



PORTS AND YACHTING DIRECTORATE

NOTICE TO MARINERS N° 05 of 2026

Our Ref: **TM/PYD/61/07**

15th January 2026



Transport Malta

Malta Transport Centre,
Triq Pantar, Hal Lija, LJA 2021
Malta

Tel: (356) 2122 2203
Fax: (356) 2125 0365
Email: info.tm@transport.gov.mt

www.transport.gov.mt

Vessel Traffic Services and Use of International Marine VHF Channels

All mariners are reminded that under the *Authority for Transport in Malta Act* (Cap. 499 of the Laws of Malta), it is a core function of the Authority for Transport in Malta (the “Authority”) to exercise overall control for the preservation of good order in the territorial and inland waters of Malta, and to provide, operate, and maintain within ports and port approaches adequate and efficient services and facilities necessary for the proper, safe, and efficient functioning of such ports.

In pursuit of these functions, Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) have been implemented in accordance with the *Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements Regulations* (S.L. 499.34) (the “Regulations”). VTS contribute to the safety of life at sea, the safety and efficiency of navigation, and the protection of the marine environment.

The Authority, through its Ports and Yachting Directorate in its capacity as port authority, is the competent authority responsible for the implementation of these Regulations and for exercising the functions referred to above, including the provision of VTS. The Armed Forces of Malta operate Malta VTS, which is responsible for monitoring shipping and receiving vessel information in accordance with the Regulations.

The VTS operational centres to provide VTS are as follows:

- **VALLETTA VTS** and **MARSAXLOKK VTS**, operated by the Authority to regulate and monitor safe movement of vessel traffic within and between ports, in port and harbour approaches and within territorial waters while vessels are engaged maritime activities.
- **MALTA VTS**, operated by the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) is responsible to monitor shipping and receiving vessel information within territorial waters. In terms of Regulation 8 of the Regulations, Malta VTS may request additional information from ships operating beyond territorial waters.

In addition, a Local Port Service (LPS) operates at Mgarr Harbour, Gozo namely:

- **MGARR LPS**, operated by the Authority, assists in the coordination of vessel movement entering or leaving the harbour, including vessels anchoring outside Mgarr for the purpose of ferrying passengers to Gozo.

Participation with Valletta VTS, Marsaxlokk VTS, Malta VTS and Mgarr LPS is mandatory for all vessels, irrespective of type, size or nature of operations. This requirement applies to all types of vessels, including commercial, non-commercial and recreational crafts, without exception.



All mariners are to use Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) and the associated message markers as defined by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in resolution A.918(22) to facilitate clear and unambiguous VHF communication. These markers must be used to clearly identify the purpose of the message and ensure proper understanding between ship and shore.

1) VTS AREAS

a) Valletta VTS and Marsaxlokk VTS

Valletta VTS and Marsaxlokk VTS are made up of primarily the ports and the port approaches, and the designated VTS Areas.

The designated VTS Areas are enclosed by the following WGS 84 DATUM co-ordinates:

Valletta Harbours - Port Approaches ¹	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 55'.731	014° 29'.564
35° 54'.959	014° 31'.339
35° 57'.182	014° 32'.343
35° 54'.481	014° 35'.089
35° 54'.175	014° 32'.970
35° 53'.429	014° 33'.252
35° 53'.299	014° 32'.981

Marsaxlokk - Port Approaches	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 49'.188	014° 33'.739
35° 48'.002	014° 37'.795
35° 45'.052	014° 33'.650
35° 48'.459	014° 32'.140

Channels between Malta and Għawdex (Gozo)	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
36° 00'.990	014° 16'.470
35° 58'.310	014° 19'.150
36° 01'.893	014° 20'.095
35° 59'.891	014° 22'.059

Bunkering Area 1	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
36° 01'.739	014° 22'.564
36° 01'.729	014° 23'.479
36° 00'.824	014° 24'.931
36° 00'.617	014° 24'.739
36° 00'.119	014° 25'.425
35° 59'.557	014° 26'.088
35° 59'.611	014° 26'.518
35° 59'.226	014° 23'.767
36° 01'.739	014° 22'.564

Bunkering Area 2	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 52'.522	014° 35'.421
35° 53'.041	014° 35'.063
35° 53'.317	014° 35'.443
35° 52'.768	014° 35'.828
35° 52'.522	014° 35'.421

¹ 'Valletta Harbours - Port Approaches' refers to both the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour.



Bunkering Area 3 West	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 54'.930	014° 44'.560
35° 54'.931	014° 46'.991
35° 51'.930	014° 46'.991
35° 51'.930	014° 44'.559
35° 54'.930	014° 44'.560

Bunkering Area 3 East	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 54'.933	014° 48'.763
35° 51'.932	014° 48'.762
35° 51'.930	014° 46'.999
35° 54'.931	014° 46'.991
35° 54'.933	014° 48'.763

Laden Tankers are to use this sector only

Area not active within Area 3 West	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 53'.024	014° 44'.648
35° 53'.024	014° 44'.886
35° 54'.084	014° 46'.597
35° 54'.511	014° 45'.998
35° 53'.504	014° 44'.648
35° 53'.024	014° 44'.648

Bunkering Area 4	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 50'.619	014° 35'.958
35° 48'.894	014° 34'.849
35° 48'.895	014° 35'.956
35° 50'.619	014° 35'.958

Bunkering Area 6	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 57'.826	014° 19'.056
35° 57'.828	014° 19'.355
35° 57'.231	014° 19'.654
35° 56'.824	014° 19'.349
35° 56'.824	014° 19'.058
35° 57'.826	014° 19'.056

Waiting Area for Valletta and Marsaxlokk	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 51'.594	014° 41'.929
35° 51'.602	014° 45'.320
35° 50'.000	014° 45'.325
35° 49'.988	014° 41'.929
35° 51'.594	014° 41'.929

Oil Rigs Area (as per ENC MT300194)	
Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
35° 49'.063	014° 27'.643
35° 47'.670	014° 32'.456
35° 44'.275	014° 33'.967
35° 44'.265	014° 27'.388
35° 49'.063	014° 27'.643



b) Mgarr LPS

Prior to entering or departing Mgarr Harbour, all vessels - including those intending to anchor outside the harbour limits or to transfer passengers ashore by tender - must notify Mgarr LPS by VHF of their arrival, departure and intentions. Participation is compulsory for all vessels, irrespective of type, size or nature of operations.

Valletta VTS should also be informed to verify the anchorage position outside the port limits.

c) Malta VTS

Malta VTS covers the territorial waters (up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline).

2) REPORTING POINTS

When calling VTS or LPS, the Master of the vessel shall be prepared to provide the vessel name and/or call sign or official number, estimated time of arrival (ETA), last port of call, length overall, number of persons on board, and the intended operation (e.g. berthing, bunkering, conveyance).

If the vessel is a tanker - whether laden or in ballast, and whether inerted or gas-free - the Master shall also state the nature of the cargo onboard.

Vessels shall establish communication with Valletta VTS, Marsaxlokk VTS or Mgarr LPS, as applicable, in accordance with the following requirements:

a) Inbound

i) Vessels approaching Valletta, Marsaxlokk or Mgarr Harbour:

- 2 hours before arrival (ETA)
- 1 hour before arrival
- 5 nautical miles from the breakwater
- 1 nautical mile from the breakwater
- At the breakwater
- At berth (ATA)
- As otherwise directed by VTS/LPS

If a pilot is required, the vessel shall additionally report:

- At the pilot boarding position
- When pilot embarks
- When pilot disembarks

All reports must be made prior to commencing any manoeuvre that could adversely affect safe navigation.



ii) Vessels proceeding to anchorage, bunkering, waiting area (where anchorage is required), or proceeding to a conveyance position:

- 2 hours before arrival at the designated position (ETA)
- 5 nautical miles from the designated position
- Upon arrival at the designated position
- *As otherwise directed by VTS/LPS*

For vessels intending to anchor (at anchorage, bunkering, or waiting area):

- Report again prior to letting go the anchor
- When the anchor is secured and the vessel is safely anchored (ATA)

For vessels at a conveyance position:

- The report "upon arrival" shall constitute the ATA at the conveyance position

All reports must be made prior to commencing any manoeuvre that could adversely affect safe navigation.

b) Outbound

When berthed, the Master shall liaise with the ship's agent to confirm the intended departure time and shall notify VTS of the proposed sailing at least 2 (two) hours prior to departure. A final confirmation shall be provided no later than 1 (one) hour before departure to enable the timely arrangement of marine pilots, mooring service personnel, and any other services that may be required.

When reporting outbound or calling VTS/LPS for departure clearance, the Master shall, provide the next port of call, and any other information required by VTS or LPS.

i) Vessels departing Valletta, Marsaxlokk or Mgarr Harbour:

- Prior to departing from berth
- On departing from berth (ATD)
- On passing the breakwater
- *As otherwise directed by VTS/LPS*

If a pilot is required, the vessel shall additionally report:

- When pilot embarks
- When pilot disembarks

All reports must be made prior to commencing any manoeuvre that could adversely affect safe navigation.

ii) Vessels departing from anchorage, bunkering, or waiting area (where anchoring was used), departing from a conveyance position:

- Prior to weighing anchor from a designated area or departing the conveyance position
- *As otherwise directed by VTS/LPS*

For vessels weighing anchor:

- When the anchor is aweigh and the vessel is under command (ATD)

For vessels departing a conveyance position:

- When the vessel has cleared the position and is proceeding (ATD)

All reports must be made prior to commencing any manoeuvre that could adversely affect safe navigation.



3) INFORMATION BROADCASTS

Valletta VTS broadcasts navigational and weather information on VHF Channel 11 at *08:03, 12:03, 18:03 and 23:03 (Local Time)*, and at any other times when deemed necessary.

In addition, VTS will issue *sécurité* (safety) messages, traffic alerts, navigational warnings and other safety-related broadcasts on the appropriate VHF channel whenever the situation warrants. Such messages will contain information essential to navigational safety (*for example: hazard warnings and adverse weather warnings*). Masters shall maintain a continuous listening watch on the designated VHF channel and acknowledge or comply with VTS instructions when requested.

4) INTERNATIONAL MARINE VHF CHANNELS

- a) Unless otherwise instructed, vessels shall use VHF Channel 16 for distress, urgency, safety and routine calling.
- b) Ship-to-ship communications should be conducted on channels other than those listed in the designated channels list, or as directed by VTS.
- c) Where practicable, vessels should use low power (1 watt) for routine transmissions to reduce channel congestion and facilitate access by other users.

5) CONTACT DETAILS

Valletta VTS

Call Sign: *Valletta VTS*
VHF Frequency: Channel 12
Telephone: +356 2555 4491
E-mail: vts.tm@transport.gov.mt

Hours of Service: Continuous (24/7)

Marsaxlokk VTS

Call Sign: *Marsaxlokk VTS*
VHF Frequency: Channel 14
Telephone: +356 2555 4492
E-mail: vts.tm@transport.gov.mt

Hours of Service: Continuous (24/7)

Mġarr LPS

Call Sign: *Mġarr LPS*
VHF Frequency: Channel 10
Telephone: +356 2125 5071
Email: mgarrlps.tm@transport.gov.mt

Hours of Service: Continuous (24/7)

Malta VTS

Call Sign: *Malta VTS*
VHF Frequency: Channel 69, 16
RT Frequency (kHz): 2182 (*Malta Radio*)
Telephone: +356 2249 4202 / 4170
E-mail: opsroom.afm@gov.mt

Hours of Service: Continuous (24/7)



Channel 70 is reserved exclusively for DSC (Digital Selective Calling) distress, urgency, safety and routine calls and must not be used for other purposes.

Owners, agents, operators and charterers shall ensure that the contents of this Notice are communicated to masters, bridge teams and other persons in charge of their vessels.

VHF Channel ²	Purpose of Communication
Channel 09	Pilotage, Mooring and Pilot Launch <i>(Marine pilots and mooring service personnel maintain a listening watch on this channel solely during its use as a working channel)</i>
Channel 10	Mġarr LPS / Towage
Channel 11	Navigational Warnings / Weather Broadcasts
Channel 12	Valletta VTS
Channel 13	Terminals and Marinas
Channel 14	Marsaxlokk VTS
Channel 20	Navigational Assistance / Onshore Power Supply (OPS) & Management
Channel 22	Emergency Operations / Oil Pollution Response
Channel 68	Towage
Channel 69	Malta VTS <i>(Armed Forces of Malta - Rescue Coordination Centre)</i>
Channel 74	Towage

All mariners are to take due note of the above and are required to use the appropriate channels as designated in this Notice and in accordance with national legislation¹.

Notice to Mariners N° 35 of 2008 and Notice to Mariners N° 20 of 2021 are hereby cancelled.

² These channels correspond to the international maritime mobile frequencies in the VHF band, as defined in the General Authorisations (Radiocommunications Apparatus) Regulations (S.L. 399.40).