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INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended to provide the user with information necessary to participate in the St. Marys River Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). It contains the regulations, which are published in Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (33 CFR). It also contains supplementary text which is not part of the Regulations, but which is intended to be explanatory in nature. The Coast Guard will keep the manual current with any changes issued to the Regulations. Changes of a temporary nature will be issued by a Broadcast Notice to Mariner and will be incorporated in the User's Manual.

The St. Marys River Vessel Traffic Service is a vessel movement reporting system established under the authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act. The goal of the system is to facilitate marine traffic and give any additional information, which may affect vessel traffic safety within the VTS Area. The **Vessel Traffic Center (VTC)** is located in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. It utilizes a VHF-FM communication network continuously manned by Coast Guard personnel. The Center processes information received from participating vessels and then disseminates the information to other participating vessels operating in the VTS area.

THE MARINER IS CAUTIONED: INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE VESSEL TRAFFIC CENTER IS TO A LARGE EXTENT BASED UPON REPORTS OF PARTICIPATING VESSELS AND CAN BE NO MORE ACCURATE THAN THE INFORMATION RECEIVED. THE COAST GUARD MAY NOT KNOW OF ALL HAZARDOUS CIRCUMSTANCES WITHIN THE VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE AREA. UNREPORTED HAZARDS MAY CONFRONT THE MARINER AT ANYTIME. ANY CONFLICTING CIRCUMSTANCES OR HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE VESSEL TRAFFIC CENTER IMMEDIATELY.

The efficient operation of the St. Marys River Vessel Traffic Service and safe navigation in the service area depend upon mariners observing these operating procedures day and night, in all weather. The Coast Guard welcomes any suggestions that may improve this manual or the St. Marys River Vessel Traffic Service.

Note: Mariners should expect a brief pause after each call to allow the VTC to formulate a proper response.

SECTION I-GENERAL

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The purpose of the **Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) St. Marys River** is to provide the mariner with information related to the safe navigation of the VTS area. The VTS is designed to enhance navigation, vessel safety, marine environmental protection, and promote safe vessel movement by reducing the potential for collisions, ramming, groundings, loss of lives and property associated with these incidents within the VTS area. Under certain circumstances, the VTS may issue directions to control the movement of a vessel in order to minimize the risk of collision or damage to the environment.

The owner, operator, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel remains at all times responsible for the manner in which the vessel is operated and maneuvered, and is responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel under all circumstances. Nothing set forth by the VTS is intended to relieve the vessel, owner, operator or person directing the movement of the vessel from the consequences of any neglect to comply with any applicable law and/or regulation.

The provisions of this manual and 33 CFR shall apply to each VTS user, and may apply to any vessel while underway or at anchor in the navigable waters of the VTS St. Marys River area.

33 CFR 161.11 A VTS may issue measures or directions to enhance navigation and vessel safety and to protect the marine environment, such as, but not limited to:

- (1) Designate temporary reporting points and procedures;
- (2) Imposing vessel operating requirements; or
- (3) Establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.

DEFINITIONS

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) means a service implemented by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area. **VTS** in the user's manual means VTS St. Marys River.

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Area means the geographic area of service for the VTS covering the navigable waters of the United States in the St. Marys River between 45-57 N. (**De Tour Reef Light**) in the south, to 46-38.7 N. (**Ile Parisienne Light**) in the north, except the waters of the St. Marys Falls Canal, and those navigable waters east of a line from 46-04.16 N. and 46-01.57 N (**La Pointe to Sims Point within Potagannissing Bay**).

Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) means a system used to Manage and track vessels movement within a VTS area. This is accomplished using information provided by the mariner to be disseminated by the VTS.

Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) User means a vessel, or owner, operator, charter, master or person directing the movement of a vessel that is required to participate in a **VMRS** within a VTS area. VMRS participation in VTS St. Marys River is required for:

- (1) Every power-driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 ft.)* or more in length, while navigating;
- (2) Every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 ft.) or more in length, while navigating; or
- (3) Every vessel certified to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

VTS User means a vessel, or an owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movements of a vessel that is:

- (a) Subject to the Vessel Bridge -to- Bridge Radiotelephone Act**; or
- (b) A VMRS User.

Soo Traffic means the shore-based facility that operates the St. Marys River VTS located in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

One-Way Traffic means an area where meeting, u-turns, and over taking are prohibited.

Two-Way Traffic means that traffic flow is permitted in opposing directions, but a vessel may not meet, cross, nor overtake any other vessel in such a manner that it would be abreast of more than one other vessel within the defined limits of a waterway.

Open Season: Also referred to as the Open Navigation Season. The period from when the Locks open (normally around 25 March) to when the locks close (normally around 15 January). The C.G. is required to maintain navigation Channels during this period.

Closed Season: Also referred to as the Closed Navigation Season. The period from when the Locks close (normally around 15 January) to when the locks open (normally around 25 March). During the closed season, the C.G. has no requirement to maintain navigable channels. However, in order for some river communities to make it through the winter, infrequent Icebreaker escorts of vessels carrying home heating oil are conducted.

OP Taconite: Operation Taconite is the largest Domestic Icebreaking operation in the U.S. OP Taconite is implemented when ice begins to impede navigation and the first Cutter is deployed to break ice (normally late November – early December) and is the tool the C.G. uses to facilitate the movement of commerce through the VTSA when ice clogs the channels. It runs until ships transit the river system unassisted and Cutters are no longer breaking ice. Depending on severity of the winter, OP Taconite normally spans both the Open Season and the Closed season.

With the implementation of OP Taconite, several additional requirements are imposed: speed limits, extra call-in points, one way traffic areas, and some channels may be closed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VTS

VTS St. Marys River consists of the navigable waters of the St. Marys River and lower Whitefish Bay between 45-56.54 N. (**De Tour Reef Light**) in the south, and 46-38.42 N. (**Le Parisienne Light**) in the north, except the waters of the St. Marys Falls Canal, and to the east line from La Pointe to Sims Point within Potagannissing Bay and Tenby Bay (formally known as Worsley Bay on older navigational charts).

The VTS has control over 2 VHF high-level antennas located in Sault Ste. Marie and Goetzville, Michigan. VHF Channel 12 and 16 are monitored continuously. A radio watch on VHF Channel 16 is not required on vessels participating in VTS St. Marys River.

Currently the VTS has four closed circuit television cameras located at Winter Pt., Johnsons Point, Rock Cut, and Mission Point.

AUTHORITY TO DEVIATE FROM THE RULES

Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District and Commanding Officer, VTS St. Marys River have the authority to grant deviations from these rules. Deviations will only be authorized if the appropriate official determines that the deviation will incorporate the same measure of safety as the original rule.

Requests to deviate from these rules for an extended period of time, or if anticipated before the start of a transit, must be submitted in writing to the Ninth Coast Guard District Commander. An application for deviation must state the need and fully explain the proposed alternative.

**Address: Commander (oan)
Ninth Coast Guard District
1240 E. Ninth St.
Cleveland, OH 44199-2060**

Requests for deviation due to circumstances that develop after a transit has begun may be made verbally to the Commanding Officer, VTS St. Marys River. Contact can be made through Soo Traffic on VHF Ch. 12 or by telephone at (906) 635-3232. Deviations authorized by the Commanding Officer VTS are usually only for one transit or a short period of time.

In an **emergency**, any person may deviate from any provision to the extent necessary to avoid endangering persons, property, or the environment. Any deviation from these rules or VTS direction should be reported to Soo Traffic as soon as practicable.

SECTION II- COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

RADIOTELEPHONE LISTENING WATCH

VTS and VMRS Users as described in the definition section of this Manual are required to maintain a radiotelephone listening watch on VHF Ch. 12 (156.6 Mhz) while underway in the VTS. [Special Marine Information Broadcasts are made on Ch. 22A (151.1Mhz)] In addition, any vessel transiting through the Sault Locks must be able to reach the Lock Master / WUE21 who monitors VHF Ch. 14 (156.7Mhz).

VESSEL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Power-driven vessels 40m (approximately 131ft) and above:
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13
 - b) Report to the VTS at reporting points
- 2) Power-driven vessels 20m (65ft) and above
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13
 - b) Requested to report to the VTS at reporting points
- 3) Towing vessels 8m (approximately 26ft) and above:
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13
 - b) Report to the VTS at reporting points
- 4) Vessels certified to carry 50 or more passengers for hire:
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13
 - b) Report to the VTS at reporting points
- 5) Vessels 100 Gross Tons carrying one or more passengers for hire:
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13
- 6) Dredges and floating plants:
 - a) Monitor VHF Ch. 12 and 13

VESSEL REPORTS

Reports made to Soo Traffic must be made in the English language and made from the navigation bridge of the vessel or control room of a dredge/tug.

Initial reports (Sailing plans) are made to Soo Traffic at least 15 minutes before entering the VTS area, or before getting underway from mooring or anchoring within the VTS area:

Initial Report:

Vessel Name
Position
Destination
Cargo/Type of Tow
Draft

Position Reports are made at designated reporting points or when directed by the VTS.

Final Reports are made when a vessel checks out at De Tour Reef Light or Ile Parisienne, or when anchored or moored within the VTS area.

Masters of vessels will report to Soo Traffic any impairment to navigation, such as, but not limited to: a fire, defective propulsion machinery, steering or navigation equipment (including radar), any towing vessel unable to control it's tow or can only control with difficulty, grounding, striking of an obstruction or aid to navigation whether in or out of the channel. Masters shall report when **visibility** is less than 1 mile and any **hazardous conditions** not reported in Notice to Mariners or Broadcast Notice to Mariners.

If a vessel has **radio failure**, the master shall attempt to notify Soo Traffic by any means available. In such instances, vessels equipped with cellular phones may use these to report in

REPORTING POINTS*

Summer reporting points, Down Bound:

- a. Ile Parisienne
- b. Round Island Light "26"
- c. Point Louise
- d. Clear of Locks / East end of locks
- e. Mission Point
- f. Six Mile Point
- g. Nine Mile Point
- h. West Neebish Channel Light "29"
- i. Munuscong Lake Junction Buoy (Mud Lake)
- j. De Tour Reef Light

In addition, the following points are added down bound during OpTaconite

- k. Whitefish Point
- l. Gros Cap Reef Light
- m. Point Aux Frenes
- n. Lime Island Traffic Buoy

Summer reporting points up bound:

- a. De Tour Reef Light
- b. Munuscong Lake Junction Buoy (Mud Lake)
- c. Nine Mile Point
- d. Six Mile Point
- e. Mission Point
- f. Clear of Locks / West end of locks
- g. Point Louise
- h. Round Island Light "26"
- i. Gros Cap Reef Light

In addition, the following points are added up bound during OpTaconite

- j. Lime Island Traffic Buoy
- k. Point Aux Frenes
- l. Green Point
- m. Ile Parisienne
- n. Whitefish Point

SECTION III – TRAFFIC RULES

OPERATION TACONITE

There are 2 seasons in the St Marys River System, the Open season and the Closed season. During open season operations the St. Marys River has two-way traffic with the following exceptions; West Neebish Channel (buoy “53” to buoy “1”, Rock Cut) is one-way down bound, Middle Neebish Channel (buoy “2” to buoy “76”) is one-way up bound, Pipe Island course (Sweets Point to Watson Reefs Light) is one-way down-bound, and Pipe Island Passage to the east of Pipe Island Shoal and north of Pipe Island Twins (from Watson Reefs Light to Sweets Point) is one-way up bound.

BUOYS: Lighted and unlighted navigation buoys are changed out in the Fall and Spring IAW the Light List. Winter markers are less susceptible to ice damage and can be replaced at a much lower cost than the lighted Summer buoys. Mariners are reminded buoys may be off station due to shifting ice.

SPEED LIMIT: During Op Taconite the speed limit is reduced by 2 MPH for up bound and down bound traffic from Nine Mile Point to Munuscong Lake Junction Buoy (LLNR 13030).

CALL-IN POINTS: In order to facilitate icebreaking operations, additional call-in points are put in place for OP Taconite. Those points designated “call into Group Sault” are to be made to Group Sault Ste Marie (hail on ch16 and shift to ch22A). The OP Taconite call-in points are as follows:

Up Bound St Marys River:

- A. 8 hours before Detour (call into Group Sault)
- B. Lime Island Traffic Buoy
- C. Point Aux Frenes
- D. Green Point
- E. Isle Parisienne

Down Bound St Marys River:

- A. 8 hours above Whitefish Point (call into Group Sault)
- B. Gros Cap Light
- C. Point Aux Frenes
- D. Lime Island Traffic Buoy

Straits of Mackinac (call into Group Sault):

- A. West bound - 8 hour advance notice of ETA for Round Island
- B. East bound – 8 hour advance notice of ETA for Lansing Shoal

CHANNEL CLOSURES: During OP Taconite, several channels may be closed. The C.G. closes or opens these channels as ice conditions require after giving due consideration to the protection of the marine environment, waterway improvements, aids to navigation, the need for cross channel traffic (e.g., ferries), the availability of icebreakers, and the safety of the island residents who in the course of their daily business must use naturally formed ice bridges for transportation to and from the mainland. Under normal seasonal conditions, only one closing each winter and one opening each spring is done. When a channel is to be closed, the C.G. will give 72hr notification prior to its closure. This notification will be made by a Group Sault Ste Marie Broadcast Notice to Mariner.

1. **WEST NEEBISH CHANNEL:** When West Neebish Channel is closed Middle Neebish Channels becomes alternating one-way traffic under the control of the VTS. In some cases Middle Neebish Channel, courses 5 through 10, is used as a two-way route with the up bound vessels using the Easterly 197 feet of the channel (vessels with a draft of 20 feet or more must get permission from Soo Traffic before proceeding), and the down bound vessels using the Westerly 295 feet. In these situations, vessels 350 feet or greater must not meet in the following waterways:

- A. Johnson Point - Buoy “Q18” to Buoy “22” (LLNR 13130)
- B. Mirre Point - Buoy “Q26” to Buoy “28” (LLN13215)
- C. Stribling Point - Light “39” (LLNR 13255 to buoy “43” (LLNR 13285)

2. **PIPE ISLAND:** The up bound channel to the east and north of Pipe Island is closed to facilitate icebreaking operations in the lower river.

3. **MACKINAC ISLAND**: That body of water between Mackinac Island and St Ignace is closed when an ice bridge forms.

4. **SOUTH CHANNEL**: The South Channel is closed when an ice bridge forms between Bois Blanc Island and the mainland in the vicinity of Cheboygan City.

5. **GRAYS REEF PASSAGE**: Grays Reef Passage is closed to facilitate icebreaking operations in the Straits.

ANCHORAGE RULES

Vessels should not anchor so as to swing out into the channel or across charted steering courses.

During emergency anchorages in a dredged channel, vessels shall anchor as near to the edge of the channel as possible. Vessels shall get underway as soon as emergency ceases, unless otherwise directed. Soo Traffic must be advised of any emergency anchoring as soon as practicable.

Vessels in the VTS area anchored for reason of temporary closure or impediment to navigation normally get underway and depart in the order in which they arrived, unless otherwise directed by Soo Traffic. Soo Traffic may advance any vessel in the order of departure to expedite the movement of mails, passengers, cargo of a perishable nature, or facilitate passage through any channel by reason of special circumstance or to facilitate passage through the St. Marys Falls Canal.

UNAUTHORIZED ANCHORAGE

No vessel shall anchor at any time in the area southward of the Point Aux Pins Range between Brush Point and the waterworks intake crib off of Big Point or within 400 yards of the intake crib in any direction.

***NOTE: Anchored vessels within the VTS area shall notify Soo Traffic with the time of anchorage and position in reference to a geographical object.**

***NOTE: Vessels shall notify Soo Traffic 15 minutes prior to getting underway form anchorage.**

***NOTE: See Appendix B of this manual to see designated anchorage for the St. Marys River.**

SPEED RULES

All vessels shall adhere to the following established speed limits:

MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT BETWEEN	MPH	KTS
De Tour Reef Light and Sweets Point Light	14	12.2
Round Island Light and Point Aux Frenes Light "21"	14	12.2
Munuscong Lake Lighted Buoy "8" and Everens Point	12	10.4
Everens Point and Reed Point	9	7.8
Reed Point and Lake Nicolet Lighted Buoy "62"	10	8.7
Lake Nicolet Lighted Buoy "62" and Lake Nicolet Light "80"	12	10.4
Lake Nicolet Light "80" and Winter Point (West Neebish Channel)	10	8.7
Lake Nicolet Light "80" and Six Mile Point Range Rear Light	10	8.7
Six Mile Point Range Rear Light Upbound and lower limit of the St. Marys River Falls Canal Down bound	8 10	7.0 8.7
Upper limit of the St. Marys Falls Canal and Point Aux Pins Main Light	12	10.4

*** NOTE: During Op Taconite the speed limit is reduced by 2 MPH for up bound and down bound traffic from Nine Mile Point to Munuscong Lake Junction buoy. When tracks are clearly established, it is highly beneficial to leave adjacent ice fields intact. This is especially true in the vicinity of ferries and in the Neebish Island Channels, but is generally true throughout the river. A vessel must not navigate any dredged channel at a speed of less than 5 statute miles per hour (4.3 knots).**

MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Towing Vessels navigating the waters of the St. Marys River VTS area shall:

- (1) Maintain positive control of tows south of Gros Cap Reef Light.
- (2) Not impede the passage of any other vessel.
- (3) Not tow a vessel of 200 feet or less in length with a tow line longer than 250 feet and,
- (4) Not tow a vessel of 200 feet or over in length with at towline longer than the length of the vessel plus 50 feet.
- (5) Maintain speed of 5 mph.

River or Channel Closures are made at the discretion of the Commanding Officer VTS as visibility or hazards dictate. Closures are made after giving due consideration to vessel and environmental safety and the needs of all VTS users. The Commanding Officer VTS will close the river or channels of the St Marys River when visibility is less than a ¼ mile or sustained winds of 35 mph or greater.

Local Terms:

- (1) Lake Nicolet is known as locally as “**Hay Lake**”
- (2) Munuscong Lake is known as “**Mud Lake**”
- (3) West Neebish Channel is known as “**Rock Cut**”
- (4) Waiska Bay is pronounced/known as “**Whiskey Bay**”

Contact Information

Address: U.S. Coast Guard Sault Ste Marie
337 Water St.
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783
Attn: VTS ST MARYS RIVER

Phone Numbers:

- (1) Soo Traffic (906) 635-3232
- (2) Search and Rescue (906) 635-3230
- (3) FAX (906) 635-3238

Soo Traffic Web Site: www.uscg.mil/d9/sault/vts/home.html

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

- (1) **What information must I give when reporting an Aton Discrepancy?** When reporting an aton discrepancy to Soo Traffic, you should provide aids name and the light list number along with type of discrepancy.
- (2) **How due I obtain the water levels for the river?** There are 3 ways to obtain the pool levels. One is to contact the Lock Master on channel 14 and request the current water levels. Second contact Soo Traffic for the levels. The third way is to listen on channel 85 as they are broadcasted every two minutes
- (3) **What information must I give when reporting a grounding of a vessel?** The master should make notifications to Soo Traffic once the grounding has occurred. Vessel should carry onboard a Great Lakes Regional Waterways Management Form, Grounding Information Worksheet. The following information should be provided within the first 15 minutes of the incident:
 - 1. Known damage to the vessel
 - 2. Is the vessel taking on water
 - 3. Immediate danger to the crew/injuries
 - 4. Any spill of cargo/fuel

The rest of the worksheet should be filled out as conditions on the vessel are known by the master. If the vessel doesn't have the form Soo Traffic may provide one via a fax machine or the form will be filled out over the phone or by radio.

- (4) **Is there a way for Soo Traffic to detect fog or give reports for the upper river?** There are currently no VTS cameras anywhere above the Soo Locks so the only reports come from participating vessels.
- (5) **What vessel information should I provide to Soo Traffic if it is the vessels first time transiting the river?**
1. Proper spelling of the vessels name
 2. Flag
 3. Lloyds/IMO number (Should be 7 digits)
 4. Call Sign
 5. Documented Length
 6. Documented width/beam
 7. Documented Gross and Net tonnage
 8. Horse Power of the vessel
 9. Does the vessel have a bow/stern thruster and stern anchor
 10. Vessels Shipping Co name and where it's located
- (6) **What if I think there is suspicious activity or a terrorist threat.** Contact Soo Traffic 906-635-3232 or the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802.

APPENDIX A

PART 26 – VESSEL BRIDGE-to-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE REGULATIONS

26.01 Purpose

- (a) The purpose of this part is to implement the provisions of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act. This part:
 - (1) Requires the use of the vessel bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone;
 - (2) Provides the Coast Guard’s interpretation of the meaning of important terms in the Act;
 - (3) Prescribes the procedures for applying for an exemption from the Act and regulations issued under the Act and a listing of exemptions.
- (b) Nothing in this part relieves any person from the obligation of complying with the rules of the road and the applicable pilot rules.

26.02 Definitions

Secretary means the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating.

Act means the “Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act”, 33 U.S.C. sections 1201-1208.

Length is measured from end to end over the deck excluding sheer.

Power-Driven Vessel means any vessel propelled by machinery.

Towing Vessel means any commercial vessel engaged in towing another vessel astern, alongside or by pushing ahead.

Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) means a service implemented under Part 161 of this chapter by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

Vessel Traffic Service Area or **VTS Area** means the geographical area encompassing a specific VTS area of service as described in Part 161 of this chapter. This area of service maybe subdivided into sectors for the purpose of allocating responsibility to individual Vessel Traffic Centers or to identify different operating requirements.

<p>*NOTE: Although regulatory jurisdiction is limited to the navigable waters of the United States, certain vessels will be encouraged or may be required, as a condition of port entry, to report beyond this area to facilitate traffic management within the VTS area.</p>
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26.03 Radio Telephone required

- (a) Unless an exemption is granted under 26.09 and except as provided in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, this part applies to:
- (1) Every power driven vessel of 20 meters or over in length while navigating.
 - (2) Every vessel of 100 gross tons and upward carrying one or more passengers for hire while navigating.
 - (3) Every towing vessel of 26 feet or over in length while navigating.
 - (4) Every dredge and floating plant engaged in or near a channel or fairway in operations likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels except for unmanned or intermittently manned floating plant under the control of a dredge.

(b) Every vessel, dredge or floating plant described in paragraph (a) of this section must have a radiotelephone on board capable of operation from its navigational bridge, or in the case of a dredge, from its main control station and capable of transmitting and receiving on the frequency or frequencies within the 156-162 Mega-Hertz band using the classes of emissions designated by the Federal Communications Commission for the exchange of navigational information.

(c) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be carried on board the described vessels, dredges and floating plants upon the navigable waters of the United States.

(d) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be capable of transmitting and receiving on **VHF FM channel 22A (157.1MHZ)**.

(e) In addition to the radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section, each vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section while transiting any water within the a Vessel Traffic Service Area, must have on board a radiotelephone capable of transmitting and receiving on the VTS designated frequencies found in **33CFR Table 26.03(F) (VTS Call Signs, Designated Frequencies and Monitoring Areas)**. VTS St Marys River uses call sign **Soo Traffic, 156.600MHZ (Ch. 12)** is the designated frequency.

<p>*NOTE: A single VHF-FM radio capable of scanning or sequential monitoring (often referred to as “dual watch” capability) will not meet the requirements for two radios.</p>
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26.04 Use of the designated frequency

(a) No person may use the frequency designated by the Federal Communications Commission under section 8 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1207(a) to transmit any information other than information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels or necessary tests.

(b) Each person who is required to maintain a listening watch under section 5 of the Act shall, when necessary, transmit and confirm, on the designated frequency, the intentions of his vessel and any other information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.

(c) Nothing in these regulations may construed as prohibiting the use of the designated Frequencies to communicate with shore stations to obtain or furnish information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.

(d) On the navigable waters of the United States, channel 13 (156.65MHz) is the designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with 26.05(a). Except that in the area prescribed in 26.03 (c), channel 67 (156.375 MHz) is designated frequency.

(e) On those navigable waters of the United States within a VTS area, the designated VTS frequency is an additional designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with 26.05.

*NOTE: As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a VHF watch on Channel 16 (156.800MHz) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both the vessel bridge-to-bridge frequency and designated VTS frequency.

26.05 Use of RadioTelephone

Section 5 of the Act states:

(a) The radiotelephone required by this Act is for the exclusive use of the master or person in charge of the vessel, or the person designated by the master or persons in charge to pilot or direct the movement of the vessel, who shall maintain a listening watch on the designated frequency. Nothing contained herein shall be interpreted as precluding the use of portable radiotelephone equipment to satisfy the requirements of this Act.

26.06 Maintenance of RadioTelephone; failure of RadioTelephone

Section 6 of the Act states:

(a) Whenever radiotelephone capability is required by this Act, a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall be maintained in effective operating condition. If the radiotelephone equipment carried aboard a vessel ceases to operate, the master shall exercise due diligence to restore it or cause it to be restored to effective operating condition at the earliest practicable time. The failure of a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall not, in itself, constitute a violation of this Act, nor shall it obligate the master of any vessel to moor or anchor his vessel; however, the loss of radiotelephone capability shall be given in consideration of the navigation of the vessel.

26.07 Communications

No person may use the services of and no person may serve as a person required to maintain a listening watch under section 5 of this Act, 33 U.S.C. 1204, **unless the person can communicate in the English language.**

26.08 Exemption procedures

- (a) Any person may petition for an exemption from any provision of the Act or this part.
- (b) Each petition must be submitted in writing to:

**U.S. Coast Guard
Marine Safety and Environmental Protection
2100 Second Street SW**

Washington, DC 20593-0001

And must state:

- (1) The provisions of the Act or this part from which the exemption is requested; and
- (2) The reasons why marine navigation will not be adversely affected if the exemption is granted and if the exemption relates to a local communication system how that system would fully comply with the intent of the concept of the Act but would not conform to the detail if the exemption is granted.

26.09 List of exemptions

(a) All vessels navigating on those waters governed by the navigation rules for Great Lakes and their connecting tributary waters (33 U.S.C. 241 et seq.) are exempt from the requirements of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and this part: Until May 6, 1975

(b) Each vessel navigating on the Great Lakes as defined in the Inland Navigational Rules Act of 1980 (33 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.) and to which the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act (33 U.S.C. 1201-1208) applies is exempt from the requirements in 33 U.S.C. 1203, 1204 and 1205 and the regulations under 26.03, 26.04, 26.05, 26.06 and 26.07. Each of these vessels and each person to whom 33 U.S.C. 1208(a) applies must comply with Articles VII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XV and XVI and Technical Regulations 1-9 of "**The Agreement Between the United States of America and Canada for Promotion of Safety on the Great Lakes by Means of Radio, 1973**".

Part 160- PORTS AND WATERWAYS SAFETY; GENERAL

160.3 Definitions

Bulk means material in any quantity that is shipped, stored, or handled without the benefit of package, label, mark or count and carried in integral or fixed independent tanks.

Captain of the Port means the Coast Guard officer designated by the Commandant to command a Captain of the Port Zone.

Commandant means the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

Commanding Officer, Vessel Traffic Services means the Coast Guard Officer designated by the Commandant to command a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).

Deviation means any departure from any rule in this subchapter.

District Commander means the Coast Guard officer designated by the Commandant to command a Coast Guard District.

ETA means estimated time of arrival.

Length of Tow means, when towing with a hawser, the length in feet from the stern of the towing vessel to the stern of the last vessel in tow. When pushing ahead or towing alongside, length of tow means the tandem length in feet of the vessels in tow excluding the length of the towing vessel.

Person means an individual, firm, corporation, association, partnership, or governmental entity.

State means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and any other commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

Tanker means a self-propelled tank vessel constructed or adapted primarily to carry oil or hazardous materials in bulk in the cargo spaces.

Tank Vessel means a vessel that is constructed or adapted to carry, or that carries, oil or hazardous material in bulk as cargo or cargo residue.

Vehicle means every type of conveyance capable of being used as a means of transportation on land.

Vessel means every description of watercraft or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water.

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) means a service implemented under part 161 of this chapter by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

Vessel Traffic Service Area or VTS Area means the geographical area encompassing a specific VTS area of service as described in part 161 of this chapter. This area of service may be subdivided into sectors for the purpose of allocating responsibility to individual Vessel Traffic Centers or to identify different operating requirements.

*** NOTE: Although regulatory jurisdiction is limited to the navigable waters of the United States, certain vessels will be encouraged or may be required, as a condition of port entry, to report beyond this area to facilitate traffic management within the VTS area.**

VTS Special Area means a waterway within a VTS area in which special operating requirements apply.

160.5 Delegations

- (a) District Commanders and Captains of the Ports are delegated the authority to establish safety zones.
- (b) Under the provisions 6.04-1 and 6.04-6 of this chapter, District Commanders and Captains of the Ports have been delegated the authority to establish security zone.
- (c) Under the provisions of 1.05-1 of this chapter, District Commanders have been delegated the authority to establish regulated navigation areas.
- (d) Subject to the supervision of the cognizant Captain of the Port and District Commander, Commanding Officers, Vessel Traffic Services are delegated the authority under 33 CFR 1.01-30 to discharge the duties of the Captain of the Port that involve directing the operation, movement, and anchorage of vessels within a Vessel Traffic Service area including management of vessel traffic within anchorages, regulated navigation areas and safety zones, and to enforce Vessel Traffic Service and ports and waterways safety regulations. This authority may be exercised by Vessel Traffic Center personnel. The Vessel Traffic Center may, within the Vessel Traffic Service area, provide information, make recommendations, or, to a vessel required under part 161 of this chapter to participate in a Vessel Traffic Service, issue an order, including an order to operate or anchor as directed; require the vessel to comply with orders issued; specify times of entry, movement or departure; restrict operations as necessary for safe operation under the circumstances; or take other action necessary for control of the vessel and the safety of the port or of the marine environment.

Part 161 Vessel Traffic Management

Subpart A - Vessel Traffic Service General Rules

161.1 Purpose and Intent

(a) The purpose of this part is to promulgate regulations implementing and enforcing certain sections of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (PWSA) setting up a national system of Vessel Traffic Services that will enhance navigation, vessel safety, and marine environmental protection, and promote safe vessel movement by reducing the potential for collisions, rammings, and groundings, loss of lives and property associated with these incidents within the VTS areas established hereunder.

(b) Vessel Traffic Services provide the mariner with information related to the safe navigation of a waterway. This information, coupled with the mariner's compliance with the provisions set forth in this part, enhances the safe routing of vessels through congested waterways or waterways of particular hazard. Under certain circumstances, a VTS may issue directions to control the movement of vessels in order to minimize the risk of collisions between vessels, or damage to property or the environment.

(c) The owner, operator, charterer, master or person directing the movement of a vessel remains at all times responsible for the manner in which the vessel is operated, and maneuvered, and is responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel under all circumstances. Compliance with these rules or with a direction of the VTS is at all times contingent upon the exigencies of safe navigation.

(d) Nothing in this part is intended to relieve any vessel, owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel from the consequences of any neglect to comply with this part or any other applicable law or regulation (e.g., the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS) or the Inland Navigation Rules) or of the neglect of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by special circumstances of the case.

161.2 Definitions

For the purpose of this part:

Cooperative Vessel Traffic Services (CVTS) means the system of vessel traffic management established and jointly operated by the United States and Canada within adjoining waters. In addition, CVTS facilitates traffic movement and anchorages, avoid jurisdictional disputes, and renders assistance in emergencies in adjoining United States and Canadian waters.

Hazardous Vessel Operating Condition means any condition related to a Vessel's ability to safely navigate or maneuver, and includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) The absence or malfunction of vessel equipment, such as propulsion machinery, steering gear, radar system, gyrocompass, depth sounding device, automatic radar plotting aid (ARPA), radiotelephone, Automatic Identification System Equipment, navigational lighting, sound signaling devices or similar equipment.
- (b) Any condition on board the vessel likely to impair navigation, such as lack of current nautical charts and publications, personnel shortage, or similar condition.
- (c) Vessel characteristics that affect or restrict maneuverability, such as cargo arrangement, trim, loaded condition, under keel clearance, speed, or similar characteristics.

Precautionary Area means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits where vessels must navigate with particular caution and within which the direction of traffic may be recommended.

Towing Vessel means any commercial vessel engaged in towing another vessel astern, alongside, or by pushing ahead.

Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) is a system used to manage and track vessel movements within a VTS area. This is accomplished by a vessel providing information under established procedures as set forth in this part, or as directed by the VTS.

Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) User means a vessel, or an owner, operator, charter, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel, that is required to participate in a VMRS within a VTS area. VMRS participation is required for:

- (a) every power-driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating;
- (b) every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length, while navigating; or
- (c) every vessel certified to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) means the shore - based facility that operates the vessel traffic service for the Vessel Traffic Service area or sector within such an area.

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) means a service implemented by the United States Coast Guard designed to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. The VTS has the capability to interact with marine traffic and respond to traffic situations developing in the VTS area.

Vessel Traffic Service Area or VTS Area means the geographical area encompassing a specific VTS area of service. This area of service may be subdivided into sectors for the purpose of allocating responsibility to individual Vessel Traffic Centers or to identify different operating requirements.

***NOTE: Although regulatory jurisdiction is limited to the navigable waters of the United States, certain vessels will be encouraged or may be required, as a condition of port entry, to report beyond this area to facilitate traffic management within the VTS area.**

VTS Special Area means a waterway within a VTS area in which special operating requirements apply.

VTS User means a vessel, or an owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel, that is:

- (a) subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act; or
- (b) required to participate in a VMRS within a VTS area (VMRS User).

VTS User's Manual means the manual established and distributed by the VTS to provide the mariner with a description of the services offered and rules in force for that VTS. Additionally, the manual may include chartlets showing the area and sector boundaries, general navigational information about the area, Radio Frequencies, reporting provisions and other information which may assist the mariner in the VTS area.

161.3 Applicability

The provisions of this subpart apply to each VTS User and may also apply to any vessel while underway or at anchor on the navigable waters of the United States within a VTS area, to extent the VTS considers necessary.

161.4 Requirements to carry the rules

Each VTS User shall carry on board and maintain for a ready reference a copy of these rules.

***NOTE: These rules are contained in the applicable U.S. Coast Pilot, the VTS User's Manual which may be obtained by contacting the appropriate VTS and periodically published in the Local Notice to Mariners. The VTS User's Manual and the World VTS Guide, an Organization (IMO) recognized publication, contain additional information which may assist the prudent mariner while in the appropriate VTS area.**

161.5 Deviations from the rules

- (a) Request to deviate from any provision in this part, either for an extended period of time or if anticipated before the start of the transit, must be submitted in writing to the appropriate District Commander. Upon receipt of the written request, the District Commander may authorize a deviation if it is determined that such a deviation provides a level of safety equivalent to that provided by the required measure or is a maneuver considered necessary for safe navigation under the circumstances. An application for an authorized deviation must state the need and fully describe the proposed alternative to the required measure.
- (b) Requests to deviate from any provision in this part, due to circumstances that develop during transit or immediately preceding a transit, may be made verbally to the appropriate VTS Commanding Officer. Requests to deviate shall be made as far in advance as practicable. Upon receipt of the request, the VTS Commanding Officer may authorize a deviation if it is determined that, based on vessel handling characteristics, traffic density, radar contacts, environmental conditions and other relevant information, such a deviation provides a level of safety equivalent to that provided by the required measure or is a maneuver considered necessary for safe navigation under the circumstances.

Services, VTS Measures, and Operating Requirements

161.10 Services

To enhance navigation and vessel safety, and to protect the marine environment, a VTS may issue advisories, or respond to vessel requests for information, on reported conditions within the VTS area, such as:

- (a) Hazardous conditions or circumstances;
- (b) Vessel congestion;
- (c) Traffic density;
- (d) Environmental conditions;
- (e) Aids to navigation status;
- (f) Anticipated vessel encounters;
- (g) Another vessel's name, type, position, hazardous vessel operating conditions, if applicable, and intended, navigation movements, as reported;
- (h) Temporary measures in effect;
- (i) A description of Local Harbor operations and conditions, such as ferry routes, dredging, and so forth;
- (j) Anchorage availability; or
- (k) other information or special circumstances.

161.11 VTS Measures

(a) A VTS may issue measures or directions to enhance navigation and vessel safety and to protect the marine environment, such as, but not limited to:

- (1) Designating temporary reporting points and procedures;
- (2) Imposing vessel operating requirements; or
- (3) Establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.

(b) During conditions of vessel congestion, restricted visibility, adverse weather, or other hazardous circumstances, a VTS may control, supervise, or otherwise manage traffic, by specifying times of entry, movement, or departure to, from, or within a VTS area.

161.12 Vessel Operating Requirements

(a) Subject to the exigencies of safe navigation, a VTS User shall comply with all measures established or directions issued by a VTS.

(1) If, in a specific circumstance, a VTS User is unable to safely comply with a measure or direction issued by the VTS, the VTS User may deviate only to the extent necessary to avoid endangering persons, property or the environment. The deviation shall be reported to the VTS as soon as is practicable.

(b) When not exchanging communications, a VTS User must maintain a listening watch as required by 26.04(e) of this chapter on the VTS frequency designated in Table 161.12(b) (VTS Call Signs, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring areas). In addition, the VTS User must respond promptly when hailed and communicate in the English language.

***NOTE: As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a VHF watch on Channel 16 (156.800 MHZ) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to- Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both vessel bridge-to-bridge frequency and a designated VTS frequency.**

(c) As soon as is practicable, a VTS User shall notify the VTS of any of the following:

- (1) A marine casualty as defined in 46 CFR 4.05-1;
- (2) Involvement in the ramming of a fixed or floating object;
- (3) A pollution incident as defined in 151.15 of this chapter;
- (4) A defect or discrepancy in an aid to navigation;
- (5) A hazardous condition as defined in 160.203 of this chapter;
- (6) A hazardous condition as defined in 160.203 of this chapter;
- (7) Improper operation of vessel equipment required by Part 164 of this chapter;
- (8) A situation involving hazardous materials for which a report is required by 49 CFR 176.48; and
- (9) A hazardous vessel operating condition as defined in 161.2.

161.13 VTS Special Area Operating Requirements

The following operating requirements apply within a VTS Special Area.

- (a) A VTS User shall, if towing astern, do so with as short a hawser as safety and good seamanship permits.
- (b) A VMRS User shall:
 - (1) Not enter or get underway in the area without prior approval of the VTS;
 - (2) Not enter a VTS Special Area if a hazardous vessel operating condition or circumstance exists;
 - (3) Not meet, cross, or overtake any other VMRS User in the area without prior approval of the VTS; and
 - (4) Before meeting, crossing, or overtaking any other VMRS User in the area, communicate on the designated vessel bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone frequency, intended navigation movements, and any other information necessary in order to make safe passing arrangements. This requirement does not relieve a vessel of and duty prescribed by the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS) or the Inland Navigation Rules.

Subpart B - Vessel Movement Reporting System

161.15 Purpose and Intent

(a) A Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) is a system used to manage and track vessel movements within a VTS area. This is accomplished by requiring that vessels provide information under established procedures as set forth in this part, or as directed by the VTS.

(b) To avoid imposing an undue reporting burden or unduly congesting radiotelephone frequencies, reports shall be limited to information which is essential to achieve the objectives of the VMRS. These reports are consolidated into four reports: sailing plan, position, sailing plan deviation and final.

161.16 Applicability

The provisions of this subpart shall apply to the following VMRS User:

(a) Every power - driven vessel 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating;

(b) Every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length, while navigating; or

(c) Every vessel certified to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

*** NOTE: The Commanding Officer VTS St. Marys River (CO VTS) has determined due to the unique navigational requirements of the St. Marys River, that all vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge - to - Bridge Radiotelephone act shall participate as VMRS Users. CO VTS requests all vessels 65 feet and above to report to Soo Traffic.**

161.17 Definitions

As used in this subpart:

Published means available in a widely - distributed and publicly available medium (e.g., VTS Users Manual, ferry schedule, Notice to Mariners).

161.18 Reporting Requirements

(a) A VTS may:

- (1) Direct a vessel to provide any of the information set forth in Table 161.18(a) (IMO Standard Ship Reporting System). This table is found in 33 CFR.
- (2) Establish other means of reporting for those vessels unable to report on the designated frequency; or
- (3) Require reports from a vessel in sufficient time to allow advance vessel traffic planning.

(b) All reports required by this part shall be made as soon as is practicable on the frequency designated in Table 161.12(b) (VTS Call Signs, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas).

(c) When not exchanging communications, a VMRS User must maintain a listening watch as described in 26.04(e) of this chapter on the frequency designated in Table 161.12(b) (VTS Call Signs, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas). In addition, the VMRS User must respond promptly when hailed and communicate in the English Language.

*** NOTE: As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a VHF watch on channel 16 (156.800 MHz) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to- Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both the vessel Bridge-to-bridge frequency and a designated VTS frequency.**

(d) When reports required by this part include time information, such information shall be given using the local time zone in effect and the 24- hour military clock system.

161.19 Sailing Plan (SP)

Unless otherwise stated, at least 15 minutes before navigating a VTS area; a vessel must report the:

- (a) Vessel name and type;
- (b) Position;
- (c) Destination and ETA;
- (d) Intended route;
- (e) Time and point of entry; and
- (f) Dangerous cargo on board or in stow, as defined in 160.203 of this chapter, and other required information as set out in 160.211 and 160.213 of this chapter.

***NOTE: CO VTS ST Marys River has a VTS Measure requiring a Sailing Plan be made at least 60 minutes before navigating the VTS area.**

161.20 Position Report

A vessel must report its name and position:

- (a) Upon point of entry into a VTS area;
- (b) At designated reporting points as set forth in subpart C; or
- (c) When directed by the VTC.

***NOTE: Notice of temporary reporting points, if established, may be published via Local Notice to Mariners, general broadcast or the VTS User's Manual.**

161.21 Sailing Plan Deviation Report (DR)

A vessel must report:

- (a) When it's ETA to a destination varies significantly from a previously reported ETA;
- (b) Any intention to deviate from a VTS issued measure or vessel traffic routing system; or
- (c) Any significant deviation from previously reported information.

161.22 Final Report (FR)

A vessel must report its name and position:

- (a) On arrival at its destination, if in the VTS area: or
- (b) When leaving a VTS area.

161.23 Reporting Exemptions

(a) Unless otherwise directed, the following vessels are exempted from providing Position and Final Reports due to the nature of their operation:

- (1) Vessels on a published schedule and route;
- (2) Vessels operating within an area of a radius of three nautical miles or less; or
- (3) Vessels escorting another vessel or assisting another vessel in maneuvering procedures.

(b) A vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section must:

- (1) Provide a Sailing Plan at least 15 minutes but not more than 60 minutes (1 hour) before navigating within a VTS area; and
- (2) If it departs from its promulgated schedule by more than 15 minutes or changes its limited operating area, make the established VMRS reports or report as directed.

Subpart C --- Vessel Traffic Service Areas, Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service Area, Vessel Traffic Service Special Areas and Reporting Points.

<p>*NOTE: All geographic coordinates contained in part 161 (latitude and longitude) are expressed in North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83).</p>
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161.45 Vessel Traffic Service St. Marys River

(a) The VTS area consists of the navigable waters of the St. Marys River and lower Whitefish Bay from 45° 57' N (Detour Reef Light) to the south, to 46° 38.7' N (Ile Parisienne Light) to the north, except the waters of the St. Marys Falls Canal, and to the east along a line from La Pointe to Sims Point, within Potagannising Bay and Tenby Bay (formally known as Worsley bay).

(b) Reporting Points are found in section II of this manual.

Part 162 - INLAND WATERWAYS NAVIGATION REGULATIONS

162.117 St. Marys River, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

(a) **The area:** The waters of the St. Marys River and lower Whitefish Bay from 45° 57' N (Detour Reef Light) to the south, to 46° 38.7' N (Ile Parisienne Light) to the north, except the waters of the St. Marys Falls Canal, and to the east along a line from La Pointe to Sims Point, within Potagannising Bay and Tenby Bay (Formally known as Worsley Bay).

(b) **Definitions:** As used in this section:

Two-way route means a directional route within defined limits inside which two-way traffic is established, and which is intended to improve safety in waters where navigation is difficult.

Two-way traffic means that traffic flow is permitted in opposing directions, but a vessel may not meet, cross, nor overtake any other vessel in such a manner that it would be abreast or more than one other vessel within the defined limits of a waterway:

(c) **Anchoring Rules:**

(1) A vessel must not anchor:

- (i) within the waters between Brush Point and the waterworks intake crib off Big Point southward of the Point Aux Pins range; or
- (ii) within 0.2 nautical miles of the intake crib off Big Point.

(2) In an emergency, vessels may anchor in a dredged channel. Vessels shall anchor as near to the edge of the channel as possible and shall get underway as soon as the emergency ceases, unless otherwise directed. Vessel Traffic Services St. Marys River must be advised of any emergency anchoring as soon as is practicable.

(3) Vessels collected in any part of the VTS area by reason of temporary closure of a channel or an impediment to navigation shall get underway and depart in the order in which they arrived, unless otherwise directed by the Vessel Traffic Service St. Marys River. Vessel Traffic Service St. Marys River may advance any vessel in the order of departure to expedite the movement of mails, passengers, cargo of perishable nature, to facilitate passage of vessels through any channel by reason of special circumstance, or to facilitate passage through the St. Marys Falls Canal.

(d) **Traffic Rules:**

(1) A vessel must proceed only in the established direction of traffic flow in the following waters:

- (i) West Neebish Channel from Buoy "53" to Buoy "1"--- downbound traffic only;
- (ii) Pipe Island Course from Sweets Point to Watsons Reefs Light --- downbound traffic only.
- (iii) Middle Neebish Channel from Buoy "2" to Buoy "76"--- upbound traffic only; and
- (iv) Pipe Island Passage to the east of Pipe Island Shoal and north of Pipe Island Twins from Watson Reefs Light to Sweets Point--- upbound traffic only.

(2) A vessel 350 feet or more in length must not overtake or approach within .2 nautical miles of another vessel proceeding in the same direction in the following waterways:

- (i) West Neebish Channel between Nine Mile Point and Munuscong Lake Junction Lighted Bell Buoy;
- (ii) Middle Neebish Channel between Munuscong Lake Junction Lighted Bell Buoy and Nine Mile Point; and
- (iii) Little Rapids Cut from Six Mile Point to Buoy "102".

(3) When two-way traffic is authorized in Middle Neebish Channel, a vessel 350 feet or more in length must not meet, cross, or overtake another vessel at:

- (i) Johnson Point from Buoy “18” to Buoy “22”
- (ii) Mirre Point from Buoy “26” to Buoy “28”; or
- (iii) Stribling Point from Buoy “39” to Buoy “43”.

(4) **Paragraph (d)(2) of this section does not apply to a vessel navigating through an ice field.**

(e) **Winter Navigation:** During the winter navigation season, the following waterways are normally closed:

- (1) West Neebish Channel, from Buoy “53” to Buoy “1”;
- (2) Pipe Island Passage to the east of Pipe Island Shoal; and
- (3) North of Pipe Island Twins, from Watson Reef Light to Sweets Point.

(f) **Alternate Winter Navigation Routes:**

- (1) When West Neebish Channel is closed, Middle Neebish Channel (from Buoy “2” to Buoy “76”) will be open either as a two-way route or an alternate traffic lane.
 - (i) When Middle Neebish Channel is a two-way route:
 - (a) An upbound vessel must use the easterly 197 feet of the channel. However, a vessel of draft 20 feet or more must not proceed prior to Vessel Traffic Center approval; and
 - (b) A downbound vessel must use the westerly 295 feet of the channel.
 - (ii) When Middle Neebish Channel is an alternating one-way traffic lane. A vessel must use the westerly 295 feet of the channel in the established direction of traffic flow.
- (2) When Pipe Island Passage is closed, Pipe Island Course is a two-way route.

***NOTE: The Vessel Traffic Service closes or opens these channels as conditions require after giving due consideration to the protection of the marine environment, waterway improvements, aids to navigation, the need for cross channel traffic (e.g. ferries), the availability of icebreakers, and the safety of the island residents who, in the course of their daily business, must use naturally formed ice bridges for transportation to and from the mainland. Under normal seasonal conditions, only one closing each winter and one opening each spring are anticipated. Prior to closing or opening the channels, interested parties including both shipping entities and island residents, will be given at least 72 hours notice by the Coast Guard.**

(g) **Speed Rules:**

- (1) The Speed rules for VTS St. Marys River are found in section III of this manual.
- (2) Temporary speed limit regulations may be established by Commanding Officer Vessel Traffic Service St. Marys River. Notice of the temporary speed limits and their effective dates and termination are published in the Federal Register and Local Notice to Mariners. These temporary speed limits, **if imposed**, will normally be placed in effect and terminated during the winter navigation season.

(h) **Towing Requirements:**

A towing vessel must:

- (1) Maintain positive control of its tow south of Gros Cap Reef Light
- (2) Not impede the passage of any other vessel.
- (3) Not tow a vessel of 200 feet or less in length with a tow line longer than 250 feet; and
- (4) Not tow a vessel of 200 feet or more in length with a tow line longer than the length of the towed plus 50 feet.

