Procedure
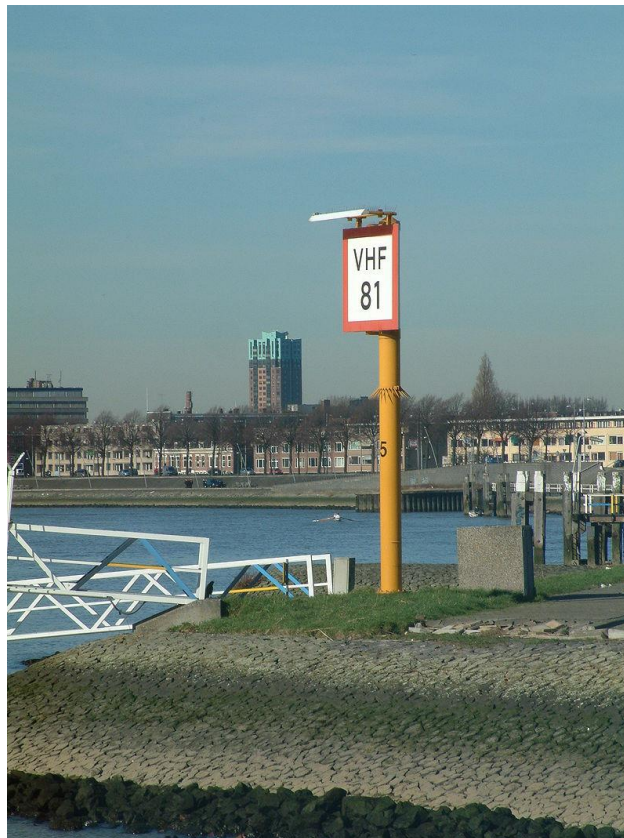# VHF communication
VTS and HCC

Port of Rotterdam Authority

Harbour Master's Division

Contents

Introduction

The Harbour Master of Rotterdam, also State Harbour Master for the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Region and VTS-authority, considers that it is of great importance that shipping is familiar with (VHF) communication procedures. In order that such general information, including the applicable regulations, procedures and definitions is available to all in a well-organized way, he announces the following:

This procedure is divided into two parts, namely:

- Procedure VHF communication Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)
- Procedure VHF communication Harbour Coordination Center (HCC)

- Annex 1: VHF channels
- Annex 2: Basic rules

Procedure VHF communication VTS

1. Area of operation

The area of application for this procedure is the area indicated on the map in Annex 2.
This map shows the classification of the VTS sectors.

2. Vessel Traffic Services

Vessel Traffic Services (further: VTS) comprise services in support of the navigational decision-making process on board ships. This may include information on the position, identity and destination of other vessels and hydrographic / meteorological information. In addition, vessel traffic can be ordered in order to contribute to the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic.

At the request of the traffic participant or when deemed necessary by the VTS authority, navigational assistance may be provided. This means that in case of incidents, defects/deficiencies on board of vessels or in special meteorological circumstances, intensified traffic information as well as position information can be provided.

3. Traffic instructions

On the basis of the Shipping Act, the VTS authority is the competent authority concerning the giving of traffic instructions. A traffic instruction is a binding instruction by a duly authorised person to one or more participants in traffic, in order to achieve a certain result in traffic behaviour. This traffic instruction may contain a specific command or prohibition.

4. Radio discipline

No communications on the VHF channels other than those concerning safe navigation or traffic handling should be conducted. Mutual agreements concerning the navigation may be made directly or with the intervention of the VTS operator. Strict communication discipline should be maintained in all circumstances and the VTS operator may give instructions to that effect as necessary.

5. Language of communication

In the VTS sectors Maas Approach, Pilot Maas and Maas Entrance from the port piers towards the sea the primary language of communication is English and secondary Dutch.

In all other VTS sectors, the primary language is Dutch and secondary English. In the event of communication problems between ship and shore stations, as well as between ship stations, in addition to the languages Dutch and English, German may also be used.

6. Shipping broadcast

When communicating with shipping, the VTS operator may broadcast a shipping message. This way a large group of traffic participants can be reached quickly. The ship's message is used in special circumstances, to inform the shipping traffic of for example, works, meteorological conditions, obstructions, incidents, etc.

7. Reporting and listening watch obligations

All seagoing vessels, inland waterway vessels and pleasure craft (pleasure craft when fitted with VHF) should:

- Maintain listening watch on the appropriate VHF channel while passing through the VTS area
- Participate in local communications, if necessary
- Report on the appropriate VHF channel to report any intention to perform special maneuvers, such as crossing the waterway, entering or leaving the harbor and any other action that deviates from a usual traffic pattern, including incidents

All vessels wishing to pass beneath a bridge or through a lock must submit request for the operation of these structures on the appropriate VHF channel. If such activities require that listening watch will be interrupted, the shipping traffic in question should report this to the VTS operator. Any of these interruptions should be as brief as possible.

8. VHF channel 10 (inter-schip)

Within the port of Rotterdam where is no VTS-coverage there must be a listening watch on VHF-channel 10.

9. Additional provisions for seagoing vessels on arrival in the VTS area

All seagoing vessels are obliged to report on arrival in the VTS area. Depending on the direction of the approach this will be:

- From sea, VHF channel 1 (Maas Approach)
- Via Oude Maas, VHF channel 62 (sector Oude Maas)
- Via Nieuwe Maas, VHF channel 81 (sector Maasbruggen)

This report include name of vessel, call sign, actual deepest draught, position, destination and special circumstances.

If the traffic participant is in possession of a Pilotage Exemption Certificate (further: PEC), he/she must also report:

- The name of the certificate holder + certificate number

10. Mandatory reports by seagoing vessels in the VTS area

All seagoing vessels passing through the VTS area report on the appropriate VHF channel. This report includes name of vessel, position, direction, destination and special circumstances..

When:
- On leaving the VTS area
- On Intention and start unmooring
- If a special maneuver is being performed such as:
  - Crossing the fairway
  - Entering or leaving a harbor
  - The intention of overtaking another seagoing vessel
  - Passing another vessel if this requires special attention
  - Any other action that deviates from the usual traffic pattern
  - In case of incidents

11. Mandatory reports by seagoing vessels prior to actual departure and shifting

All piloted seagoing vessels report electronically to the Harbour Master, via the pilots' GIDS system, prior to the actual departure/shifting with the following data:

- Ship name
- Draught
- Destination
- Ship particulars
- Bridge passage if applicable

All seagoing vessels without a pilot, and if the traffic participant is in possession of a PEC, shall report on VHF channel 11 Traffic Control Rotterdam, prior to the actual departure/shipment, with the following information:

- Ship name
- Draught
- Destination
- Ship particulars
- The name of the certificate holder + certificate number

Procedure VHF communication HCC

12. Area of operation

The area of application for this procedure is the area indicated on the map in Annex 2.

13. Traffic Control Rotterdam, VHF channel 11

VHF channel 11 is used for traffic matters in relation to seagoing shipping. The captain or the pilot on behalf of the captain reports to the Harbour Coordination Center (further: HCC) if:

- The shipping agent has not notified the Harbour Master of the planned departure
- The intended voyage, with statement of the reason, cannot take place

All shipping reports on VHF channel 11:

- In case of incidents

14. Harbour Coordination Center, VHF channel 14

VHF channel 14 is used for operational matters, activities and obtaining permission/exemption to carry out activities and/or exercises.
All questions/reports regarding hazardous substances intended for the Inspection Department should also be directed to the HCC.

15. Harbour Coordination Center, VHF channel 19

The HCC will broadcast the following shipping message on VHF channel 19:
When a wind force of 8 Beaufort or more is expected, a weather report will be broadcast 10 minutes before each full hour, e.g. 00.50 hrs, 01.50 hrs, etc.

16. IVS-next, VHF channel 14

All target group ships that are obliged to report in accordance with the Communication Regulation for State Inland Waterways should report electronically via IVS-Next upon departure from a berth within the Rotterdam Nautical Area. In case of a malfunction in IVS-Next, the HCC will be notified on VHF channel 14.

17. Commencement date

This procedure shall be published and comes into effect on 1st February 2022 and shall be cited as "Procedure VHF Communication VTS and HCC". This version is an update of version 1.2 of 1st January 2020.

Annex 1. VHF channels

VHF Call sign	VHF-channel
Sector Maas Aanloop	1
Sector Pilot Maas	2
Sector Maasmond	3
Sector Europoort	66
Sector Rozenburg	65
Sector Maasluis	80
Sector Botlek	61
Sector Oude Maas	62
Sector Eemhaven	63
Sector Waalhaven	60
Sector Maasbruggen	81
Traffic Control Rotterdam (seagoing vessels departing)	11
Harbour Coordination Center (operational matters + IVS-next)	14
Communication with patrol vessels DHMR possible on VHF channels mentioned above	
Weather warnings (if forecast 8 Beaufort or more)	19
inter-schip communication	10
Calandbrug	22
Rozenburgsesluis	22
Hartelsluis	22
Botlekbrug + Spijkenisserbrug	18
Erasmusbrug	20
Koninginnebrug	20
Van Brienenoordbrug	20
Parksluis + bridges over Delfshavense Schie	22
Nieuwe Leuvebrug	20
Boerengatbrug	20

Annex 2: Basic rules
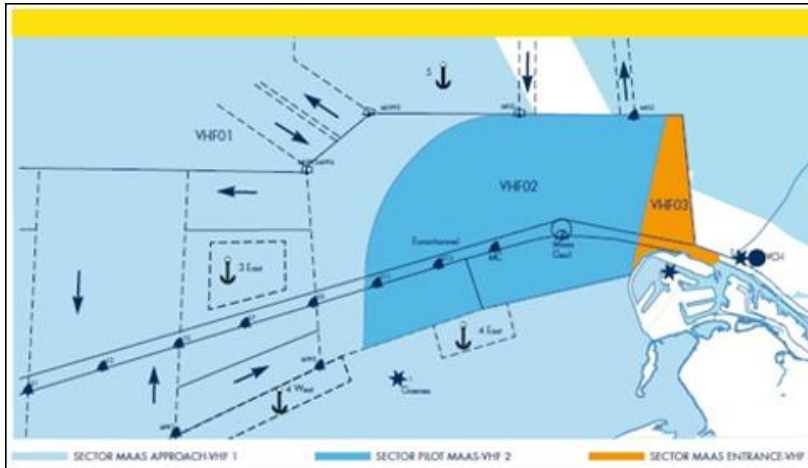
1. Responsibility of safe navigation always remains with the master on board the vessel
2. Continuous listening watch should be maintained on appropriate VHF channel
3. Information should be given on request by VTS-authority
4. VTS provides information, navigation assistance and when deemed necessary give instructions on behalf of the Harbour Master
5. All communication should be brief and relevant
6. Any particulars with the regard of navigation or equipment should be reported
7. Language is Dutch or English for the inner area and English or Dutch for the outer area