- iii. Reporting Waiver
1. On July 2, 1996, The Eighth Coast Guard District Commander waived the 33 CFR 161.23 requirement concerning ferry vessels to provide Sailing Plans. VTS will report how many ferries are in operation.

**d. I am a VMRS User. What must I report?**

i. Sailing Plan:

1. VMRS Users must report the following information via VHF-FM Channel 5A(1005) prior to entering the VTSA or getting underway (preferably in this order):
  - a. Vessel Name;
  - b. From (Origination Point); - To (Destination);
  - c. Tow Configuration (How many and # of loaded/unloaded barges/if any CDC barges, if so, CDC barge name); - Vessel's Dimensions (Length x beam x draft);
  - d. Bunker Info (If Applicable);
    - i. Ship;
    - ii. Time required;
    - iii. Phone number;
  - e. Next Port of Call (For all outbound piloted vessels);
  - f. Other information and/or operating impairments.

2. REPORTING WAIVER

- a. On August 1, 1997, the Eighth Coast Guard District Commander waived the 33 CFR 161.19 requirement concerning 15 minute Sailing Plans. **However, vessels shall provide sailing plans in sufficient time to allow advance traffic planning by the mariner and the VTC.**
- b. Mariners building tows in Precautionary Areas, particularly those at the mouths of the San Jacinto River, Old River, and Greens Bayou, are reminded that these areas are considered part of the VTSA and that they are required to check in with Houston Traffic as a VMRS User.
- c. Mariners building tows further into the San Jacinto River, Old River, and Greens Bayou are operating just outside the VTSA and might otherwise enter a very congested portion of the Houston Ship Channel with very little notice.
- d. **Timely submission of Sailing Plans in this situation is an important component of safety.**

ii. Position Report:

1. VMRS Users must report vessel name and position;
  - a. Upon point of entry into a VTS area;
  - b. At designated reporting points;
  - c. When directed by the VTC.

2. Automatic Reporting:
  - a. In accordance with 33 CFR 161.21, due to traffic levels and narrow waterways in the VTS Houston-Galveston Area: **VTS Directs all VMRS Users to make voice reports (check-in) at all reporting points.**
    - i. VTS Traffic Managers are required to notify vessel operators of certain traffic conditions that cannot be known using AIS, ECDIS, or visual navigation. Specifically, VTS Traffic managers must report critical AtoN discrepancies, Channel Hazards, and VTS Measures. Examples include dredges/marine construction hazards, special operations, vessel particulars such as hi/low couplings or limited visibility situations, deep/wide dimensions, directives for no meeting/overtaking, and wake/surge considerations.
    - ii. Mariners may “waive” their summary, however due to reasons already stated, VTS Traffic Managers will still provide required reports of critical AtoN, Channel Hazards, and VTS Measures, at a minimum.
3. Traffic Advisories:
  - a. VTS Houston-Galveston's traffic advisories at each reporting point may consist of:
    - i. Traffic:
      1. Anticipated meeting situations before the next reporting point;
      2. Anticipated crossing situations before the next reporting point;
      3. Anticipated overtaking situations.
    - b. AtoN - critical AtoN discrepancies (“See Useful Things to Know”)
    - c. Channel Hazards (dredges, bunkers, shoaling, heavy lifts, hi/low coupling)
    - d. VTS Measures (no meeting, wake/surge considerations, closures)
4. VMRS Users must also report:
  - a. When your destination changes from a previously-reported destination;
  - b. Any intention to deviate from a VTS-issued measure or vessel traffic routing system;
  - c. Any significant deviation from previously-reported information or sailing plan.
- iii. FINAL REPORT:
  1. VMRS Users must report the vessel’s name and position:
    - a. On arrival at destination within the VTS area;
    - b. When leaving the VTS area.
- iv. OTHER REPORTS:
  1. Per 33 CFR 161.12(c): As soon as is practicable, a VTS User shall notify the VTS of:
    - a. A marine casualty as defined in 46 CFR 4.05-1;
    - b. Involvement in the ramming of a fixed or floating object;
    - c. A pollution incident as defined in Sec. 151.15 of this chapter;
    - d. A defect or discrepancy in an aid to navigation;
    - e. A hazardous condition as defined in Sec. 160.203 of this chapter;
    - f. Improper operation of vessel equipment required by Part 164 of this chapter;
    - g. A situation involving hazardous materials for which a report is required by 49 CFR 176.48; and
    - h. A hazardous vessel operating condition as defined in Sec. 161.2.
  2. AtoN Knockdowns: If an allision occurs with an AtoN, anywhere within the USCG Sector Houston-Galveston Area of Responsibility, you may make the required report to “Houston Traffic,” “Port Arthur Traffic,” or the Sector Command Center. The USCG watch stander taking your report will collect information as listed in Appendix D.

**e. I am a VTS User. What must I do?**

- i. You must maintain a listening watch on the appropriate VHF frequency and respond if hailed.
  1. Monitor VTS frequency (VHF-FM Ch 11, 12, or 21A(1021)) depending upon your location, and VHF Ch 13. Vessels which maintain a listening watch on the VTS frequency are not required to monitor VHF Channel 16 while operating in the VTSA.

**f. Can the VTS direct the movement of my vessel?**

- i. VTS Houston-Galveston will not direct your course and speed but may impose “outcome based” VTS Measures and vessel operating requirements.
- ii. **VTS MEASURES:** The VTS may issue measures and directives to enhance navigation and vessel safety, and to protect the marine environment, such as, but not limited to:
  1. Designating temporary reporting points and procedures;
  2. Imposing vessel operating requirements;
  3. Establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.
  4. This may include, in one common example, VTS directing ship traffic in one direction, tow traffic in the other, to facilitate safer movement of heavy traffic volumes following a protracted channel closure.

**g. May I Depart from the VTS Procedures for Convenience?**

- i. No. The VTS regulations provide for departure from established procedures for “the exigencies of safe navigation,” but not for convenience. If, in a specific circumstance, you are unable to safely comply with a VTS measure, you may deviate to the extent necessary to avoid endangering persons, property, or the environment. If you need to deviate, the deviation shall be reported to the VTS as soon as practicable.

**h. Where May I Push in to the Bank with my Tow?**

- i. There will be times when weather, visibility, or the needs of commercial operations require towing vessels to suspend their transits between destination, facilities, and/or outside fleeting areas. The local technique of “pushing in” enhances navigation safety when used appropriately such as avoiding adverse weather or clearing the channel to reduce risk of collision. It is not a make-good for inefficient dispatching. VTS Houston-Galveston is engaged in near-constant dialogue to improve efficiency without compromising navigation safety, and looks to you, the mariner, for input to improve our procedures to best aid safe vessel movements. These policies were developed in cooperation with industry.
- ii. All vessels inbound from the GIWW should confirm available space at their destination fleet area or facility before departing Pelican Cut or Bolivar Land Cut. Tows leaving the San Jacinto River, Old River, or Greens Bayou should make similar checks. Fleeting area dispatchers should reach out to inbound tows and should feel free to coordinate with the VTS to ensure that we are all moving traffic toward a safe berth.
- iii. As a matter of policy, pushing in is not permitted at the mouth of the San Jacinto River and Old River, and along the Houston Ship Channel.
- iv. Pushed in towing vessels remain active VMRS participants; must remain clear of the navigation channel at all times; must maintain an active wheelhouse watch; and must guard the appropriate VHF channel(s).

**i. Use of the Bolivar Roads Alternate Inbound Route**

- i. An alternate route for inbound vessels that allows mariners to by-pass the Bolivar Roads/Houston Ship Channel intersection and avoid navigating the difficult 105° turn there. A range was established to facilitate use of the Bolivar Roads Alternate Inbound Route (BRAIR). Westbound tows departing the GIWW for the HSC are encouraged to use the BRAIR. Because of the strong current and narrow channel width, VTS Houston-Galveston Directs no meeting or overtaking between Bolivar Peninsula Virtual Aid 22 and Bolivar Peninsula Light 14.
  - ii. If Outbound use of BRAIR is needed for an adverse condition, advanced communication with Houston Traffic is necessary.
- j. Are Towing Lights required when I leave the GIWW?**
- i. Yes.
  - ii. Inland Rule 24(i) applies to most of the Inland Waters and Western Rivers, but Inland Rule 24(c) requires two white masthead lights for power-driven vessels pushing ahead or towing alongside while transiting Bolivar Roads from the Bolivar Assembling Basin at Mile 346 WHL to the Galveston Causeway Bridge at Mile 357.3 WHL. Rule 24(c) also applies on the Houston Ship Channel.
  - iii. In short, if vessels are pushing ahead or towing alongside within VTS Houston-Galveston's VTSA, you should show the white masthead lights required by Rule 24(c). Mariners should confirm that these lights are properly displayed prior to entering the VTSA to enhance safety on our busy, mixed-use waterways.

## ***Section II Excerpts of Federal Regulations***

### **Applicable to VTS Houston-Galveston**

#### **33 CFR Part 161 Vessel Traffic Management**

#### **Subpart A -Vessel Traffic Services**

##### **General Rules**

161.1 Purpose and Intent

161.2 Definitions

161.3 Applicability

161.4 Requirement to carry the rules

161.5 Deviations from the rules

##### **Services, VTS Measures, and Operating Requirements**

161.10 Services

161.11 VTS Measures

161.12 Vessel Operating Requirements

161.13 VTS Special Area Operating Requirements

##### **Subpart B -Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS)**

161.15 Purpose and Intent

161.16 Applicability

161.17 [Reserved]

161.18 Reporting Requirements

161.19 Sailing Plan (SP)

161.20 Position Report (PR)

161.21 Automated Reporting

161.22 Final Report (FR)

161.23 Reporting Exemptions

##### **Subpart C - Vessel Traffic Service and Vessel Movement Reporting System Areas and Reporting Points**

161.35 Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston

## **TITLE 33--NAVIGATION AND NAVIGABLE WATERS**

### **CHAPTER I--COAST GUARD, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY [Revised as of July 1, 2007]**

#### **PART 161 VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT--TABLE OF CONTENTS**

#### **SUBPART A - VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES**

##### **General Rules**

##### **Sec. 161.1 Purpose and Intent.**

(a) The purpose of this part is to promulgate regulations implementing and enforcing certain sections of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (PWSA) setting up a national system of Vessel Traffic Services that will enhance navigation, vessel safety, and marine environmental protection, and promote safe vessel movement by reducing the potential for collisions, rammings, and groundings, and the loss of lives and property associated with these incidents within VTS areas established hereunder.

(b) Vessel Traffic Services provide the mariner with information related to the safe navigation of a waterway. This information, coupled with the mariner's compliance with the provisions set forth in this part, enhances the safe routing of vessels through congested waterways or waterways of particular hazard. Under certain circumstances, a VTS may issue directions to control the movement of vessels in order to minimize the risk of collision between vessels, or damage to property or the environment.

(c) The owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel remains at all times responsible for the manner in which the vessel is operated and maneuvered, and is responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel under all circumstances. Compliance with these rules or with a direction of the VTS is at all times contingent upon the exigencies of safe navigation.

(d) Nothing in this part is intended to relieve any vessel, owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel from the consequences of any neglect to comply with this part or any other applicable law or regulation (e.g., the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS) or the Inland Navigation Rules) or of the neglect of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case.

#### **Sec. 161.2 Definitions.**

For the purposes of this part:

**-Center** means a Vessel Traffic Center or Vessel Movement Center.

**-Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS)** means the system of vessel traffic management established and jointly operated by the United States and Canada within adjoining waters. In addition, CVTS facilitates traffic movement and anchorages, avoids jurisdictional disputes, and renders assistance in emergencies in adjoining United States and Canadian waters.

**-Hazardous Vessel Operating Condition** means any condition related to a vessel's ability to safely navigate or maneuver, and includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) The absence or malfunction of vessel operating equipment, such as propulsion machinery, steering gear, radar system, gyrocompass, depth sounding device, automatic radar plotting aid (ARPA), radiotelephone, Automatic Identification System equipment, navigational lighting, sound signaling devices or similar equipment.
- (b) Any condition on board the vessel likely to impair navigation, such as lack of current nautical charts and publications, personnel shortage, or similar condition.
- (c) Vessel characteristics that affect or restrict maneuverability, such as cargo or tow arrangement, trim, loaded condition, underkeel or overhead clearance, speed capabilities, power availability, or similar characteristics, which may affect the positive control or safe handling of the vessel or the tow.

**-Navigable waters** means all navigable waters of the United States including the territorial sea of the United States, extending to 12 nautical miles from United States baselines, as described in Presidential Proclamation No. 5928 of December 27, 1988.

**-Precautionary Area** means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits where vessels must navigate with particular caution and within which the direction of traffic may be recommended.

**-Towing Vessel** means any commercial vessel engaged in towing another vessel astern, alongside, or by pushing ahead.)



**-Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS)** means a mandatory reporting system used to monitor and track vessel movements. This is accomplished by a vessel providing information under established procedures as set forth in this part in the areas defined in Table 161.12(c) (VTS and VMRS Centers, Call Signs/MMSI(Maritime Mobile Service Identity), Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas).

**-Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) User** means a vessel, or an owner, operator, charterer, Master, or person directing the movement of a vessel that is required to participate in a VMRS.

**-Vessel Traffic Center (VTC)** means the shore-based facility that operates the vessel traffic service for the Vessel Traffic Service area or sector within such an area.

**-Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)** means a service implemented by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

**-Vessel Traffic Service Area or VTS Area** means the geographical area encompassing a specific VTS area of service. This area of service may be subdivided into zones for the purpose of allocating responsibility to individual Vessel Traffic Centers or to identify different operating requirements. **Note:** Although regulatory jurisdiction is limited to the navigable waters of the United States, certain vessels will be encouraged or may be required, as a condition of port entry, to report beyond this area to facilitate traffic management within the VTS area.

**-VTS Special Area** means a waterway within a VTS area in which special operating requirements apply.

**-VTS User** means a vessel, or an owner, operator, charterer, Master, or person directing the movement of a vessel within a VTS Area that is: (1) Subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act; (2) Required to participate in a VMRS; or. (3) Equipped with a required Coast Guard type-approved Automatic Identification System (AIS).

**-VTS User's Manual** means the manual established and distributed by the VTS to provide the mariner with a description of the services offered and rules in force for that VTS. Additionally, the manual may include chartlets showing the area and zone boundaries, general navigational information about the area, and procedures, radio frequencies, reporting provisions and other information which may assist the mariner while in the VTS area.

### **Sec. 161.3 Applicability.**

The provisions of this subpart shall apply to each VTS User and may also apply to any vessel while underway or at anchor on the navigable waters of the United States within a VTS area, to the extent the VTS considers necessary.

### **Sec. 161.4 Requirement to carry the rules.**

Each VTS User shall carry on board and maintain for ready reference a copy of these rules.

**Note:** These rules are contained in the applicable U.S. Coast Pilot, the VTS User's Manual which may be obtained by contacting the appropriate VTS Watch Supervisor at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil).

### **Sec. 161.5 Deviations from the rules.**

- (a) Requests to deviate from any provision in this part, either for an extended period of time or if anticipated before the start of a transit, must be submitted in writing to the appropriate District Commander. Upon receipt of the written request, the District Commander may

authorize a deviation if it is determined that such a deviation provides a level of safety equivalent to that provided by the required measure or is a maneuver considered necessary for safe navigation under the circumstances. An application for an authorized deviation must state the need and fully describe the proposed alternative to the required measure.

- (b) Requests to deviate from any provision in this part due to circumstances that develop during a transit or immediately preceding a transit, may be made to the appropriate VTC. Requests to deviate must be made as far in advance as practicable. Upon receipt of the request, the VTC may authorize a deviation if it is determined that, based on vessel handling characteristics, traffic density, radar contacts, environmental conditions, and other relevant information, such a deviation provides a level of safety equivalent to that provided by the required measure or is a maneuver considered necessary for safe navigation under the circumstances.

#### **Sec. 161.10 Services.**

To enhance navigation and vessel safety, and to protect the marine environment, a VTS may issue advisories, or respond to vessel requests for information, on reported conditions within the VTS area, such as:

- a. Hazardous conditions or circumstances;
- b. Vessel congestion;
- c. Traffic density;
- d. Environmental conditions;
- e. Aids to navigation status;
- f. Anticipated vessel encounters;
- g. Another vessel's name, type, position, hazardous vessel operating conditions, if applicable, and intended navigation movements, as reported;
- h. Temporary measures in effect;
- i. A description of local harbor operations and conditions, such as ferry routes, dredging, and so forth;
- j. Anchorage availability; or
- k. Other information or special circumstances.

#### **Sec. 161.11 VTS measures.**

- (a) A VTS may issue measures or directions to enhance navigation and vessel safety and to protect the marine environment, such as, but not limited to:
  - (1) Designating temporary reporting points and procedures;
  - (2) Imposing vessel operating requirements; or
  - (3) Establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.
- (b) During conditions of vessel congestion, restricted visibility, adverse weather, or other hazardous circumstances, a VTS may control, supervise, or otherwise manage traffic, by specifying times of entry, movement, or departure to, from, or within a VTS area.

#### **Sec. 161.12 Vessel operating requirements.**

- (a) Subject to the exigencies of safe navigation, a VTS User shall comply with all measures established or directions issued by a VTS.
- (b) If, in a specific circumstance, a VTS User is unable to safely comply with a measure or direction issued by the VTS, the VTS User may deviate only to the extent necessary to avoid endangering persons, property or the environment. The deviation shall be reported to the VTS as soon as is practicable.



- (c) When not exchanging voice communications, a VTS User must maintain a listening watch as required by Sec. 26.04(e) of this chapter on the VTS frequency designated in Table 161.12(c) (VTS and VMRS Centers, Call Signs/MMSI, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas). In addition, the VTS User must respond promptly when hailed and communicate in the English language.

**Note to Sec. 161.12(c):** As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a very high frequency watch on Channel 16 (156.800 MHz) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both the vessel bridge-to-bridge frequency and a designated VTS frequency.

**VTS, Call Signs/ MMSI, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas**

<b>Center MMSI<sup>1</sup> Call Sign</b>	<b>Designated freq, Channel designation, purpose<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Monitoring area</b>
Houston- Galveston- 003669954		The navigable waters north of 29° N, west of 94°20' W., south of 29°49' N., and east of 95°20' W.
Houston Traffic Sector III	157.050MHz(Ch.21A(1021)) 156.250 MHz (Ch.5A(1005)) — For Sailing Plans only	The navigable waters of the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) above Lights 121 and 122.
Houston Traffic Sector II	156.550 MHz (Ch. 11) 156.250 Mhz(Ch. 5A(1005)) —For Sailing Plans only	The navigable waters of the HSC between Lighted Buoy 33 and Light 34 and Lights 121 and 122.
Houston Traffic Sector I	156.600 MHz (Ch. 12) 156.250 Mhz (Ch.5A(1005)) —For Sailing Plans only	The navigable waters below HSC Lighted Buoy 33 and Light 34.

- (d) As soon as is practicable, a VTS User shall notify the VTS of any of the following:
- (1) A marine casualty as defined in 46 CFR 4.05-1;
  - (2) Involvement in the ramming of a fixed or floating object;
  - (3) A pollution incident as defined in Sec. 151.15 of this chapter;
  - (4) A defect or discrepancy in an aid to navigation;
  - (5) A hazardous condition as defined in Sec. 160.202 of this chapter;
  - (6) Improper operation of vessel equipment required by Part 164 of this chapter;
  - (7) A situation involving hazardous materials for which a report is required by 49 CFR 176.48; and
  - (8) A hazardous vessel operating condition as defined in Sec. 161.2.

**Sec. 161.13 VTS Special Area operating requirements.**

The following operating requirements apply within a VTS Special Area:

- a. A VTS User shall, if towing astern, do so with as short a hawser as safety and good seamanship permits.

**Note:** While there are no VTS Special Areas in effect here, it is COTP Houston-Galveston policy that all towing vessels towing astern on a hawser above Morgan's Point must have an assist tug on the stern of the vessel/barge being towed.

b. A VMRS User shall:

- (1) Not enter or get underway in the area without prior approval of the VTS;
- (2) Not enter a VTS Special Area if a hazardous vessel operating condition or circumstance exists;
- (3) Not meet, cross, or overtake any other VMRS User in the area without prior approval of the VTS; and
- (4) Before meeting, crossing, or overtaking any other VMRS User in the area, communicate on the designated vessel bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone frequency, intended navigation movements, and any other information necessary in order to make safe passing arrangements. This requirement does not relieve a vessel of any duty prescribed by the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS) or the Inland Navigation Rules.

### **Subpart B -Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS)**

#### **Sec. 161.15 Purpose and intent.**

- (a) A Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) is a system used to monitor and track vessel movements within a VTS or VMRS area. This is accomplished by requiring that vessels provide information under established procedures as set forth in this part, or as directed by the Center.
- (b) To avoid imposing an undue reporting burden or unduly congesting radiotelephone frequencies, reports shall be limited to information which is essential to achieve the objectives of the VMRS. These reports are consolidated into three reports (sailing plan, position, and final).

#### **Sec. 161.16 Applicability.**

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions of this subpart apply to the following vessels and VMRS Users:

- (a) Every power-driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating;
- (b) Every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length, while navigating; or
- (c) Every vessel certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

#### **Sec. 161.18 Reporting requirements.**

- (a) A Center may:
  - (1) Direct a vessel to provide any of the information set forth in Table 161.18(a) (IMO Standard Ship Reporting System);

Table 161.18(a)--The IMO Standard Ship Reporting System			
A	ALPHA	Ship	Name, call sign or ship station identity, and flag.

B	BRAVO	Dates and time of event.	A 6 digit group giving day of month (first two digits), hours and minutes (last four digits). If other than UTC state time zone used.
C	CHARLIE	Position	A 4 digit group giving latitude in degrees and minutes suffixed with N (north) or S (south) and a 5 digit group giving longitude in degrees and minutes suffixed with E (east) or W (west); or.
D	DELTA	Position	True bearing (first 3 digits) and distance (state distance) in nautical miles from a clearly identified landmark (state landmark).
E	ECHO	True course	A 3 digit group.
F	FOXTROT	Speed in knots and tenths of knots.	A 3 digit group.
G	GOLF	Port of Departure	Name of last port of call.
H	HOTEL	Date, time and point of entry Into system.	Entry time expressed as in (B) and the entry position expressed as in (C) or (D).
I	INDIA.	Destination and expected time of arrival.	Name of port and date time group expressed as in (B).
J	JULIET	Pilot	State whether a deep sea or local pilot is on board.
K	KILO	Date, time and point of exit from system.	Exit time expressed as in (B) and exit position expressed as in (C) or (D).
L	LIMA	Route information	Intended track.
M	MIKE	Radio	State in full names of communications stations/frequencies guarded.
N	NOVEMBER	Time of next report.	Date time group expressed as in (B).
O	OSCAR	Maximum present static draught in meters.	4 digit group giving meters and centimeters.
P	PAPA	Cargo on board	Cargo and brief details of any dangerous cargoes as well as harmful substances and gases that could endanger persons or the environment.
Q	QUEBEC	Defects, damage, deficiencies or limitations.	Brief detail of defects, damage, deficiencies or other limitations.
R	ROMEO	Description of pollution or dangerous goods lost.	Brief details of type of pollution (oil, chemicals, etc) or dangerous goods lost overboard; position expressed as in (C) or (D).
S	SIERRA	Weather conditions.	Brief details of weather and sea conditions prevailing.

T	TANGO	Ship's representative and/or owner.	Details of name and particulars of ship's representative and/or owner for provision of information.
U	UNIFORM	Ship size and type.	Details of length, breadth, tonnage, and type, etc., as required.
V	VICTOR	Medical personnel	Doctor, physician's assistant, nurse, no medic.
W	WHISKEY	Total number of persons on board.	State number.
X	XRAY	Miscellaneous	Any other information as appropriate. [i.e., a detailed description of a planned operation, which may include: its duration; effective area; any restrictions to navigation; notification procedures for approaching vessels; in addition, for a towing operation: configuration, length of the tow, available horsepower, etc.; for a dredge or floating plant: configuration of pipeline, mooring configuration, number of assist vessels, etc.].

- (2) Establish other means of reporting for those vessels unable to report on the designated frequency; or
- (3) Require reports from a vessel in sufficient time to allow advance vessel traffic planning.
- (b) All reports required by this part shall be made as soon as is practicable on the frequency designated in Table 161.12(c) (VTS and VMRS Centers, Call Signs/MMSI, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas).
- (c) When not exchanging communications, a VMRS User must maintain a listening watch as described in Sec. 26.04(e) of this chapter on the frequency designated in Table 161.12(c) (VTS and VMRS Centers, Call Signs/MMSI, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas). In addition, the VMRS User must respond promptly when hailed and communicate in the English language.

**Note:** As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a VHF watch on Channel 16 (156.800 MHz) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both the vessel bridge-to-bridge frequency and a designated VTS frequency.

- (d) A vessel must report:
  - (1) Any significant deviation from its Sailing Plan, as defined in Sec. 161.19, or from previously reported information; or
  - (2) Any intention to deviate from a VTS issued measure or vessel traffic routing system.
- (e) When reports required by this part include time information, such information shall be given using the local time zone in effect and the 24-hour military clock system.

### **Sec. 161.19 Sailing Plan (SP).**

Unless otherwise stated, at least 15 minutes before navigating a VTS area, a vessel must report the:

- (a) Vessel name and type;
- (b) Position;
- (c) Destination and ETA;
- (d) Intended route;
- (e) Time and point of entry; and
- (f) Dangerous cargo on board or in its tow, as defined in Sec. 160.202 of this chapter.

**Sec. 161.20 Position Report (PR).**

A vessel must report its name and position:

- (a) Upon point of entry into a VMRS area;
- (b) At designated reporting points as set forth in subpart C; or
- (c) When directed by the Center.

**Sec. 161.21 Automated reporting.**

- (a) Unless otherwise directed, vessels equipped with an Automatic Identification System (AIS) are required to make continuous, all stations, AIS broadcasts, in lieu of voice Position Reports, to those Centers denoted in Table 161.12(c) of this part.
- (b) Should an AIS become non-operational, while or prior to navigating a VMRS area, it should be restored to operating condition as soon as possible, and, until restored a vessel must:
  - (1) Notify the Center;
  - (2) Make voice radio Position Reports at designated reporting points as required by Sec. 161.20(b) of this part; and
  - (3) Make any other reports as directed by the Center.

**Sec. 161.22 Final Report (FR).**

A vessel must report its name and position:

- (a) On arrival at its destination; or
- (b) When leaving a VTS area.

**Sec. 161.23 Reporting exemptions.**

- (a) Unless otherwise directed, the following vessels are exempted from providing Position and Final Reports due to the nature of their operation:
  - (1) Vessels on a published schedule and route;
  - (2) Vessels operating within an area of a radius of three nautical miles or less; or
  - (3) Vessels escorting another vessel or assisting another vessel in maneuvering procedures.
- (b) A vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section must:
  - (1) Provide a Sailing Plan at least 5 minutes but not more than 15 minutes before navigating within the VMRS area; and
  - (2) If it departs from its promulgated schedule by more than 15 minutes or changes its limited operating area, make the established VMRS reports, or report as directed.

**Subpart C - Vessel Traffic Service and Vessel Movement Reporting System Areas and Reporting Points****Sec. 161.35 Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston.**

- (a) The VTS area consists of the following major waterways and portions of connecting waterways: Galveston Bay Entrance Channel; Outer Bar Channel; Inner Bar Channel; Bolivar Roads Channel; Galveston Channel; Gulf ICW and Galveston-Freeport Cut-Off from Mile 345 to Mile 355; Texas City Channel; Texas City Turning Basin; Texas City Canal Channel; Texas City Canal Turning Basin; Houston Ship Channel; Bayport Channel; Bayport Turning Basin; Houston Turning Basin; Barbours Cut; and Barbours Cut turning Basin.

Table 161.35(c)VTS Houston-Galveston Report Points

<b>Geographic name</b>	<b>Geographic description</b>	<b>Latitude/ Longitude</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Galveston Bay Entrance Channel</b>	<b>Galveston Bay Entrance Channel LB 1B/2B</b>	<b>29°18.2' N; 094°37.3' W</b>	
<b>Inner Bar Channel</b>	<b>Inner Bar Channel LB 11 and 12</b>	<b>29°20.6' N; 094°44.6' W</b>	
<b>MM345</b>	<b>MM 345 (ICW)</b>	<b>29°24.8' N 094°44.0' W</b>	
<b>Galveston-Freeport Cutoff Channel</b>	<b>MM 355 (ICW)</b>	<b>29°19.2' N; 094°51.6' W</b>	
<b>Galveston Harbor</b>	<b>Galveston Channel Lt. 2</b>	<b>29°20.3' N; 094 46.4' W</b>	<b>Traffic departing Gal, Inbound to HSC/TC/ICW</b>
<b>Texas City Channel</b>	<b>Texas City Channel Lt. 12</b>	<b>29°22.4' N; 094°50.9' W</b>	
<b>Lower Galveston Bay</b>	<b>HSC LB 33 and Lt. 34</b>	<b>29°24.5' N; 094°49.3' W</b>	<b>Boundary between Sectors I &amp; II</b>
<b>Upper Galveston Bay</b>	<b>HSC Lt. 69 and 70</b>	<b>29°34.7' N; 094°55.8' W</b>	
<b>Bayport Ship Channel</b>	<b>Bayport Ship Channel Lt. 8 and 9</b>	<b>29°36.8' N; 094°59.3' W</b>	<b>Bayport Land Cut.</b>
<b>Morgan's Point</b>	<b>HSC Lt. 91and 92</b>	<b>29°41.0' N; 094°58.9' W</b>	
<b>Middle Crossovers</b>	<b>HSC Lt. 121 and 122</b>	<b>29°44.7' N; 095°03.7' W</b>	<b>Boundary between Sectors II &amp; III</b>
<b>Boggy Bayou</b>	<b>Pemex Facility</b>	<b>29°44.1' N; 095°08.0' W</b>	
<b>Greensport</b>	<b>Greens Port</b>	<b>29°44.7' N; 0 95°11.4' W</b>	
<b>Lyondell</b>	<b>Sims Bayou Turning Basin</b>	<b>29°43.2' N; 095°14.4' W</b>	
<b>Buffalo Bayou</b>	<b>Buffalo Bayou Railroad Bridge</b>	<b>29°44.8' N; 095°17.6' W</b>	

## **Sec. 164.46 Automatic Identification System (AIS).**

### **(b) AIS carriage —**

(1) **AIS Class A device.** The following vessels must have on board a properly installed, operational Coast Guard type-approved AIS Class A device:

- (i) A self-propelled vessel of 65 feet or more in length, engaged in commercial service.
- (ii) A towing vessel of 26 feet or more in length and more than 600 horsepower, engaged in commercial service.
- (iii) A self-propelled vessel that is certificated to carry more than 150 passengers.
- (iv) A self-propelled vessel engaged in dredging operations in or near a commercial channel or shipping fairway in a manner likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels.
- (v) A self-propelled vessel engaged in the movement of—
  - (A) Certain dangerous cargo as defined in subpart C of part 160 of this chapter, or
  - (B) Flammable or combustible liquid cargo in bulk that is listed in 46 CFR 30.25-1, Table 30.25-1.

(2) **AIS Class B device.** Use of a Coast Guard type-approved AIS Class B device in lieu of an AIS Class A device is permissible on the following vessels if they are not subject to pilotage by other than the vessel Master or crew:

- (i) Fishing industry vessels;
- (ii) Vessels identified in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section that are certificated to carry less than 150 passengers and that—
  - (A) Do not operate in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) or Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) area defined in Table 161.12(c) of § 161.12 of this chapter, and
  - (B) Do not operate at speeds in excess of 14 knots; and
- (iii) Vessels identified in paragraph (b)(1)(iv) of this section engaged in dredging operations.

**Note to paragraph (b):** Under 46 U.S.C. 70002 and 33 CFR 160.111, a Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) may restrict the operation of a vessel if he or she determines that by reason of weather, visibility, sea conditions, port congestion, other hazardous circumstances, or the condition of such vessel, the restriction is justified in the interest of safety. In certain circumstances, if a COTP is concerned that the operation of a vessel not subject to § 164.46 would be unsafe, the COTP may determine that voluntary installation of AIS by the operator would mitigate that concern. Fishing industry vessels include fishing vessels, fish processing vessels, and fish tender vessels as defined in 46 U.S.C. 2101.

(g) **AIS Pilot Plug.** The AIS Pilot Plug on any vessel subject to pilotage by other than the vessel Master or crew must be readily available and easily accessible from the primary conning position of the vessel and permanently affixed (not an extension cord) and adjacent (within 3 feet) to a 120-volt 50/60 Hz AC power receptacle (NEMA 5-15).



### 33 CFR 26 VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE REGULATIONS

#### **Sec. 26.01 Purpose.**

- (a) The purpose of this part is to implement the provisions of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act. This part:
- (1) Requires the use of the vessel bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone;
  - (2) Provides the Coast Guard's interpretation of the meaning of important terms in the Act;
  - (3) Prescribes the procedures for applying for an exemption from the Act and the regulations issued under the Act and a listing of exemptions.
- (b) Nothing in this part relieves any person from the obligation of complying with the rules of the road and the applicable pilot rules.

#### **Sec. 26.02 Definitions.**

For the purpose of this part and interpreting the Act:

**Act** means the "Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act", 33 U.S.C. sections 1201-1208;

**Length** is measured from end to end over the deck excluding sheer;

**Power-driven vessel** means any vessel propelled by machinery; and

**Secretary** means the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating;

**Territorial sea** means all waters as defined in Sec. 2.22(a) (1) of this chapter.

**Towing vessel** means any commercial vessel engaged in towing another vessel astern, alongside, or by pushing ahead.

**Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)** means a service implemented under Part 161 of this chapter by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

**Vessel Traffic Service Area or VTS Area** means the geographical area encompassing a specific VTS area of service as described in Part 161 of this chapter. This area of service may be subdivided into sectors for the purpose of allocating responsibility to individual Vessel Traffic Centers or to identify different operating requirements.

**Note:** Although regulatory jurisdiction is limited to the navigable waters of the United States, certain vessels will be encouraged or may be required, as a condition of port entry, to report beyond this area to facilitate traffic management within the VTS area.

#### **Sec. 26.03 Radiotelephone required.**

- (a) Unless an exemption is granted under Sec. 26.09 and except as provided in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, this part applies to:
- (1) Every power-driven vessel of 20 meters or over in length while navigating;
  - (2) Every vessel of 100 gross tons and upward carrying one or more passengers for hire while navigating;
  - (3) Every towing vessel of 26 feet or over in length while navigating; and
  - (4) Every dredge and floating plant engaged in or near a channel or fairway in operations likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels except for an unmanned or intermittently manned floating plant under the control of a dredge.



- (b) Every vessel, dredge, or floating plant described in paragraph (a) of this section must have a radiotelephone on board capable of operation from its navigational bridge, or in the case of a dredge, from its main control station, and capable of transmitting and receiving on the frequency or frequencies within the 156-162 Mega-Hertz band using the classes of emissions designated by the Federal Communications Commission for the exchange of navigational information.
- (c) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be carried on board the described vessels, dredges, and floating plants upon the navigable waters of the United States.
- (d) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be capable of transmitting and receiving on VHF FM channel 22A (157.1 MHz).
- (e) [Not relevant to VTS HG]
- (f) In addition to the radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section, each vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section while transiting any waters within a Vessel Traffic Service Area, must have on board a radiotelephone capable of transmitting and receiving on the VTS designated frequency in Table 161.12(c) (VTS and VMRS Centers, Call Signs/MMSI, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas).

**Note:** A single VHF-FM radio capable of scanning or sequential monitoring (often referred to as "dual watch" capability) will not meet the requirements for two radios.

**Sec. 26.04 Use of the designated frequency.**

- (a) No person may use the frequency designated by the Federal Communications Commission under section 8 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1207(a), to transmit any information other than information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels or necessary tests.
- (b) Each person who is required to maintain a listening watch under section 5 of the Act shall, when necessary, transmit and confirm, on the designated frequency, the intentions of his vessel and any other information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.
- (c) Nothing in these regulations may be construed as prohibiting the use of the designated frequency to communicate with shore stations to obtain or furnish information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.
- (d) On the navigable waters of the United States, channel 13 (156.65 MHz) is the designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with Sec. 26.05(a) except that in the area prescribed in Sec. 26.03(e), channel 67 (156.375 MHz) is the designated frequency.
- (e) On those navigable waters of the United States within a VTS area, the designated VTS frequency is an additional designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with Sec. 26.05.

**Sec. 26.05 Use of radiotelephone.**

Section 5 of the Act states that the radiotelephone required by this Act is for the exclusive use of the master or person in charge of the vessel, or the person designated by the master or person in charge to pilot or direct the movement of the vessel, who shall maintain a listening watch on the designated frequency. Nothing herein shall be interpreted as precluding the use of portable radiotelephone equipment to satisfy the requirements of this act.

**Sec. 26.06 Maintenance of radiotelephone; failure of radiotelephone.**

Section 6 of the Act states:

- (a) Whenever radiotelephone capability is required by this Act, a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall be maintained in effective operating condition. If the radiotelephone equipment carried aboard a vessel ceases to operate, the master shall exercise due diligence to restore it or cause it to be restored to effective operating condition at the earliest practicable time. The failure of a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall not, in itself, constitute a violation of this Act, nor shall it obligate the master of any vessel to moor or anchor his vessel; however, the loss of radiotelephone capability shall be given consideration in the navigation of the vessel.

### **33 CFR 110 Anchorage Regulations**

#### **Subpart B—Anchorage Grounds**

#### **33 CFR 110.197 Galveston Harbor, Bolivar Roads Channel, Texas.**

- (a)
- (1) Anchorage area (A). The water bounded by a line connecting the following points:
- | <u>Latitude</u> | <u>Longitude</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 29°20'48.5" N   | 94°42'54.0" W    |
| 29°20'43.0" N   | 94°44'46.5" W    |
| 29°21'15.0" N   | 94°44'27.0" W    |
| 29°21'05.0" N   | 94°42'52.0" W    |
- and thence to the point of beginning.
- (2) Anchorage area (B). The water bounded by a line connecting the following points:
- | <u>Latitude</u> | <u>Longitude</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 29°20'43.0" N   | 94°44'46.5" W    |
| 29°20'37.0" N   | 94°46'08.0" W    |
| 29°21'14.0" N   | 94°45'50.0" W    |
| 29°21'15.0" N   | 94°44'27.0" W    |
- and thence to the point of beginning.
- (3) Anchorage area (C). The water bounded by a line connecting the following points:
- | <u>Latitude</u> | <u>Longitude</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 29°20'39.0" N   | 94°46'07.5" W    |
| 29°21'06.1" N   | 94°47'00.2" W    |
| 29°21'24.0" N   | 94°46'34.0" W    |
| 29°21'14.5" N   | 94°45'49.0" W    |
- and thence to the point of beginning.
- (4) Anchorage area (A) East. The water bounded by a line connecting the following points:
- | <u>Latitude</u> | <u>Longitude</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 29°21'5.87" N   | 94°42'52.7" W    |
| 29°20'53.99" N  | 94°42'7.13" W    |
| 29°20'45.31" N  | 94°42'37.75" W   |
| 29°20'39.16" N  | 94°42'7.81" W    |
- and thence to the point of beginning.

(b) Regulations.

- (1) The anchorage area is for the temporary use of vessels of all types, but especially for vessels awaiting weather and other conditions favorable to the resumption of their voyages.
- (2) Except when stress of weather makes sailing impractical or hazardous, vessels shall not anchor in anchorage areas (A), (B), or (C) for more than 48 hours unless expressly authorized by the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston. Permission to anchor for longer periods may be obtained through Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston on VHF-FM channels 12 (156.60 MHz) or 13 (156.65 MHz).

**Note:** You may also call the VTS Watch Supervisor at 281-464-4836/37.

- (3) No vessel with a draft of less than 22 feet may occupy anchorage (A) without prior approval of the Captain of the Port.
- (4) No vessel with a draft of less than 16 feet may anchor in anchorage (C) without prior approval of the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston.
- (5) Vessels shall not anchor so as to obstruct the passage of other vessels proceeding to or from other anchorage spaces.
- (6) Anchors shall not be placed in the channel and no portion of the hull or rigging of any anchored vessel shall extend outside the limits of the anchorage area.
- (7) Vessels using spuds for anchors shall anchor as close to shore as practicable, having due regard for the provisions in paragraph (b)(5) of this section.
- (8) Fixed moorings, piles or stakes, and floats or buoys for marking anchorages or moorings in place, are prohibited.
- (9) Whenever the maritime or commercial interests of the United States so require, the Captain of the Port, or his authorized representative, may direct the movement of any vessel anchored or moored within the anchorage areas.

### **33 CFR 165.813 Security Zones; Ports of Houston and Galveston, TX.**

- (a) Location. Within the Ports of Houston and Galveston, Texas, moving security zones are established encompassing all waters within 500 yards of a cruise ship between Galveston Bay Approach Lighted Buoy "GB", at approximate position 29°21'18" N, 94°37'36" W [NAD 83] and up to, and including, Barbour's Cut. These zones remain in effect during the inbound and outbound entire transit of the cruise ship and continues while the cruise ship is moored or anchored.
- (b) Regulations.
  - (1) Entry of vessels or persons into these zones is prohibited unless authorized as follows.
    - (i) Vessels may enter within 500 yards but not closer than 100 yards of a cruise ship provided they operate at the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course.
    - (ii) No person or vessel may enter within 100 yards of a cruise ship unless expressly authorized by the Coast Guard Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston. Where the Houston Ship Channel narrows to 400 feet or less between Houston Ship Channel Entrance Lighted Bell Buoy "18", light list no. 34385 at approximately 29°21'06" N, 94°47'00" W [NAD 83] and Barbour's Cut, the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston may permit vessels that must transit the navigable channel between these points to enter within 100 yards of a cruise ship.
    - (iii) Moored vessels or vessels anchored in a designated anchorage area are permitted to remain within 100 yards of a cruise ship while it is in transit.
  - (2) Vessels requiring entry within 500 yards of a cruise ship that cannot slow to the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course must request express permission to proceed from the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston, or his designated representative.
  - (3) For the purpose of this section the term "cruise ship" is defined as a passenger vessel over 100 gross tons, carrying more than 12 passengers for hire, making a voyage lasting more than 24 hours, any part of which is on the high seas, and for which passengers are embarked or disembarked in the United States or its territories.
  - (4) The Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston will inform the public of the moving security zones around cruise ships via Marine Safety Information Broadcasts.
  - (5) To request permission as required by these regulations contact "U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Waterways Management by phone at (713) 398-5823.
  - (6) All persons and vessels within the moving security zone shall comply with the instructions of the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston and designated on-scene U.S.

- Coast Guard patrol personnel. On-scene U.S. Coast Guard patrol personnel include commissioned, warrant, and petty officers of the U.S. Coast Guard.
- (c) Authority. In addition to 46 U.S.C. 70034, the authority for this section includes 46 U.S.C. 70116.

**33 CFR 165.814 Security Zones; Captain of the Port Houston- Galveston Zone.**

- (a) Location. The following areas are designated as security zones:
- (1) Houston, Texas. The Houston Ship Channel and all associated turning basins, bounded by a line drawn between geographic positions 29°45'14" N., 095°05'47" W. to 29°45'04" N., 095°05'33" W. west to the T & N Rail Road Swing Bridge at the entrance to Buffalo Bayou, including all waters adjacent to the ship channel from shoreline to shoreline and the first 200 yards of connecting waterways.
  - (2) Morgan's Point, Texas. The Barbour's Cut Ship Channel and Turning Basin containing all waters west of a line drawn between Junction Light "BC" 29°41'12" N, 94°59'10" W (LLNR-24750), and Houston Ship Channel Light 91, 29°40'58" N, 94°58'59" W (LLNR-24595) (NAD 1983).
  - (3) Bayport, TX. The Port of Bayport, Bayport Ship Channel and Bayport Turning Basin containing all waters south of latitude 28°36'45" N and west of position 29°36'45" N, 094°59'31" W. (NAD 1983).
  - (4) Texas City, Texas. The Port of Texas City Channel, Turning Basin and Industrial Canal containing all waters bounded by the area south and west of a line drawn from Texas City Channel Light 19 (LLNR 26160) through Cut B Inner Range Front Light (LLNR 26110) and terminating on land in position 29°23'16" N, 94°53'15" W (NAD 1983).
- (b) Regulations.
- (1) Entry of into these zones is prohibited except for the following:
    - (i) Commercial vessels operating at waterfront facilities within these zones;
    - (ii) Commercial vessels transiting directly to or from waterfront facilities within these zones;
    - (iii) Vessels providing direct operational/logistic support to commercial vessels within these zones;
    - (iv) Vessels operated by the appropriate port authority or by facilities located within these zones; and
    - (v) Vessels operated by federal, state, county, or municipal agencies.
  - (2) Other persons or vessels requiring entry into a zone described in this section must request express permission to enter from the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston, or designated representative.
  - (3) To request permission as required by these regulations contact U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Waterways Management by phone at (713) 398-5823. Requests should normally be made 48 hours in advance.
  - (4) All persons and vessels shall comply with the instructions of the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston and designated on-scene U.S. Coast Guard patrol personnel. On-scene U.S. Coast Guard patrol personnel include commissioned, warrant, and petty officers of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Excerpted information is provided only to show the type of incidents requiring a notice of Marine Casualty and is not all-inclusive.

## **46 CFR 4.05—Notice of Marine Casualty and Voyage Records**

### **§ 4.05-1 Notice of marine casualty.**

- (a) Immediately after the addressing of resultant safety concerns, the owner, agent, master, operator, or person in charge, shall notify the nearest Sector Office, Marine Inspection Office or Coast Guard Group Office whenever a vessel is involved in a marine casualty consisting in
  - (1) An unintended grounding, or an unintended strike of (allision with) a bridge;
  - (2) An intended grounding, or an intended strike of a bridge, that creates a hazard to navigation, the environment, or the safety of a vessel, or that meets any criterion of paragraphs (a) (3) through (8);
  - (3) A loss of main propulsion, primary steering, or any associated component or control system that reduces the maneuverability of the vessel;
  - (4) An occurrence materially and adversely affecting the vessel's seaworthiness or fitness for service or route, including but not limited to fire, flooding, or failure of or damage to fixed fire-extinguishing systems, lifesaving equipment, auxiliary power-generating equipment, or bilge-pumping systems;
  - (5) A loss of life;
  - (6) An injury that requires professional medical treatment (treatment beyond first aid) and, if the person is engaged or employed on board a vessel in commercial service, that renders the individual unfit to perform his or her routine duties; or
  - (7) An occurrence causing property-damage in excess of \$75,000, this damage including the cost of labor and material to restore the property to its condition before the occurrence, but not including the cost of salvage, cleaning, gas-freeing, drydocking, or demurrage.
  - (8) An occurrence involving significant harm to the environment as defined in §4.03–65.
- (b) Notice given as required by 33 CFR 160.215 satisfies the requirement of this section if the marine casualty involves a hazardous condition as defined by 33 CFR 160.202.
- (c) Except as otherwise required under this subpart, if the marine casualty exclusively involves an occurrence or occurrences described by paragraph (a)(8) of this section, a report made pursuant to 33 CFR 153.203, 40 CFR 117.21, or 40 CFR 302.6 satisfies the immediate notification requirement of this section.

### **Section III Useful Things to Know**

Distress Reports  
Aids to Navigation and AtoN Knockdowns  
Hazardous Operating Conditions  
Channel Obstructions  
Dredges and Floating Plants  
Ferry Operations  
Vessel Moorings that Impact Waterway Navigation  
Security Zones  
Safety Zones  
Government Moorings  
Towing on a Hawser Above Morgans Point  
Shoaling in the Inner Bar Channel  
Bolivar Peninsula Meeting Restrictions  
VTS Houston-Galveston Chartlets

### **Distress Reports**

Report flare sightings, distress calls, or sightings of vessels possibly in distress to the VTC with the following;

- Location;
- Nature of distress;
- Description of vessel/s in distress;
- If your vessel is able to assist.

### **Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and AtoN Knockdowns**

AtoN (Aids to Navigation): Any private, state, or federally maintained light, beacon, or buoy. VTS continuously monitors the status of all AtoN within the VTSA. To avoid redundancy and unduly congested radiotelephone frequencies, VTS will normally report only critical AtoN discrepancies and/or critical AtoN situations in VTS traffic advisories. If additional AtoN information is needed, simply ask your controller.

The following aids are considered "critical" VTS AtoN:

- Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoys 7, 8, 9, and 10; Lighted Bell Buoy 16; and Pelican Is. Spit Shoal Lighted Buoy "P"
- Houston Ship Channel Lighted Bell Buoy 18; Lighted Buoys 25 & 26;
- Houston Ship Channel Lights 51, 52, 75, 76, and 127
- Texas City Channel Lights 9, 10, & 17
- San Jacinto Junction Light "SJ"
- All range lights

In addition to AtoN information provided by VTS, Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston broadcasts AtoN discrepancy information, including AtoN within the VTSA, on VHF-FM Channel 22A(1022) four times daily at 1050, 1250, 1650, and 2250 (local standard time).

### **Hazardous Operating Conditions**

Hazardous Vessel Operating Conditions are defined to mean any condition related to a vessel's ability to safely navigate or maneuver. These include, but are not limited to:

- (a) The absence or malfunction of vessel operating equipment, such as propulsion machinery, steering gear, radar system, gyrocompass, depth sounding device, automatic radar plotting aid (ARPA), radiotelephone, Automatic Identification System equipment, navigational lighting, sound signaling devices or similar equipment.
- (b) Any condition on board the vessel likely to impair navigation, such as lack of current nautical charts and publications, personnel shortage, or similar condition.
- (c) Vessel characteristics that affect or restrict maneuverability, such as cargo arrangement, trim, loaded condition, under keel clearance, speed, or similar characteristics.



Notify the VTS as soon as practicable should any of the above conditions emerge. VTS will direct appropriate actions which may range from continuing your transit with additional precautions to positive direction to a lay-berth and contacting a Marine Inspector.

### **Channel Obstructions**

Operations which will obstruct any portion of the navigable channel/waterway must be approved by VTS Houston-Galveston prior to the operation. Email the VTS and call the Watch Supervisor to discuss your operation that may be an obstruction. The Watch Supervisor will determine your next steps and may send you a Channel Obstruction Request Form to fill out and return to the VTS for planning your operation.

When completed and submitted, this request will be sent to appropriate VTS and USCG personnel and to representatives of the various Port Coordination Team constituencies for review.

- For a Category-I Obstruction (complete obstruction of the channel) notify the VTS Watch Supervisor 2- weeks in advance at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil) and call at 281-464-4836/37. Final formal submittal due 96 hours in advance.
- For a Category-II Obstruction (restriction of channel or portable obstruction) submit 24 hours in advance.

### **Dredges and Floating Plants**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) is responsible for permitting dredge projects for the navigable channels within the VTSA. Individual companies are responsible for permitting dredge projects for their docks. Dredge project officers should notify the VTS Watch Supervisor 2-weeks in advance at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil). A coordination meeting may be scheduled to determine affect to the mariners and measures, if needed. VTS will monitor all dredging operations, reporting the following:

- dredge location;
- pipeline configurations which restrict the channel or impede the flow of traffic.

This does not relieve the mariner of the responsibility to communicate with the dredge and make proper passing arrangements in accordance with the Rules of the Road.

Dredges and floating plants operating within the Houston-Galveston VTSA are required to be fitted with AIS. Upon arrival in the area, the dredge superintendent will receive a letter from the Vessel traffic Service detailing procedures. We request the following information from dredges:

- a. Name;
- b. Location of intended operation;
- c. Description of intended operation – including any channel obstructions;
- d. Configuration of pipeline;
- e. Termination point of pipelines;
- f. Time required to re-open the channel for vessel passage;
- g. Any operating impairments;



- h. Any notification requirements to channel traffic (e.g., requests for SLOWBELL or wake and surge considerations, no meeting or overtaking, divers in the water, etc.);
- i. Means of contacting the dredge control station;
- j. Telephone numbers and names of assist vessels;
- k. Telephone number and name of project superintendent.

VTs Houston-Galveston includes information regarding on-going dredging projects in its Dispatcher's List. Email the VTS Watch Supervisor at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil) to request receiving daily distribution of the Dispatcher's List. The Watch Supervisor will determine if your request is valid and place you on the distribution once vetted.

### **Ferry Operations**

Vessels on a published schedule or route, which has been furnished to the VTS, are exempt from providing Sailing Plans, Position Reports, and Final Reports unless deemed necessary by the vessel's master or VTC controller. Ferries must report mechanical casualties or conditions which may affect their safe navigation; 33 CFR, Part 161.12 (c).

There are two ferry crossing zones within VTS Houston-Galveston.

**Bolivar Precautionary Area:** State operated ferries transit between terminals at Bolivar Peninsula and Galveston Harbor. These ferries operate throughout the year, 24 hours each day. There may be as many as six ferries operating during peak hours, summer months, and holidays. The ferries monitor VHF-FM Channels 13 and 16.

**Lynchburg Precautionary Area:** State operated ferries transit between the mouth of the San Jacinto River and San Jacinto State Park. These ferries also operate throughout the year Monday thru Friday from 0430-2000 and Saturday/Sunday 1100-1830. There may be as many as two ferries in operation at any one time. The ferries monitor VHF-FM Channels 13 and 16.

### **Vessel Moorings that Impact Waterway Navigation**

To reduce the risks associated with vessel mooring and bunkering operations at critical locations within the VTSA, the Captain of the Port through the VTS has established restrictions at various facilities. These restrictions were implemented upon agreements developed within the Port community. Email the Watch Supervisor at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil) to request a copy of the Restricted Mooring, Bunkering and Lightering Policy.

**A clear channel shall at all times be left open to permit free and unobstructed navigation by all types of vessels and tows normally using the various waterways.** For this reason, pushing in along the channel will not normally be permitted. Using push tugs to hold vessels to a dock, following mooring evolution, is also not permitted. Proper moorings shall be maintained without the use of assist vessel(s). All vessels shall plan accordingly with their offices and dispatchers for prearranged dock or fleeting area availability as well as proper mooring configuration.

### **Security Zones**

33 CFR 165.30 defines a security zone as an area of land, water, or land and water which is so designated by the Captain of the Port or District Commander for such time as is necessary to prevent damage or injury to any vessel or waterfront facility, to safeguard ports, harbors, territories, or waters of the United States or to secure the observance of the rights and obligations of the United States.

The Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston has established security zones for certain areas within the Houston-Galveston area. Recreational vessels and unauthorized vessels/persons are excluded from these areas without the express permission from the Captain of the Port. Violators may be subject to civil penalties, fines and/or imprisonment. See pages 27-28 for further explanation of these areas.

Requests to enter a Security Zone should be forwarded to either Sector Houston-Galveston Waterways Management or MSU Texas City Waterways Management at [HoustonWWM@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonWWM@uscg.mil) or [MSUTexasCityWaterways@uscg.mil](mailto:MSUTexasCityWaterways@uscg.mil), respectively.

### **Safety Zones**

33 CFR 165.20 defines a safety zone as a water area, shore area, or water and shore area to which, for safety or environmental purposes, access is limited to authorized persons, vehicles, or vessels. It may be stationary and described by fixed limits or it may be described as a zone around a vessel in motion. Contact Waterways Management for non-routine entry into Safety Zones.

### **Government Moorings**

The Army Corps of Engineers maintains moorings in the Bolivar Land Cut and Pelican Cut for temporary mooring of barges while awaiting weather, repairs, dock space, or orders. Federal Regulations require that any vessel or tow using these areas maintain a clear and unobstructed waterway for other vessel traffic. Vessels must be properly moored, display proper signals, lights, and have a minimum of one crew member on board at all times.

### **Towing on a Hawser Above Morgans Point**

It is COTP policy that all tows towing astern on a hawser above Morgan's Point must have an assist tug on the stern of the vessel/barge being towed.

### **Shoaling in the Inner Bar Channel**

The Inner Bar Channel between Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoys 9 and 16 is known to experiencing shoaling prior to other reaches of the Galveston Bay Entrance Channel. Deep draft vessels of 40 foot and greater have experienced squat that results in temporary grounding and blocking the channel. Vessel Masters/Operators should pay due regard to speed of advance and effects of squat to prevent grounding. Updated U.S. Army Corps survey data can be found at:

<https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Navigation-Projects-Contracts/>

### **Bolivar Peninsula Meeting Restrictions**

VTs Directs no meeting or overtaking between Bolivar Peninsula Virtual Aid 22 and Bolivar Peninsula Light 14. Bolivar Peninsula aids to navigation are set outside of the limits of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in shoal water. VTS recommends vessel masters/operators confirm the position of their vessels using ECDIS to prevent grounding. Currents in this area are known to reach 3 kts. Exercise precaution and prepared to operate accordingly.

### **VTs Houston-Galveston Chartlets**

Area Chartlets are available. Email the Watch Supervisor at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil) to request a copy. Mariners are urged to carry a current copy of the area chartlets, as they provide a ready reference to facility locations within the Vessel Traffic Service Area.

## **USER MANUAL APPENDICES**

*Appendix A: Inshore Anchorage Restrictions*

*Appendix B: Mooring Restrictions*

*Appendix C: AtoN Knockdown Reporting Format*

*Appendix D: Security Zones*

*Appendix E: VTSA Distance Tables*

*Appendix F: Reporting Points*

*Appendix G: Precautionary Areas*

*Appendix H: Working Frequencies*

*Appendix I: Useful Internet Links*

### *Appendix A: Inshore Anchorage Restrictions*

Detailed information is available at Section II of this manual. This Appendix summarizes the information from 33 CFR 110.197.

The Bolivar Roads Anchorage is defined by Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Bell Buoys 10, 12, and 16.

Anchorage "A" is the "deep water" anchorage, restricted to vessels with a draft greater than 22 feet. Anchorage "A" can be used for temporary anchoring (not to exceed 48 hours). Vessels with a draft of 22 feet or less are prohibited from anchoring in this anchorage without approval.

Anchorage "A" East is a deep water anchorage and can be used for temporary anchoring (not to exceed 48 hours).

Anchorage "B" is the "shallow" anchorage and can be used for temporary anchoring (not to exceed 48 hours).

Anchorage "C" is restricted to vessels with a draft of 16 feet or greater (not to exceed 48 hours).

For all anchorages:

Vessels shall not anchor so as to obstruct the passage of other vessels proceeding to or from available anchorage spaces.

Anchors shall not be placed in the channel and no portion of the hull or rigging of any anchored vessel shall extend outside the limits of the anchorage area.

Vessels using spuds for anchors shall anchor as close to shore as practical, having due regard for the provisions stated above.

Fixed moorings, piles, or stakes, floats, or buoys, for marking anchorages or moorings in place, are prohibited.

Whenever the maritime or commercial interests of the United States so require, the COTP or authorized representatives possess the authority to direct the movement of any vessel anchored or moored within the anchorage area.

### ***Appendix B: Mooring Restrictions***

Email the Watch Supervisor at [HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil](mailto:HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil) to request a copy of the VTS Policy for Restricted Mooring, Bunkering and Lightering.

## *Appendix C: AtoN Knockdown Reporting*

### **AtoN Knockdown Reporting Format**

Your report of an AtoN Knockdown to Houston Traffic, Port Arthur Traffic, or the Sector Houston-Galveston Command Center, will be taken by a USCG watchstander in this form:

Your First Name

Your Last Name

Your email address

Your phone number

Preferred method of contact

Waterway/area

State

Vessel's Name

Vessel DOC/VIN/State

AID Name from Light List

Light List number

Type of Discrepancy

Buoy Discrepancy

Lighted ATON Discrepancy

Does a hazard to navigation exist

Amplifying information



## Appendix D: Security Zones



### Security Zones for Houston, Galveston, Texas City, and Freeport

**THE CAPTAIN OF THE PORT HOUSTON • GALVESTON HAS ESTABLISHED SECURITY ZONES FOR CERTAIN AREAS WITHIN THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA.**

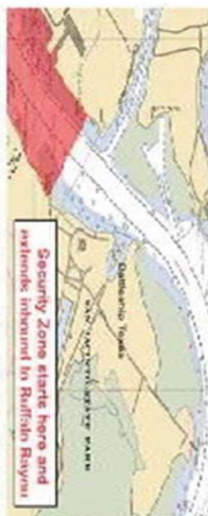
**RECREATIONAL VESSELS AND OTHER UNAUTHORIZED VESSELS/PERSONS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THESE AREAS WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION FROM THE CAPTAIN OF THE PORT.**

**VIOLATORS MAY BE SUBJECT TO CIVIL PENALTIES, FINES, AND/OR IMPRISONMENT. SEE INSIDE FOR A FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THESE AREAS.**

### ! WARNING !

\* The following areas are off limits \*

**Houston:** The Houston Ship Channel and all associated turning basins, bounded by a line drawn between the Houston Ship Channel Light 132 (LLNK-2444) and Houston Ship Channel Light 133 (LLNR-24450) (Just west of the USS Battle Ship TEXAS) west to the T & N Rail Road Swing Bridge at the entrance to Buffalo Bayou, including all waters adjacent to the ship channel from shoreline to shoreline and the first 200



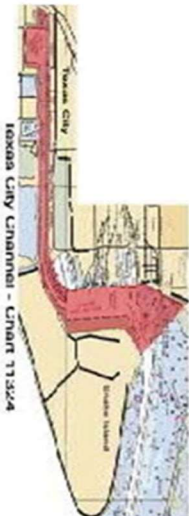
**Morgan's Point:** The Barbour's Cut Ship Channel and Turning Basin containing all waters west of a line drawn between Junction Light "Barbour's Cut" 29° 41. 12' N, 94° 59. 12' W (LLNR-23525), and Houston Ship Channel Light 91, 29° 41. 00' N, 94° 59. 00' W (LLNR-23375) (NAD 1983)



**Dayport:** The Port of Dayport Ship Channel and Turning Basin containing all waters south of 29° 36. 45. between the Bayport Ship Channel Light 9 (LLNR-23295) and the channel's western most point (NAD 1983).



**Texas City:** The Port of Texas City Channel, Turning Basin and Industrial Canal containing all waters bounded by the area south and west of a line drawn between Texas City Channel Light 19 (LLNR-24810) through Cut R Inner Range Front Light (11 NR-24766) and terminating on land in position 29° 23. 16. N, 096° 53. 15. W (NAD 1983)



**Freeport:** The Brazos Harbor containing all waters west of a line drawn between the northern point at 28° 56. 27. N, 095° 20. 00. W and the southern point 28° 56. 09. N, 095° 20. 00. W (NAD 1983) and its junction with the Old Brazos River Cut. The Dow Barge Canal containing all waters bounded by its junction with the Intracoastal Waterway, by a line drawn between the point at latitude 28° 56. 48. N, 095° 18. 20. W, and the point at 28° 56. 40. N, 095° 18. 33. W (NAD 1983). The Freeport LNG Basin containing all waters, from surface to sea floor, by a line drawn between the eastern point at latitude 28° 56. 25' N, 095° 18' 13" W, and the western point at 28° 56' 28" N, 095° 18' 34" W.



**Freeport Moving Security Zones:** The Captain of the Port may impose a Moving Security Zone around any vessel entering the Freeport Harbor. Entry is prohibited within 1000 yards ahead or astern, or bow yards on each side of a vessel that has a moving security zone placed around it. A moving security zone begins at U.S. territorial waters and moves with the vessel throughout the entire transit into the Port of Freeport. Mariners should monitor channel 16 VHF/FM for broadcasts when these security zones are in effect.

**All Cruise Ships:** Vessels may enter within 500 yards of a cruise ship but not closer than 100 yards provided they operate at the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course. No person or vessel may enter within 100 yards of a cruise ship unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port.

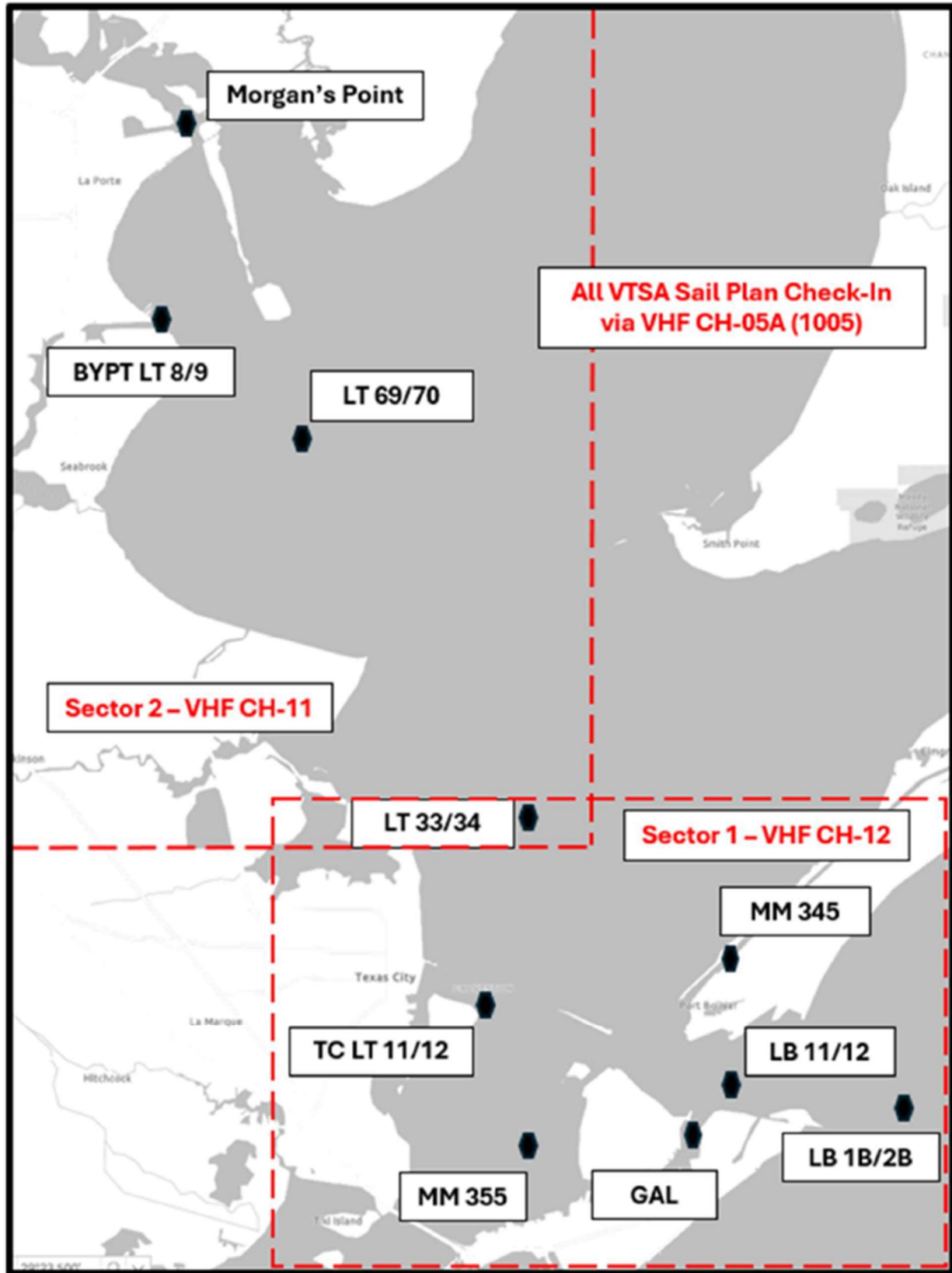
For information on how to obtain authorization to transit a security zone contact Sector Houston-Galveston Command Center at (713)671-5113.

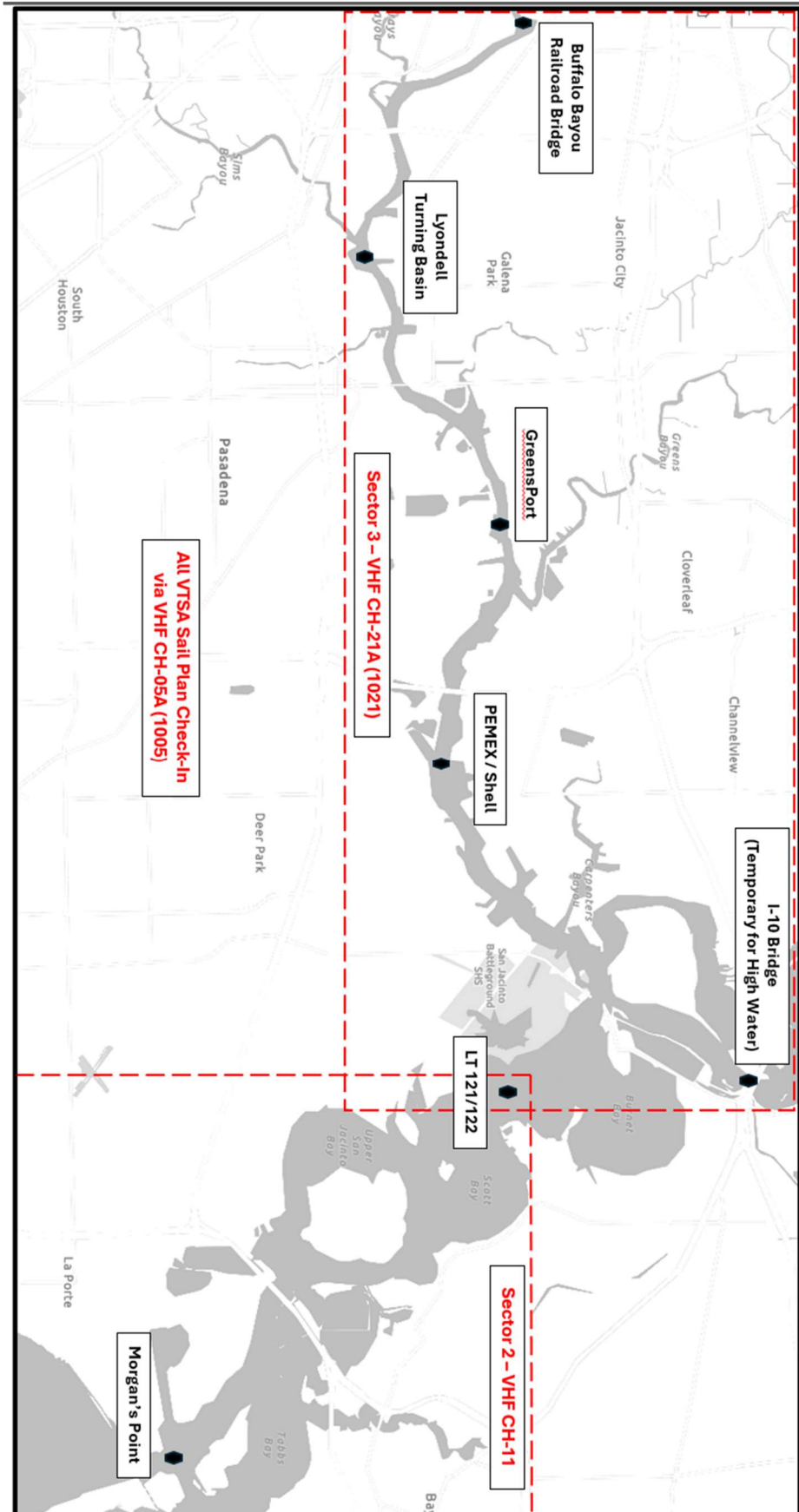


**Appendix E: VTSA Distance Tables (in statute miles)**

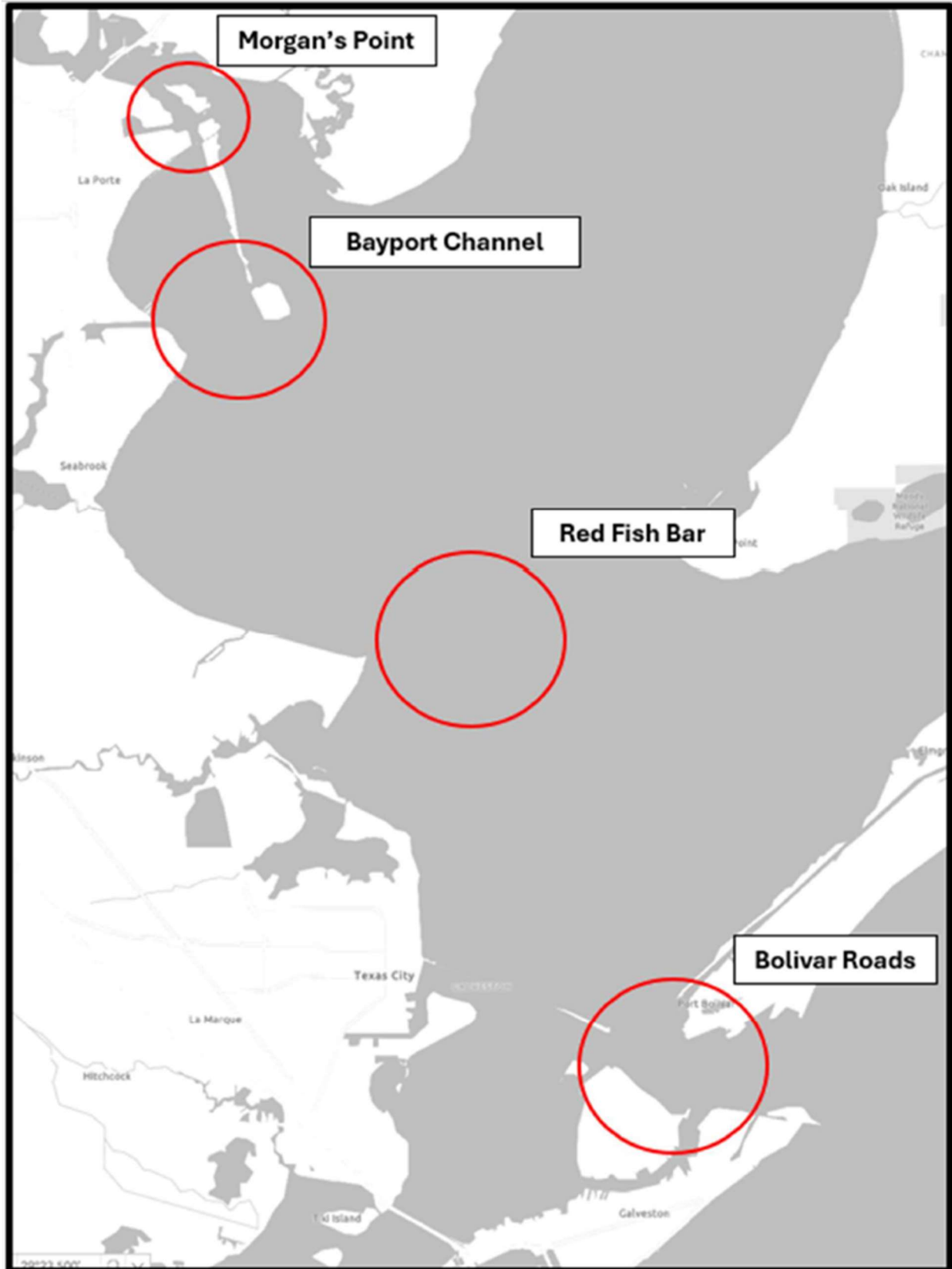
S T A T U T E  M I L E S	GBEC LBs 1B & 2B	53.3	52.1	51.8	51.3	49.1	47.9	47.6	47.1	46.1	45.8	45.5	44.8	43.4	43.0	42.6	42.2	41.4	40.2	39.9	39.0	38.2	37.2	36.7	35.7	34.2	30.1	26.6	25.6	21.6	13.4	5.2	3.6	2.8	0.0
	GBEC LBs 7 & 8	49.1	47.9	47.6	46.1	45.8	45.5	44.8	43.4	43.0	42.6	42.2	41.4	40.2	39.9	39.0	38.2	37.2	36.7	35.7	34.2	30.1	26.6	25.6	21.6	13.4	5.2	3.6	2.8	0.0					
	GBEC LBs 9 & 10	47.6	46.4	46.1	45.6	44.6	44.3	44.0	43.3	41.9	41.5	41.1	40.7	39.9	38.7	38.4	37.5	36.7	35.7	34.2	30.1	26.6	25.6	21.6	13.4	5.2	3.6	2.8	0.0						
	HSC LB 16	44.8	43.6	43.3	42.8	41.8	41.5	41.2	40.5	39.1	38.7	38.3	37.9	37.1	35.9	35.6	34.7	33.9	32.9	31.4	27.3	23.8	22.8	18.8	10.6	2.4	0.8	0.0							
	HSC LB 18	44.0	42.8	42.5	42.0	41.0	40.7	40.4	39.7	38.3	37.9	37.5	37.1	36.3	35.1	34.8	33.9	33.1	32.1	30.6	26.5	23.0	22.0	18.0	9.8	1.6	0.0								
	HSC LBs 25 & 26	42.4	41.2	40.9	40.4	39.4	39.1	38.8	38.1	36.7	36.3	35.9	35.5	34.7	33.5	33.2	32.3	31.5	30.5	29.0	24.9	21.4	20.4	16.4	8.2	0.0									
	HSC LT 51 & 52	32.4	33.0	32.7	32.2	31.2	30.9	30.6	29.9	28.5	28.1	27.7	27.3	26.5	25.3	25.0	24.1	23.3	22.3	20.8	16.7	13.2	12.2	8.2	0.0										
	HSC LT 75 & 76	26.0	24.8	24.5	24.0	23.0	22.7	22.4	21.7	20.3	19.9	19.5	19.1	18.3	17.1	16.8	15.9	15.1	14.1	12.6	8.5	5.0	4.0	0.0											
	Bayport Turning Basin	22.0	20.8	20.5	20.0	19.0	18.7	18.4	17.7	16.3	15.9	15.5	15.1	14.3	13.1	12.8	11.9	11.1	10.1	8.6	4.5	1.0	0.0												
	Morgans Point / Barbours Cut Entrance	21.0	19.8	19.5	19.0	18.0	17.7	17.4	16.7	15.3	14.9	14.5	14.1	13.3	12.1	11.8	10.9	10.1	9.1	7.6	3.5	0.0													
	Exxon Baytown	17.5	16.3	16.0	15.5	14.5	14.2	13.9	13.2	11.8	11.4	11.0	10.6	9.8	8.6	8.3	7.4	6.6	5.6	4.1	0.0														
	Lynchburg Ferry Crossing	13.4	12.2	11.9	11.4	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.1	7.7	7.3	6.9	6.5	5.7	4.5	4.2	3.3	2.5	1.5	0.0															
	Jacintoport / ITC / Vopak / HOFO	11.9	10.7	10.4	9.9	8.9	8.6	8.3	7.6	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.0	4.2	3.0	2.7	1.8	1.0	0.0																
	Cargill	10.9	9.7	9.4	8.9	7.9	7.6	7.3	6.6	5.2	4.8	4.4	4.0	3.2	2.0	1.7	0.8	0.0																	
	PEMEX / Oiltanking	10.1	8.9	8.6	8.1	7.1	6.8	6.5	5.8	4.4	4.0	3.6	3.2	2.4	1.2	0.9	0.0																		
	Beltway 8 Bridge	9.2	8.0	7.7	7.2	6.2	5.9	5.6	4.9	3.5	3.1	2.7	2.3	1.5	0.3	0.0																			
	Ineos Phenols	8.9	7.7	7.4	6.9	5.9	5.6	5.3	4.6	3.2	2.8	2.4	2.0	1.2	0.0																				
	Greens Bayou	7.7	6.5	6.2	5.7	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.4	2.0	1.6	1.2	0.8	0.0																					
	Greensport	6.9	5.7	5.4	4.9	3.9	3.6	3.3	2.6	1.2	0.8	0.4	0.0																						
	Pasadena Commodities Inc.	6.5	5.3	5.0	4.5	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.2	0.8	0.4	0.0																							
	Magellan / Targa	6.1	4.9	4.6	4.1	3.1	2.8	2.5	1.8	0.4	0.0																								
	Kinder Morgan Pasadena	5.7	4.5	4.2	3.7	2.7	2.4	2.1	1.4	0.0																									
	Pasadena Refining	4.3	3.1	2.8	2.3	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.0																										
	Lyondell / Woodhouse / TPC	3.6	2.4	2.1	1.6	0.6	0.3	0.0																											
	Manchester Terminal	3.3	2.1	1.8	1.3	0.3	0.0																												
	Houston Cement West	3.0	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.0																													
	610 Bridge	2.0	0.8	0.5	0.0																														
Brady Turning Basin	1.5	0.3	0.0																																
New Terminal	1.2	0.0																																	
Buffalo Bayou / Turning Basin	0.0																																		

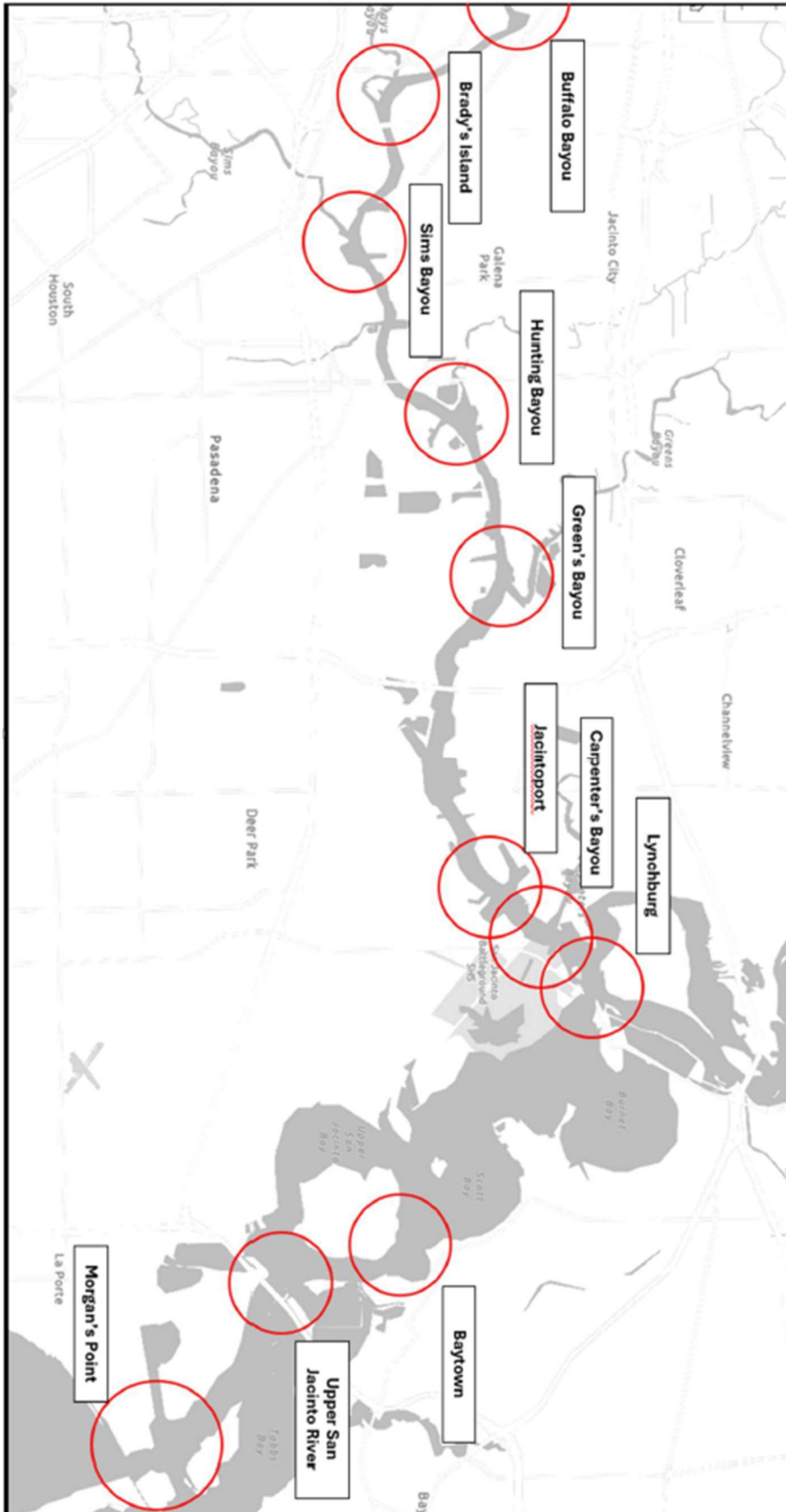
*Appendix F: Reporting Points*





*Appendix G: Precautionary Areas*





## *Appendix H: Working Frequencies*

### **Working Frequencies along the Houston Ship Channel**

This informal list of frequencies is intended only as a useful reference and offers no official endorsement of frequency usage.

VHF	USE
5A (1005)	VTs Houston-Galveston Sailing Plans
9	Kirby Fleeting Area – Old River
10	Channel Shipyard – San Jacinto River Tow Traffic
21A (1021)	VTs Houston-Galveston Sector III (Above HSC lights 121 and 122)
11	VTs Houston-Galveston Sectors II (Between HSC lights 33,34 and 121,122)
12	VTs Houston-Galveston Sectors I (Below HSC lights 33 and 34)
13	Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone
14	Port Operations and Ship-to-Tug; Pilot Boats
16	International Distress and Calling
19	Exxon-Mobil Docks - Baytown
22A (1022)	Government/non-Government Liaison
73	Galveston-Texas City Pilots Working
74	Houston Pilots Working
81	US Coast Guard Working
83	US Coast Guard Working



## *Appendix I: Useful Internet Links*

VTs Houston-Galveston:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/missions/ports-and-waterways/vessel-traffic-services/vts-houston-galveston>

VTs Email Notification via GovDelivery:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSCG/subscriber/new>

USCG Homeport – Sector Houston-Galveston:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/port-directory/houston-galveston>

Captain of the Port MSIBs:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/my-homeport/safety-Notifications/MSIB?cotpid=28>

NOAA Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System Houston-Galveston

<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/ports/index.html?port=hg>

NOAA NWS Houston-Galveston Area Weather

<https://www.weather.gov/hgx/>

NOAA NWS National Hurricane Center <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Houston Pilots <http://www.houston-pilots.com/>

Galveston-Texas City Pilots <https://www.galvestonpilots.com/>

Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee <https://lonestarihsc.org>

U.S. Army Corps Survey Data:

<https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Navigation-Projects-Contracts/>



