

Legal requirement and navigation Guidance Notes

Navigational Safety

The ports and harbours are in constant use by commercial vessels, including motor tankers, container ships, ferries and other traffic. Recreational users of the area are advised to keep clear and use caution as well as maintain a listening watch on the designated VHF channel.

Vessel traffic services (VTS) contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment, adjacent shore areas and work sites and from possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.

AVOID CROSSING THE BOWS OF ON-COMING COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC

Large container ships, in particular, usually have restricted visibility ahead (see diagram below). You may be able to see them clearly, but can they see you? If the full width of the wheelhouse on the ship is not visible then you may not have been seen!

Most recreational sailors take a justifiable pride in the responsible way they conduct themselves. Part of this is the realization that hindering the safe passage of commercial vessels is not only bad seamanship but dangerous to themselves, their crews and the ship itself.

Recreational users of the port must familiarise themselves with, and observe, the COLREGS, Maltese Bye-Laws and Local Notice to Mariners.

Information is available on: www.transport.gov.mt

Passenger Ship Safety Guidance

The most extensive EU legislative instrument is Directive 2009/45/EC covering passenger ships made of steel or equivalent material and high-speed craft on domestic voyages. Where applicable and feasible, it is based on internationally agreed standards, namely the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), establishing detailed technical requirements on vessel construction, stability, fire protection and life-saving equipment. It also includes specific access and public information requirements for persons with reduced mobility or disabilities.

This Directive applies to the following passenger ships and craft, regardless of their flag, when engaged on domestic voyages:

- new and existing passenger ships of 24 metres in length and above;
- high-speed passenger crafts.

The Directive does not apply to:

- passenger ships which are: (i) ships of war and troopships; (ii) sailing ships; (iii) ships not propelled by mechanical means; (iv) vessels constructed in material other than steel or equivalent and not covered by the standards concerning High Speed Craft (Resolution MSC 36 (63) or MSC.97(73)) or Dynamically Supported Craft (Resolution A.373(X)); (v) wooden ships of primitive built; (vi) traditional ships; (vii) pleasure yachts; (viii) ships exclusively engaged in port areas; (ix) offshore service ships; or (x) tenders;
- high-speed passenger craft which are: (i) craft of war and troop craft; (ii) pleasure craft; (iii) craft exclusively engaged in port areas; or (iv) offshore service craft.

Enforcement Rhibs

The Enforcement Directorate operates enforcement rhibs within the limits of the Maltese Islands throughout the year. This service is used mainly to escort large vessels safely into or out of the harbour area to ensure that the main navigable channels are kept clear for their safe transit.

The enforcement rhibs maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 12.

Speed of vessels

In compliance with Maltese Bye-Laws:

- Proceed at a safe speed with due regard to other water users, buoys, moorings and banks of the harbour area or any other property.
- Reduce speed and wash when passing a dredger, vessel engaged in diving operations or vessel working on a buoy or mooring.



Useful addresses and Telephone Numbers

Transport Malta

Ports & Yachting Directorate
Malta Transport Centre, Triq Pantar,
Hil Lija, LA 2021
Malta

Valletta VTS: +356 2555 4491
Marsaxlokk VTS: +356 2555 4492

Maritime Office - Gozo

Tel: +356 21558856 / 21558857

Maritime Enforcement

Tel: +356 2555 4407

Malta VTS (Armed Forces of Malta)

Tel: +356 2249 4000

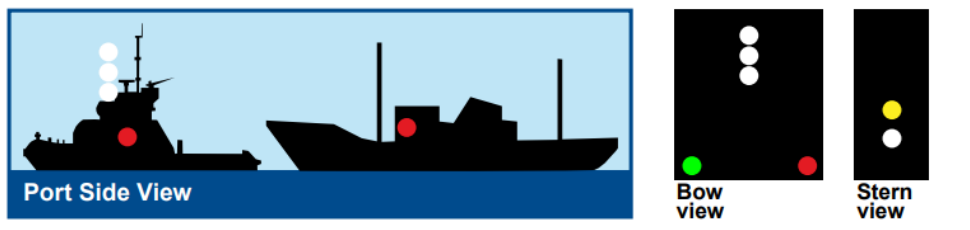
Civil Protection Department

Tel: +356 2393 0000

Emergency

Tel: 112

Towing Lights & Signals



Visual & Sound Signals in Fog

Vessels Not Under Command	Vessels at Anchor
By Day 2 Black Balls	By Day 1 Black Ball
By Night COLREGS Rule 27(a) 2 Red Lights (Vertical)	By Night COLREGS Rule 30(a) All Round White Light
Sound Signal COLREGS Rule 35(c)	Sound Signal Bell COLREGS Rule 35(g)

Manoeuvring & Warning Signals

These signals may be supplemented by light signals

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Short blasts | Altering to starboard |
| 2 Short blasts | Altering to port |
| 3 Short blasts | Going astern |
| 5 Or more short blasts | Your intentions are unclear |

Vessels Restricted in Their Ability to Manoeuvre By Day Ball Diamond Ball By Night COLREGS Rule 27 (b) Lights (Vertical) Red White Red Sound Signal COLREGS Rule 35(c)	Vessels Engaged in Dredging/Underwater Ops By Day Foul Side Side vessels may pass Black By Night Foul Side Side vessels may pass Red White Green Red Red Green Green Lights Sound Signal COLREGS Rule 35(c)	Power Driven Vessels Sound Signal Making Way Stopped COLREGS Rule 35(a) or (b)
Vessels Engaged in Diving Ops By Day Code Flag A	I am taking in, or discharging, or carrying dangerous cargo By Day Code Flag B	I have a pilot on board By Day Code Flag H

VHF R/T Working Channels

Yachts are reminded that Channel 16 is a DISTRESS SAFETY AND CALLING CHANNEL ONLY.

Other than for distress Channel 16 must only be used to establish contact before going to a working channel. VHF working channels must not be used for boat communications.

The designated VHF Working Channels are as follows:

- 09 Pilotage, Mooring and Pilot Launch
- 10 Mgarr LPS (Local Port Service)
- 10 Towage (to be used on a secondary basis)
- 11 Weather Broadcasts & Navigation Warnings
- 12 Valletta VTS

13 Terminals and Marinas

14 Marsaxlokk VTS

20 Navigational Assistance / Special instructions to a specific ship

22 Emergency Operations / Oil Pollution

68 Towage

69 Malta VTS

74 Towage

ALL VESSELS WITHIN MALTESE TERRITORIAL WATERS, NAVIGATING, OR AT ANCHOR, OR SECURED AT BERTH, SHALL AT ALL TIMES MAINTAIN A LISTENING WATCH ON THE ALLOCATED VHF CHANNEL.

VTS Communication Procedures Procedure on VTS

1. Vessels to be subjected to Traffic Service

- Ocean-going ships for international route
- Ships over 500 Gross Tonnage
- Cargo Ships carrying dangerous goods
- Tug Boats with towage line
- Fishing boats with length 45 metres or longer
- Towing vessels for construction work
- Oil tankers or Waste Oil Carriers with gross tonnage of 300 tonnes or less
- Passenger and cruise ships
- Recreational crafts over 45 metres
- High speed-crafts and fast ferries

b) Pre-Movement/Shifting Reporting

- Report on expected movement of a ship to VTS at least 2 hours before shifting: Vessel Name, Location, Estimated time of shifting
- Report on commencing of movement: Vessel Name, Call Sign, Location, Pilot onboard and Cast off.
- Report on movement completion: Vessel Name, Call Sign, Location, at berth and pilot off.

c) Pre-Departure Reporting

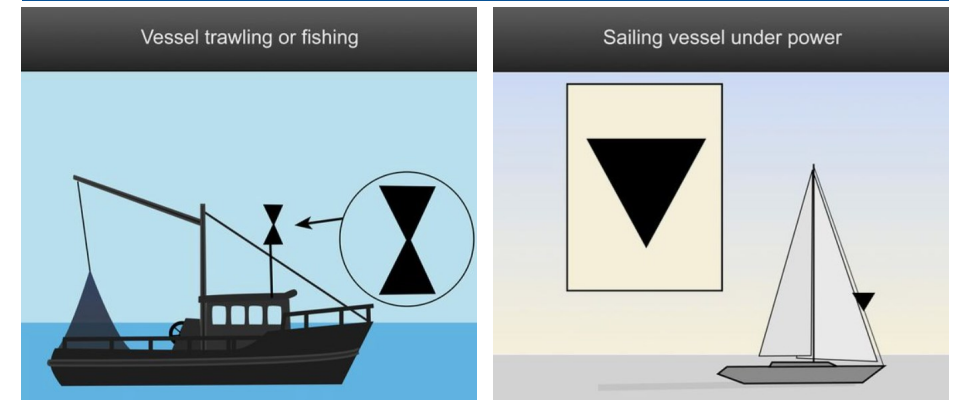
- Report on expected departure of a ship to VTS at least 2 hours before departure: Vessel Name, Call Sign, location, ETD and destination.
- Yachts are required to provide: Yacht's name, ETD, length overall, passengers onboard, next port of call and intentions.
- The designated reporting points for vessels leaving port are: when pilot is onboard, casting off, at breakwater and pilot off.

2. VTS Reporting Procedures

a) Pre-Entry Reporting

- Report on expected arrival of a ship to VTS at least 2 hours before arrival: Vessel Name, Call Sign, ETA, last port of call and purpose of visit (for tankers whether loaded or in ballast and type of mooring lines).
- Yachts are required to provide: Yacht's name, ETA, length overall, passengers onboard, last port of call and intentions.
- The designated reporting points for vessels arriving in port are: 2 hours before arrival, 1 hour before arrival, 5 nautical miles off pilot station, at pilot station, when pilot is onboard, at breakwater, at berth and pilot off.

The VTS centre can ask vessels that are not subjected to VTS reporting, to report on a port of departure, a port of arrival, time and purpose when they are sailing within territorial waters.



This Guide is produced by TM as a reference and safety guide only and must not be used as a navigation chart.

All numbers and information contained within were correct at time of publication.