

REEFVTS NEWS

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Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

REEFVTS - A new identifier

With the introduction of changes to the REEFREP mandatory ship reporting system in December and its move to a coastal Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), the identifier "REEFVTS" has been adopted for the *Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service*.

REEFVTS consists of two major components:

1. A mandatory Ship Reporting System (the *Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Ship Reporting System* (REEFREP)), and
2. Traffic monitoring systems including radar, AIS and Automated Position Reporting via Inmarsat C (APR).

REEFVTS – Background

The decision to upgrade REEFREP to a Coastal VTS was one of the outcomes of a Review that the Federal Government ordered, following the grounding of the *Bunga Teratai Satu* off Cairns in 2000.

The review recommended the implementation of a Coastal Vessel Traffic Service to replace the VHF based Ship Reporting System REEFREP.

Since then, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and Maritime Safety Queensland have been working together to

elevate REEFREP to a Coastal VTS.

Vessel Traffic Services are shore-based systems that range from providing basic information to ships, such as positions of other ships, meteorological information and navigational hazard warnings, to the organisation of traffic within a port or waterway.

Generally, ships entering a VTS area report to the authorities and may be tracked by the VTS control centre.

REEFVTS is Australia's first Coastal Vessel Traffic Service facility.

There are over 7000 ship movements through the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait each year and some 30,000 smaller vessels including coastal traders, tourist craft, fishing vessels and pleasure boats are also active within the region.

Changes to the mandatory reporting requirements

The International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) adopted amendments to the REEFREP mandatory reporting requirements in May 2004.

These changes take effect on 1 December 2004 and a copy of the revised Marine Orders (MO 56) is available from the AMSA website:

http://www.amsa.gov.au/shipping_safety/ausrep_and_reefrep/changes_to_reefrep.asp

New Reports Requirements

The master of a ship navigating in the REEFVTS area (same as the REEFREP area) must provide the following reports to REEFVTS:

- a) Pre-Entry Position Report
- b) Entry Report
- c) Passage Plan Report, if passage details have not been previously provided in the Entry Report
- d) Route Deviation Report, where applicable
- e) Intermediate Position Reports
- f) Defect Reports, where applicable
- g) Final Report

Pre-Entry Position report

A Pre-Entry position report must be made at least two hours prior to the ship:

- a) Entering the REEFVTS area; or
- b) Departing from a port within the REEFVTS area.

The purpose of a pre-entry report is to advise REEFVTS of the ships intention (i.e. entry to the REEFVTS area) and provide details of the ships Inmarsat C terminal (see Intermediate Position Reports).

Masters are requested to ensure that the vessels Inmarsat C terminal is logged into the Pacific Ocean Region (POR).

Entry Report

An Entry Report must be made as soon as a ship:

- a) Enters the REEFVTS area, or
- b) Departs from a port within the REEFVTS area.

This report details the ship information, vessels intentions and passage through the REEFVTS area. Ships are encouraged to provide a passage plan when providing an Entry Report. However, it is recognised that at this stage in their passage, they are unlikely to have a pilot on board and are therefore may be unable to provide a detailed passage plan.

Should the ship include the required passage details using one of the methods described below, then the vessel will not need provide a separate passage plan report within an hour of entering the REEFVTS area.

Passage Plan

Adequate route information must be provided to REEFVTS to ensure quality ship traffic information can be provided to transiting vessels. Passage plans assist to detail the route taken.

Passage plan details are to be provided in one or more of the following ways:

- i. Standard Route Plan
- ii. Mandatory Reporting Points
- iii. Waypoints

Where a Passage Plan has not been included in the Entry Report, then it must be provided within one hour following the ship's entry into the REEFVTS area, or departure from a port within the REEFVTS area.

Route Deviation Report

Any deviation from a previously submitted passage plan report must be provided to REEFVTS, preferably prior to the deviation. However, it is recognised that some deviations may be made with little notice and in such instances these must be reported to REEFVTS within 15 minutes of the deviation taking place.

The deviation is to be reported using a revised Passage Plan.

Intermediate Position Reports

Automated Position Reporting (APR) via Inmarsat-C is the primary mechanism for ships to provide Intermediate Position Reports while transiting the REEFVTS area. REEFVTS will generally carry out APR remotely without any intervention by the ships crew.

It is essential that the vessels Inmarsat C terminal is logged into the Pacific Ocean Region (POR).

Ships fitted with first generation Inmarsat-C terminals, which do not support remote programming, will be required to be programmed onboard for Intermediate Position Reports to be sent automatically. Instructions relating to programming of these terminals can be obtained from REEFVTS.

Ships providing Intermediate Position Reports via APR must still comply with the other REEFREP reporting requirements of Pre-Entry position reports, Entry report, Passage Plan report (*if*

applicable), Route Deviation report (*if applicable*), Defect report (*if applicable*), and Exit Report.

If a ship is unable to provide intermediate position reports via APR, brief position reports must be provided on an hourly basis or as advised by the VTS operators.

Defect Report

Safety related reports must be provided without delay should a ship within the REEFVTS area suffers damage, failure or breakdown affecting the safety of the ship, makes a marked deviation from a route, course or speed previously advised.

Reports of pollution or cargo lost overboard must also be reported to REEFVTS without delay using lines Q and R, or special reports as defined IMO for incidents involving Dangerous Goods (DG), Harmful Substances (HS) or Marine Pollutants (MP).

Final report

A Final Report must be made when a ship:

- (a) Exits the REEFVTS area, or
- (b) Arrives at a port within the REEFVTS area.

When a ship exits the REEFVTS area, it will be necessary to indicate whether the ship intends continuing to report to AUSREP for the remainder of its voyage and, if so, the time of its next report or, if arriving at a port within the area, whether this is its Final Report to AUSREP

VHF Reports at Mandatory Reporting Points

Under the revised Marine Orders, vessels are no longer required to provide position reports via VHF at the mandatory Reporting Points if they:

- Provide en route position reports via APR as required by REEFCENTRE
- Provide adequate route plans, and
- Advise REEFCENTRE of any deviations to route plans.

Automated Message Delivery (AMD)

From September 2004 onwards, vessels have been able to choose between receiving ship traffic information via VHF voice communications or via

Inmarsat C where a 'hard copy' can be printed on-board (AMD).

The introduction of this service has been very successful with the majority of ships now opting to receive their traffic information via AMD

To receive ship traffic information via AMD masters or pilots need simply contact REEFVTS.

NAVAIDS - Update

Torres Strait

During October and early November 2004 a new gravity base structure was completed at Nardana Patches in Prince of Wales Channel (Figure 1). The Nardana buoy will shortly be removed and in early December a much brighter permanent light will replace the current temporary light. Because of the delayed completion of the Nardana structure, the installation and setting to work of a tide gauge and current meter on the structure is now planned for March/April 2005.



Figure 1. New structure at Nardana Patches

