



# **VHF (working) procedures**

## **River Scheldt VTS Area**

**FREE TRANSLATION**

**Version 5.2 – Dated: December 2017**

## **PREAMBEL**

These VHF procedures are for the guidance of traffic participants, for VTS operators and for pilots participating in the River Scheldt VTS area, to create clarity in the use of VHF procedures in order to optimize efficiency and enhancing safety of Shipping Traffic and the protection of the environment.

Applying correct procedures will set a good example to other traffic participants which will contribute to safety.

The IMO Guidelines For Vessel Traffic Services (IMO Resolution A 857 (20)) stood model for this guidance.

This document should be read with the brochure VHF Sectors (MariFoonBlokIndeling (MFBI)).

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Users philosophy

- Vessel Traffic Service for the River Scheldt Area (VTS-SGVTS-SG) is an entity of separate services. Its chief task is to supply one product to shipping, namely: to enhance safety and optimize efficiency of shipping traffic and the protection of the environment.
- Within the VTS-SGVTS-SG area all commercial traffic has a duty to report.
- All pleasure craft have a duty to maintain a continuous listening watch if there is a VHF set on board. This entails keeping a listening watch on the appropriate frequencies as described in the MFBI brochure. Pleasure craft having a VHF set on board must be able to be contacted by shipping traffic, but do not have to report as in the MFBI brochure, only upon request of shipping traffic or the VTS-SGVTS-SG Traffic Centre. Pleasure craft may use the services of VTS-SGVTS-SG under the same conditions as commercial traffic, but this should be explicitly requested.
- Commercial traffic are required to maintain a continuous listening watch on the appropriate local frequency.
- Self-Regulating: Self-Regulating, among other things, means that vessels may contact each other directly (without interference of a Traffic Centre) to make traffic arrangements. The Traffic Centre will monitor the feasibility and correct execution of arrangements at all times and intervene if necessary.
- Pro-active: The Traffic Controller contributes to a safe and smooth passage by actively monitoring the traffic flow. As and when the Traffic Controller anticipates bottlenecks or dangerous situations, he/she actively intervenes as to avoid any problems. Thereby the Traffic Controller uses his authority to issue a warning, information, advice or a traffic instruction<sup>1</sup> The Traffic Controller does not only do so upon request, but explicitly on his own initiative.
- The limits of a sector area are determined by the character of the area and by the shipping traffic, in order to enable anticipation.

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<sup>1</sup> Traffic Instructions may only be given by the Competent Authority (GNA). When the situation this allows than will the (Chief) Traffic Controller always consult the Competent Authority (GNA). Only in case of imminent danger may the (Chief) Traffic Controller emit a Traffic Instruction with immediate feedback to the Competent Authority (GNA)

- A radar frequency has an overflow function besides the traffic frequency but a listening watch on the traffic frequency will remain compulsory at all times. This means that an overflow frequency may be used to relieve the traffic frequency f.i. for supplying radar information or for other longwinded conversations.
- Without prejudice to the competence of the Flemish and Dutch Authorities with reference to the safe and smooth handling of the shipping traffic, the ultimate responsibility for the navigation will always remain with the Ship's Master/traffic participant.
- All traffic participants and VTS operators in the VTS-SG are required to adhere to the prescribed VHF procedures.

## 1.2 Operating Area

The operating area of the "VHF-procedures VTS" applies to the area as indicated in the MFBI brochure.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

### 2.1 VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEM

A VTS can be any of three types of services according to the IMO VTS guidelines A 857 (20)

#### 2.1.1 Information Service (INS)

*“An Information Service is a service to ensure that essential information becomes available in time for on-board navigational decision-making and to monitor its effects.”*

Geographical, hydrological and administrative information in relation to the shipping route.

#### 2.1.2 Navigational Assistance Service (NAS)

*“A Navigational Assistance Service is a service to assist on-board navigational decision making.”*

Navigation Assistance Services may be given to complement the Information Services and Traffic Organization Services. It may be given upon request of the traffic participant or when deemed necessary by the VTS authority. These services offer essential, timely and current data to support the on-board navigational decision-making and consist of supplying information, advice and/or instructions.

#### 2.1.3 Traffic Organizational Service (TOS)

*“A Traffic Organizational Service is a service to prevent the development of dangerous maritime traffic situations and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic within the VTS area.”*

Information which is important to the nautical sequence of dispatch, including admission and acceptance policies, i.e. information relating to tidal windows, slots, availability of pilots, lock planning, etc.

## **2.2 Traffic Arrangements**

These are mutual arrangements between traffic participants to clarify uncertain situations and/or to prevent imminent danger. Traffic arrangements must be made directly between traffic participants and not via a Traffic Centre.

## **2.3 General Traffic Information**

Information given by a duly authorized person to one or more traffic participants, or to others regarding a fairway or a part thereof or individual vessels on that fairway, whereby this information may also pertain to fairway information or tactical traffic information.

## **2.4 Traffic Instruction**

An order, given by a duly authorized person to one or more traffic participants to achieve a certain result in traffic behaviour, or to impose a certain prohibition of a result in traffic behaviour.

## **2.5 Pilot's advice under the terms of Shore Based Pilotage**

Advice of a Pilot to a Ship's Master and/or a traffic participant in as far as the Pilot is unable to render his services on board of the vessel. This advice may be given under certain conditions from another vessel or from the shore.

## **2.6 Mandatory Reports**

These are reports at required waypoints or times by traffic participants for the purpose of processing traffic information.

## **2.7 Port Information**

Port information is information relating to bridges, berths and lock planning.

## **2.8 Traffic Participant**

A participant who has the actual control of a vessel.

## 2.9 Message Markers

To simplify ship-to-ship, shore-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication, but also when one of the IMO Standard Communication Phrases (SMCP) does not quite cover the required perception, one of the following eight indicators may be used to increase the option for the message to be understood correctly.

It is up to the discretion of the Traffic Controller or ship's officer to either use or not use message markers and if so, which ones to choose according to his expert judgement in the situation involved.

The message marker should be expressed preceding the message or the corresponding part of the message. According to the IMO VTS Guidelines, it is recommended to clearly indicate with every message directed at a vessel, whether this message contains information, advice, warning or instruction and that whenever possible, IMO SMCP is to be used.

Categories of Message Markers:

### 2.9.1 Information

This indicates that the following message is restricted to observed facts, situations, etc.

Comment: This marker is preferably used for navigational and traffic information, etc. The recipient of the INFORMATION should then take the appropriate action.

Example: "INFORMATION, vessel "X" will overtake you on your port side."

### 2.9.2 Warning

This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to inform others regarding danger.

Comment: This means that any recipient of a WARNING should pay immediate attention to the danger mentioned. It is up to the recipient of the WARNING to take the necessary action.

Example: "WARNING. Obstruction in fairway."

### **2.9.3 Advice**

This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence others by a Recommendation.

Comment: The decision whether to follow the ADVICE still stays with the recipient. One does not necessarily have to carry out the ADVICE, but should consider it very carefully.

Example: "ADVICE, (I advise you to) remain on the red side of the fairway until the inward bound vessel has passed."

### **2.9.4 Instruction**

This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence others by a Regulation.

Comment: This means that the sender, e.g. a VTS station or a naval vessel, must have the full authority to send such a message. The recipient has to follow this (legally) binding message unless he/she has contradictory safety reasons which then have to be reported to the sender.

Example: "INSTRUCTION. Do not cross the fairway

### **2.9.5 Question**

This indicates that the following message is of interrogative character.

Comment: The use of this marker removes any doubt on whether a question is being asked. The recipient is expected to return an answer.

Example: "QUESTION. (What is) your maximum draft?"

### **2.9.6 Answer**

This indicates that the following message is the reply to a previous question.

Comment: Note that an answer should not contain another question.

Example: "ANSWER. My maximum draft is one hundred and thirty two ( one three two) decimeters."

### **2.9.7 Request**

This indicates that the following message is asking for action from others with respect to the vessel.

Comment: The use of this marker is to signal: I want something to be arranged or provided, e.g. requirements for ship's stores, tugs, permission, etc.

Example: "REQUEST. I need two tugs."

### **2.9.8 Intention**

This indicates that the following message informs others regarding immediate navigational action intended to be taken (by a certain vessel).

Comment: The use of this message marker is logically restricted to messages announcing navigational actions by the vessel sending this message.

Example: "INTENTION. I will reduce speed."

## 3 VHF FREQUENCIES

Depending on their use, VHF Frequencies are arranged as follows:

### 3.1 Traffic Frequencies:

- Traffic arrangements
- Traffic information
- Pilot information
- Traffic instructions
- Mandatory reports
- Port information (where no Port information frequency is available)

### 3.2 Radar Frequencies:

- Traffic information
- Navigational assistance
- Mandatory reports
- Port information (where no port information frequency is available)

### 3.3 Contingency frequency:

A contingency frequency is a frequency exclusively reserved to deal with radio traffic during calamities.

The competent authority refers VHF users to the contingency frequency if there is reason for that.

- Contingency traffic

### 3.4 Port Operations

Information about berths, locks, waiting quays, anchorages,....



### **3.5 Other frequencies**

- Pilot frequencies
- Port frequency
- Terminal frequency for Inland Barges
- Frequencies for locks/bridges

## 4 VHF SECTOR LAYOUT IN VTS-SG

### 4.1 Traffic area Wandelaar

#### 4.1.1 SECTOR WANDELAAR APPROACH and WANDELAAR

##### 4.1.1.1 Call sign:

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| WANDELAAR APPROACH       | VHF 60 |
| TRAFFIC CENTRE WANDELAAR | VHF 65 |

##### 4.1.1.2 Coverage:

**Wandelaar Approach:** Belgian-French border from the Flemish coast 51°23.60N 002°19.20E / 51°25.95N 002°27.50E across OD1 buoy, 51°19.60N 002°31.50E, Middelkerke Bank buoy to Westende Water Tower on the coast.

**Wandelaar:** from the Westende Water Tower on the Flemish coast, across Middelkerke Bank buoy, 51°19.60N 002°31.50E, OD1 buoy to 51°25.95N 002°27.50E / 51°28.75N 002°56.00E via bouy S2 to Obst 14 to the coast.

##### 4.1.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Pilot information
- 4 Traffic instructions
- 5 Mandatory reports
- 6 Pilots by helicopter

## 4.1.2 RADAR ZEEBRUGGE

### 4.1.2.1 Call sign:

RADAR ZEEBRUGGE

VHF 04

### 4.1.2.2 Coverage:

Coast Belgian-French border to 51°23.60N 002°19.20E, to 51°25.95N 002°27.50E, to 51°28.75N 002°56.00E, to 51°34.6N 003°08.38E (via WP4 buoy), buoys W4, W5, follow coast across the moles heads of Zeebrugge and Ostend to the Belgian-French border.

### 4.1.2.3 Functions:

- 1 Escorting LNG traffic
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Navigation assistance (radar information)
- 4 Intake Shore Based Pilotage
- 5 Port information
- 6 Helicopter co-ordination

### 4.1.2.4 CHANNELS FOR PILOT SERVICES

- Contact channel Pilotage: WANDELAAR PILOT VHF 65
- Working channel pilots / SWATH communication channel  
Wandelaar Pilot Vessel / Traffic Centre Zeebrugge VHF 06
- Flemish Coastal Ports VHF 09

### 4.1.2.5 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL

VHF 67

## 4.2 Traffic Area Steenbank

### 4.2.1 SECTOR STEENBANK

#### 4.2.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE STEENBANK

VHF 64

#### 4.2.1.2 Coverage:

From the Walcheren coast via Domburg meridian (003°30.00E) to SBO buoy, via parallel SBO to 51°50.00N 003°08.38E to 51°34.60N 003°08.38 E (via WP4 buoy), buoys W4, OG17/OG14, to the Walcheren coast.

#### 4.2.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Navigation assistance (radar information)
- 4 Pilot information
- 5 Traffic instructions
- 6 Mandatory reports

#### 4.2.1.4 CHANNELS FOR PILOT SERVICES

- Contact channel pilots: STEENBANK PILOT VHF 64
- Working channel pilots / SWATH communication channel  
Pilot Steenbank VHF 79

#### 4.2.1.5 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL

VHF 67

## **4.3 Traffic Area Zeebrugge**

### **4.3.1 SECTOR ZEEBRUGGE**

#### 4.3.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE ZEEBRUGGE

VHF 69

#### 4.3.1.2 Coverage

51°28.75N 002°56.00E to 51°34.60N 003°08.38E to WP4 buoy, buoys W4, W5, follow coast across mole heads Zeebrugge, coastline, Obst 14, meridian across buoys A1bis, S2 and VG6.

#### 4.3.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Pilot information
- 4 Traffic instructions
- 5 Mandatory reports

### **4.3.2 PORT AREA ZEEBRUGGE**

#### 4.3.2.1 Call sign:

RADAR CONTROL ZEEBRUGGE

VHF19

#### 4.3.2.2 Functions:

1. IVS function, arrival and departure reports
2. Swath intake for vessels departing from Ostend, Nieuwpoort and Zeebrugge

#### 4.3.2.3 CHANNELS FOR PILOT SERVICES

- Pilot Service Zeebrugge : PILOT ZEEBRUGGE VHF 09
- Flemish Pilots (communication channel Wandelaar Pilot Vessel/Traffic Centre Zeebrugge VHF 06

#### 4.3.2.4 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL VHF 67

### 4.4 Traffic Area Flushing (Vlissingen)

#### 4.4.1 SECTOR FLUSHING (VLISSINGEN)

##### 4.4.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE FLUSHING (VLISSINGEN) VHF 14

##### 4.4.1.2 Coverage:

Buoy W5 via coast to connecting line of buoys 15A and E2A via coast across mole heads of Sloehaven, outer harbour and Michiel de Ruyter harbour to a line connecting buoys OG14, ¼ nm west of OG17, W4, W5 as far as coast.

##### 4.4.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Pilot Services information

- 4 Traffic instructions
- 5 Mandatory reports

#### **4.4.2 RADAR FLUSHING (VLISSINGEN)**

##### 4.4.2.1 Call sign:

RADAR FLUSHING (VLISSINGEN)

VHF 21

##### 4.4.2.2 Coverage:

Buoy W5 via coastline to a line connecting buoys 15A and E2A, to coastline across mole heads of Sloehaven, outer harbour and Michiel de Ruyter harbour, to a connecting line of buoys OG14, OG17, W4, W5 until coast.

##### 4.4.2.3 Functions:

- 1 Mandatory reports
- 2 Navigation assistance (radar information)
- 3 Port information

##### 4.4.2.4 CHANNELS FOR PILOT SERVICE

- Co-ordination Flushing Roads Tenders

VHF 40

##### 4.4.2.5 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL

VHF 67

## **4.5 Traffic Area Terneuzen**

### **4.5.1 SECTOR TERNEUZEN / RADAR TERNEUZEN**

#### 4.5.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE TERNEUZEN / RADAR TERNEUZEN VHF 03

#### 4.5.1.2 Coverage:

The connecting line between buoys 15A/E2A via coastline to Hoek van Baarland, buoys MG2/32/35 via coastline, Terneuzen Outer Harbour included as far as connecting line between buoys 15A/E2A.

#### 4.5.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Navigation assistance (radar information)
- 4 Traffic instructions
- 5 Mandatory reports
- 6 Port and lock information

## **4.6 Traffic Area Hansweert**

### **4.6.1 SECTOR HANSWEERT / RADAR HANSWEERT**

#### 4.6.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE HANSWEERT / RADAR HANSWEERT VHF 65

#### 4.6.1.2 Coverage:

The connecting line of buoys 35/32/MG 2 to Hoek van Baarland along the river banks, Hansweert Outer Harbour included, as far as connecting line of buoys SvV4/SvV3, to



the connecting line of buoys 46/55, along this line to the coast, along the river banks to buoys 35.

#### 4.6.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Navigation assistance (radar information)
- 4 Traffic instructions
- 5 Mandatory reports
- 6 Port and lock information

#### 4.6.1.4 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL

VHF 67

### 4.7 Traffic Area Antwerp

#### 4.7.1 SECTOR ANTWERP

##### 4.7.1.1 Call sign:

TRAFFIC CENTRE ZANDVLIET

VHF 12

##### 4.7.1.2 Coverage:

The connecting line of buoys 55/46, to a connecting line of buoys SvV3/SvV4, along this line to the coast until buoy 100.

##### 4.7.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Traffic instructions
- 4 Mandatory reports

## 4.7.2 Port Operations

### 4.7.2.1 Call sign:

SID Antwerp

VHF 85

### 4.7.2.2 Coverage:

From connecting line buoys 32/35 to Wintam Lock

### 4.7.2.3 Functions:

- 1 Information exchange, on ships initiative as well on VTS Centre initiative
- 2 Lock information

### 4.7.2.4 Other channels

Terminal channel for inland navigation

VHF 81

## 4.7.3 RADAR WAARDE

### 4.7.3.1 Call sign:

RADAR WAARDE

VHF 19

### 4.7.3.2 Coverage:

Connecting line buoys 55/46, to buoys SvV3/SvV4, to buoys SvV14/SvV13, to buoys 58/63.

### 4.7.3.3 Function:

Navigation assistance (radar information)

## 4.7.4 RADAR SAEFTINGE

### 4.7.4.1 Call sign:

RADAR SAEFTINGE

VHF 21

#### 4.7.4.2 Coverage:

Connecting line buoys 63/58, to buoys SvV13 /SvV14, to South Saeftinge Beacon/buoy 76.

#### 4.7.4.3 Function:

Navigation assistance (radar information)

### 4.7.5 RADAR ZANDVLIET

#### 4.7.5.1 Call sign:

RADAR ZANDVLIET

VHF 04

#### 4.7.5.2 Coverage:

South Saeftinge beacon/76 to buoys 93/82A.

#### 4.7.5.3 Function:

Navigation assistance (radar information)

#### **4.7.6 RADAR KRUISSCHANS**

##### **4.7.6.1 Call sign:**

RADAR KRUISSCHANS

VHF 66

##### **4.7.6.2 Coverage:**

Buoys 93 / 82A as far as buoy 100

##### **4.7.6.3 Function:**

Navigation assistance (radar information)

#### **4.7.7 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL Traffic Area Antwerp**

VHF 67

#### **4.8 AREA UPSTREAM of buoy nr.100**

##### **4.8.1 Call sign:**

None

VHF 10

##### **4.8.2 Functions:**

- 1 Traffic arrangements between vessels
- 2 Mandatory reports

Comment: No radar coverage, no traffic information

## 4.9 Traffic area Ghent - Terneuzen Canal

### 4.9.1 SECTOR GHENT \_ TERNEUZEN

#### 4.9.1.1 Call sign:

HARBOUR SERVICE TERNEUZEN (for Dutch part) VHF 11

HARBOUR SERVICE GENT/LOOKOUT ZELZATE (Flemish part) VHF 11

#### 4.9.1.2 Coverage:

The Ghent - Terneuzen Canal and adjacent area.

#### 4.9.1.3 Functions:

- 1 Traffic arrangements
- 2 General traffic information
- 3 Traffic instructions
- 4 Mandatory reports
- 5 Lock information

4.9.1.4 CONTINGENCY CHANNEL VHF 67

## 5 MANDATORY REPORTS FOR COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC

### 5.1 Inbound from Sea, entering Roads / River

| LOCATION  | MESSAGE  | TO                    | VHF               | PARTICULARS   |
|---|--|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| ½ hour before<br>Scheldt VTS Area<br>limits       | Ship's name + position<br>+ draft + destination +<br>ETA pilot station | WAP<br>TCS<br>TCW/TCZ | 60<br>64<br>65/69 | Instruction speed, if compulsory<br>pilotage, report 3' from<br>Steenbank Racon |
| <b>WANDELAAR PILOT STATION OPERATES ON VHF 65</b> |  |                       |                   |   |
| <b>STEENBANK PILOT STATION OPERATES ON VHF 64</b> |  |                       |                   |   |
| Steenbank   | Route "Westrond" (via<br>WP4 – VG/NEAK<br>buoy)                        | TCS                   | 64                |   |
| SBZ   | Ship's name + position<br>+ ETA Flushing Roads                         | TCS                   | 64                | Inbound from Steenbank  |
| SWA   |  | TCW                   | 65                | Inbound from Wandelaar  |
| A1 bis / S2 / VG6 /<br>NE-Akkaert / WP4           | Ship's name + position+<br>ETA FR if not yet<br>report                 | TCZ                   | 69                | Wielingen/Scheur/Zeebrugge<br>Inbound Steenbank via<br>"Westrond"               |
| OG17 / W5   | Ship's name + position<br>of pilot's changeover                        | CVL                   | 14                |   |
| Flushing Roads                                    | Ship's name + ETA<br>destination + route                               | CVL                   | 14                |   |
| 15A / E2A   | Ship's name +<br>position  | CTN                   | 03                | Enter Traffic Area  |
| 35 / MG 2   | Ship's name + position   | CHW                   | 65                | Enter Traffic Area  |
| 35  | Ship's name + position   | SID<br>Antwerp        | 85                | Seagoing traffic bound for<br>Antwerp Kruisschans, Lock<br>planning             |
| 55  | Ship's name + position   | CZV                   | 12                | Enter Traffic Area  |
| 65<br>Seagoing ships<br>only                      | Ship's name + position   | CZV                   | 12                |   |
| Zuid-Saeftinge<br>Seagoing ships<br>only          | Ship's name + position   | CZV                   | 12                |   |
| 116   | Ship's name + position   |                       | 10                | All traffic   |

## 5.2 Leaving river / roads, outbound to sea

| LOCATION  | MESSAGE  | TO                            | VHF | PARTICULARS  |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-----|--|
| Place of departure<br>Upper Scheldt<br>above buoy 100                                 | Ship's name +<br>position + draft +<br>destination                               | SID<br>Antwerp                | 85  | General info / lock info. Only<br>seagoing traffic must report<br>prior to departure |
| Place of departure<br>above buoy 100  | Ship's name +<br>position + intention  | To all<br>shipping<br>traffic | 10  | On departure   |
| 111   | Ship's name +<br>position  | To all<br>ships               | 10  | For seagoing traffic   |
| 100, before leaving<br>lock or before<br>letting go last line<br>at terminal or jetty | Ship's name +<br>destination   | CZV                           | 12  | Identification Entry Traffic Area  |
| South Saeftinge   | Ship's name + ETA<br>Flushing Roads  | SID<br>Antwerp                | 85  |  |
| 46  | Ship's name +<br>position  | CHW                           | 65  | Entry Traffic Area   |
| 32  | Ship's name +<br>position + route  | CTN                           | 03  | Entry Traffic Area   |
| 8 / E2A   | Ship's name +<br>position +<br>information pilot's<br>changeover                 | CVL                           | 14  | Entry Traffic Area   |
| Flushing Roads  | Ship's name +<br>position +route +<br>ETA Pilot Station                          | CVL                           | 14  | After Pilot's changeover   |
| OG14 / WP4  | Ship's name +<br>position + heading<br>after pilot has<br>disembarked            | TCS                           | 64  | Entry Traffic Area   |
| W4  | Ship's name +<br>position + route<br>+ETA Pilot station +<br>info Swath operable | TCZ                           | 69  | Entry Traffic Area   |
| S2 / A1 Bis   | Ship's name +<br>position + Route (if<br>N-outward)                              | Westpost                      | 65  | Confirmation yawl/swath<br>TCW acknowledges message                                  |
| ODY   | Ship's name +<br>position  | WNA                           | 60  |  |

### 5.3 Participating in a traffic flow

All ships leaving a harbour, weighing anchor, leaving a lock or departing from berth report to the Traffic Centre shortly before joining the traffic flow, on the appropriate channel (if relevant)

| AREA                             | VTS-CENTRE                  | VHF | PARTICULARS                                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| ZEEBRUGGE                        | RADAR CONTROL<br>ZEEBRUGGE  | 19  | In port                                      |
| ZEEBRUGGE (roads<br>area)        | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>ZEEBRUGGE | 69  |  |
| ZEEBRUGGE (sea<br>approach area) | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>WANDELAAR | 65  |  |
| ZEEBRUGGE                        | WANDELAAR<br>APPROACH       | 60  | In the port Nieuwpoort,<br>leaving from quay |
| FLUSHING                         | RADAR FLUSHING              | 21  |  |
| FLUSHING                         | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>FLUSHING  | 14  |  |
| TERNEUZEN                        | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>TERNEUZEN | 03  |  |
| HANSWEERT                        | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>HANSWEERT | 65  |  |
| ANTWERP                          | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>ZANDVLIET | 12  |  |

Above buoy nr. 100, where there is no radar coverage, all ships are to report their intentions to all shipping traffic (channel 10)



## 5.4 Leaving traffic flow

Ships entering a harbour, anchoring, mooring or entering a lock, sign off to a Traffic Centre in the area where participating in a traffic flow ends.

| AREA                             | VTS-CENTRE                                   | VHF-CHANNEL | PARTICULARS   |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| ZEEBRUGGE                        | RADAR CONTROL<br>ZEEBRUGGE                   | 19          | In port   |
| ZEEBRUGGE<br>(roads area)        | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>ZEEBRUGGE                  | 69          |   |
| ZEEBRUGGE (sea<br>approach area) | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>WANDELAAR                  | 65          |   |
| ZEEBRUGGE                        | WANDELAAR<br>APPROACH                        | 60          | In the port<br>Nieuwpoort, moored<br>at quay                    |
| FLUSHING                         | RADAR FLUSHING                               | 21          | Anchor information  |
| FLUSHING                         | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>FLUSHING                   | 14          |   |
| FLUSHING                         | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>TERNEUZEN                  | 03          | Inward bound off<br>Dow Jetty.<br>Outward bound off<br>buoy 22. |
| HANSWEERT                        | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>HANSWEERT                  | 65          | Inward bound off<br>buoy 45.<br>Outward bound off<br>buoy 42A.  |
| ANTWERP                          | TRAFFIC CENTRE<br>ZANDVLIET (SID<br>Antwerp) | 85          | At anchor, moored<br>on quay, jetty or lock                     |

### 5.5 Inward Bound for Ghent - Terneuzen

| LOCATION            | MESSAGE                                      | TO   | VHF | PARTICULARS                       |
|---------------------|--|------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Terneuzen Locks     | Ship's name + position + draft               | HDTN | 11  |                                   |
| Sluiskil Bridge     | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                                   |
| Driekwart           | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                                   |
| Sas van Gent Bridge | Ship's name + position                       | UKZ  | 11  |                                   |
| Dutch Ports         | Ship's name + position + draft + destination | HDTN | 11  | After mooring<br>Before departure |
| Zelzate Lookout     | Ship's name + position                       | HDGE | 11  |                                   |
| Siffer dock         | Ship's name + position                       | HDGE | 11  |                                   |
| Belgian Ports       | Ship's name + position                       | HDGE | 11  |                                   |
| After mooring       | Ship's name + position                       | UKZ  | 11  | Sign off IVS -SRK                 |

### 5.6 Outward bound from Ghent – Terneuzen

| LOCATION                                 | MESSAGE                                      | TO   | VHF | PARTICULARS        |
|--|--|------|-----|--------------------|
| Flemish Ports                            | Ship's name + position + draft + destination | HDGE | 11  |                    |
| Shortly before letting go in Dutch Ports | Ship's name + position + draft + destination | UKZ  | 11  | Sign in to IVS-SRK |
| Sidmar South                             | Ship's name + position                       | UKZ  | 11  |                    |
| Zelzate Lookout                          | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                    |
| Sas van Gent Bridge                      | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                    |
| Shortly before letting go in Dutch Ports | Ship's name + position + draft + destination | HDTN | 11  |                    |
| Driekwart                                | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                    |
| Sluiskil Bbridge                         | Ship's name + position                       | HDTN | 11  |                    |
| Terneuzen Locks                          | Ship's name + position + draft               | HDTN | 11  |                    |

## 6 River Scheldt Shipping Broadcasts

### 6.1 Principles

The intention of the SSB is to supply information of a general nature to traffic participants.

The contents of the SSB:

- Heights of tides and expected deviations at various points in the area
- Wind direction and speed at the Traffic Centre, storm signals and local wind forecast
- Visibility reports if relevant
- Shipping traffic, unusual circumstances as well as important operations or construction works
- Important deviations of fairway marks
- Depending on Traffic Centre: Pilot information such as side of pilot ladder, embarkation in adverse weather conditions, ...
- Only for Traffic Centre Zeebrugge: Traffic information in working area for Ships with a draft  $\geq 140$  dm or Ships which cannot maneuvering due their tideslot (GNA)(sailing during the last half hour of their tideslot with a mean speed of 14 knots)

### 6.2 Coverage, VHF channels and times

Four area related River Scheldt Shipping Broadcasts are transmitted at different times so as not to overlap, namely:

#### 6.2.1 TRAFFIC CENTRE ZEEBRUGGE

- Area Wandelaar, area Zeebrugge and area Flushing as far as the Eastern limit of the Precautionary Area of Flushing roads (=meridian across the Green light of Sloehaven Entrance)
- On channel 69 in Dutch, every hour on the hour + 10 minutes
- On channel 04 in English, every hour on the hour + 15 minutes

- On channel 69 in English, every hour on the hour + 30 minutes (only “Information Deep Draft Ships”)
- On channel 69 in English, every hour on the hour + 50 minutes (only “information Deep Draft Ships”)

#### **6.2.2 TRAFFIC CENTRE FLUSHING**

- Area Steenbank, area Zeebrugge, area Flushing, area Terneuzen and area Hansweert
- On channel 14 in Dutch, every hour on the hour + 50 minutes
- On channel 21 in English, every hour on the hour + 55 minutes

#### **6.2.3 TRAFFIC CENTRE ZANDVLIET**

- Area Antwerp, area Hansweert, area Terneuzen and area Flushing as far as the Eastern limit of the Precautionary Area of Flushing roads (= meridian across the green light of Sloehaven Entrance)
- On channel 12 in Dutch, every hour on the hour + 30 minutes

#### **6.2.4 TRAFFIC CENTRE TERNEUZEN**

- Area Ghent - Terneuzen Canal and Terneuzen locks complex
- On channel 11 in Dutch, every hour on the hour

## 7 VHF users philosophy in River Scheldt VTS area

If users of VHFannels do not adhere to the rules of speech discipline, other conversations will be overspoken. This overspeak, also known as noise, distorts normal exchange of messages, and creates questions that do not contribute to safety. In order to prevent overspeak on VHFannels, VTS users should adhere to the following rules;

### 7.1 Speech discipline for users of VTS River Scheldt Area:

- Adhere to the speech discipline as it was taught, even if other users do not comply. The Traffic Centre should set an example.
- Always use the ship's name and proper name of the Traffic Centre, no abbreviations nor private names.
- The Traffic Controller should remind the traffic participant who does not comply with the correct procedures.
- Traffic participants with a mandatory reporting duty do sign in on the appropriate channel, but do not sign off, unless it is a mandatory report.
- Make sure that traffic participants make traffic arrangements among themselves on the traffic channels. Traffic Centres may assist. Point that out to an offender.
- Do not enter into discussion on VHFannels. Incorrect use of a VHFannel may be referred to another channel by the administrator.
- Only use the approved official languages, either Dutch or English. In English, preferably use the Standard Marine Communication Phrases. In an emergency one may deviate.
- Use message markers (both in Dutch and in English) to indicate the nature of the message.

### 7.2 Information Service

- The responsibility for conducting a safe navigation ,lies on board. The traffic participant may gather required information in various ways, among other things, such as listening or making enquiries. In such a case, it should not restrain a Traffic Controller to give unsolicited information to the traffic participant concerned.
- Information given must be correct, relevant, complete and clear.
- The Traffic Controller will inform (a) traffic participant(s) of imminent dangers or risks without delay. This may be done by means of message markers in order to obtain the required result.

- Chapter 4 of these guidelines indicates the functions of the various VHF frequencies. This governs which information will be given on what channel. The Traffic Controller corrects when necessary.
- The colour of side lights is referred to in traffic arrangements. For instance passing green to green or red to red.

### **7.3 Navigation Assistance Service**

Before radar information may be given, the Traffic Controller should agree with the traffic participant which type of information the latter wishes to obtain. The traffic participant has the option of restricted (standard) information or extensive information. Should circumstances require, the Traffic Controller will give unsolicited, restricted or extensive radar information.

Both commercial and leisure traffic may make use of radar information. If it transpires that the traffic participant has insufficient skills or inadequate equipment, the Traffic Controller will supply the traffic participant with the necessary (traffic) information to guide the Ship to a safe haven, anchorage or berth.

Restricted assistance entails rendering a relevant traffic image of the VHF sector with extension into the next sector if necessary. This traffic image will be updated at regular intervals. The radar information must not be repeated by the ship or replied to if the message ends in "OUT".

Only when supplying important information, which must not be missed on board, the VTS operator should ask for a reply. The user of the fairway that is being assisted, should confirm reception. In such a case, the Traffic Controller ends the report with "OVER".

When dangerous situations arise, the message marker "WARNING" is called once as a rule, followed by the ship's name on the appropriate VHFannel.

For extensive radar navigation assistance, the restricted radar assistance is enhanced with one of the following options: position reports, ground course and speed, estimated passing distances.

### **7.4 Definitions when giving radar information**

- The Traffic Controller ascertains the correct position of the Ship to be informed (so called positive identification).

- Traffic participants must timely indicate that they wish to deviate from their route. Traffic Controllers must react immediately if this is spotted, without having received a report from the Ship.
- Traffic Controllers perform actively (non-passive) in traffic situations to support traffic participants.
- With radar information, a summary is given of the current traffic image, eventually complemented with calculated, expected situations such as meetings and passings, etc. in (passing) distance and time.
- The position of a moving Ship is given by the location of the bow in relation to a point ahead in the fairway, or in bearing and distance. For an immobile ship it is the centre of the track or radar echo as the case may be.
- Passing distance is the distance between the facing sides of the ship involved and the other ship or obstacle, as is at the moment of passing, provided the ground course will be maintained.
- The ground course of a ship is the direction of movement across the ground in relation to True North.
- The distance between two Ships is the shortest distance measured. For meeting Ships, it is the distance bow-bow and for overtaking Ships, it is the distance between bow and stern.
- The distance abeam of a buoy, beacon or obstacle is the distance at right angles with the direction of the fairway, between the bow of a moving Ship to an object.
- The distance to a navigation mark is the shortest distance to this navigation mark (see 5th bullet above).
- The terms in(ward)bound / out(ward)bound are used East of Schone Waardin.
- In approaches and roads, the terms ingoing/ outgoing are used.
- To indicate a position before or past a certain point, the terms upstream (above) or downstream (below) may be used.
- If the Traffic Controller is required to give information in a part of the area with no radar cover or visual sight, then he will make this known to the traffic participant requiring the information.

- Position information will be given with regard to well-known reference points. These points are conspicuous, familiar and can be found on the chart.
- Traffic arrangements between ships, such as passing or overtaking, contravening the current regulations, etc. are made between ships themselves. Usually when passing, reference is made to the colour of the side lights, for instance passing green to green, and while overtaking with reference to the side:

I will overtake you on your port side/starboard side.
- A bearing between two known points is the horizontal angle between True North and the point of bearing. The digits are individually spoken, one by one.
- Distances are given in tenths of kilometres (metres) or nautical miles (or cables). If confusion may arise, digits are spoken separately, f.i. 50 or 15.
- Names of buoys and marks etc. should not be translated and must be spoken as they are marked in the chart, W6 is Whisky 6.
- The transit of buoys means that two consecutive buoys marking a bend in a fairway, are coming in one line with regard to the bow of the Ship.
- Position reports may be given in any of two ways, namely the longitudinal/transversal method or bearing and distance. These reports may be complemented with ground course and speed. Intervals between various reports depend on the traffic image, Ships' speeds, meteorological circumstances, nautical critical points, etc.
- Position reports (longitudinal/transversal method). This is the point to where the ship has progressed in longitudinal direction in the fairway and the transverse distance, measured to the local usual reference line (line of buoys, leading line, the shore, etc.). The transversal distance may also be expressed as 1/3 red, 1/3 green or mid-fairway. If the distance is less than 1/3 of the fairway, the distance should be expressed in metres from the line of buoys. Measuring always refers to the starboard side of the Ship. If this is not possible because of no reference, this should explicitly be reported.
- Position reports (bearing and distance method). This is in regard to the bow of the assisted Ship to a known point. Here ground course and speed may also be given. Should the Ship proceed parallel to the reference line, or deviate from, or approach the reference line, this must be reported.



- Upon request, position reports may be given when anchoring. It must be agreed with regard to which point or to which intended anchor position may be indicated. This could be an anchor position as indicated in the chart, or a position chosen by the Master / Pilot. Information is given as bearing and distance (b/d) from the bow to this anchorage, including ground speed. As a norm for the frequency of reports, the following may be of help:
  - distance more than 1500 m.: b/d every 500 m.
  - distance 1500 - 500 m.: b/d every 200 m.
  - distance 500 to 200 m.: b/d every 100 m.
  - from 200 m.: b/d every 50 m.

For the benefit of an anchor watch, the Master / Pilot must report a number of nautical miles or cables from a fixed point, as well as the number of shackles on deck.

## 8 Official Language

The Permanent Committee of Supervision for Navigation on the River Scheldt has prescribed that the official language of VHF communication in the area controlled by the GNA is the official national language, Dutch. Alternatively the English language may be used (in accordance with SMCP). For Traffic Controllers and traffic participants this entails the following:

### 8.1 All shipping:

- The user of the fairway will be addressed and supported in one of the official languages (Dutch and/or English). Only to avoid an unwanted situation / incident, another language may be used if one masters that language. The message must then immediately be repeated in Dutch and/or English, for other traffic participants to be able to understand what has been said.
- Should one discover that a traffic participant cannot be approached in one of the official languages (see 8.2.1 bullet 2), this should be passed on to the GNA.

### 8.2 Inland River Cruise Ships:

If an inland river cruise ship is expected, it must be verified that the Captain/Skipper masters one of the official languages (see 8.2.1 bullet 2) before this Ship enters the GNA controlled area.

#### 8.2.1 Verification

- This verification should take place as follows:  
Within the scope of Nautical Sequence, authorities in adjacent ports to VTS-SG are issuing similar instructions for the benefit of their operational staff. This should prevent that these Ships can enter the VTS-SG operational area, if the Skipper/Captain does not master one of the official languages.
- In addition to the above, as a double-check, the Traffic Centres of the VTS-SG will address inland river cruise ships (see 8.2) as follows:

*“It is compulsory to use the Dutch or English language in the area ruled by the Common Nautical Authority, do you speak and understand one of these languages?”*

If he answers positively, one can ask additional questions for further verification, either in Dutch or in English. For instance:

- what is the Ship's destination?
- will you be following the main fairway or the secondary fairway?
- are you familiar with the fairway?
- .....?

Should the Skipper/Captain react in an unclear and unsatisfactory way, the Ship may not be permitted into the controlled area.

### **8.2.2 Exception at certain Hydro/Meteo circumstances.**

If an inland river cruise ship states that she wishes to proceed without any passengers, the GNA may (through the Traffic Centre involved) issue an exemption to proceed with a visibility of 1000 metres or less and/or a significant wave height of 1,5 m.

## 9 ABBREVIATIONS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CHW    | Traffic Centre Hansweert                     |
| CTN    | Traffic Centre Terneuzen                     |
| CVL    | Traffic Centre Flushing                      |
| CZB    | Traffic Centre Zeebrugge                     |
| CZV    | Traffic Centre Zandvliet                     |
| GNA    | Common Nautical Authority                    |
| HDGE   | Ghent Port Service                           |
| HDTN   | Terneuzen Port Service                       |
| IMO    | International Maritime Organization          |
| INS    | Information Service                          |
| LNG    | Liquefied Natural Gas                        |
| LOA    | Shore Based Pilotage                         |
| MFBI   | VHF Sector Layout                            |
| NAS    | Navigational Assistance Service              |
| ODY    | Oostdyck buoy                                |
| SID    | Scheldt Information Service                  |
| SMCP   | Standard Marine Communication Phrases        |
| SSB    | River Scheldt Shipping Information Broadcast |
| SWATH  | Small Waterplane Area Twin Hull              |
| TCS    | Traffic Centre Steenbank                     |
| TCW    | Traffic Centre Wandelaar                     |
| TCZ    | Traffic Centre Zeebrugge                     |
| TOS    | Traffic Organization Service                 |
| UKZ    | Zelzate Lookout                              |
| VHF    | Very High Frequency                          |
| VTS    | Ship Traffic Services                        |
| VTS-SG | Ship Traffic Services River Scheldt Area     |
| WNA    | Wandelaar Approach                           |