Helsinki VTS Sector 1

About Vessel Traffic Services

The provisions on vessel traffic services are laid down in the Vessel Traffic Service Act 623/2005 and in the Government Decrees on Vessel Traffic Service 763/2005, 1798/2009, 1304/2011, 1216/2018 and 93/2024.

Participation in Vessel Traffic Services

Vessels of 24 metres in length overall or more are obliged to participate in the vessel traffic services.
When navigating in the VTS area, vessels are required to maintain a continuous listening watch on the working channel used in the area. Furthermore, vessels are obliged to obey the rules relevant to the traffic in the VTS area. More detailed instructions about the required reports and working channels can be found in the regional VTS guide.
Vessels navigating in the VTS area, which are not obliged to participate in the vessel traffic services, are recommended to maintain a listening watch on the working channel in the VTS area or sector in question.

Operational hours and location of VTS Centres

In Finland the vessel traffic services (VTS services) are operated by Fintraffic Vessel Traffic Services Ltd (Fintraffic VTS). VTS centres are located in Turku and Helsinki. The sea areas at the Finnish coast are divided into six VTS areas. These are Bothnia VTS, West Coast VTS, Archipelago VTS, Hanko VTS, Helsinki VTS and Kotka VTS. In addition, Saimaa VTS operates in the Saimaa deep water fairway.
Along the coast VTS services are provided 24 h/day throughout the year. There may be operational interruptions due to technical problems or an unexpected shortage of personnel. Information about the interruptions is given as navigational or local warnings. Saimaa VTS only provides services during its period of operations. The period of operations is largely equivalent to the opening hours of the Saimaa Canal, but Fintraffic VTS will provide information about when the operational period begins and ends.

Service and languages

Vessel Traffic Service includes providing information, responding to developing unsafe situations, and organizing traffic.
To improve safety and to create a consistent maritime situational awareness, English is used as the primary communication language in the VTS areas along the Finnish coast. As required, vessel traffic service is also provided in Finnish and Swedish.

Information
is given to all vessels whenever necessary, at set intervals, when they report or when a vessel so requests. The information to vessels comprises matters which affect the vessels' safe and smooth navigation. Such information includes, among other things, traffic in the VTS area, weather conditions, pilotage, icebreaking, towage, and port operations, as well as information on the status of navigational aids and fairways. VTS monitors the movement of vessels and, if necessary, provides information to the vessel about a developing unsafe situation.

Responding to developing unsafe situations:
Identified vessels are assisted in navigation upon request or when deemed necessary by the VTS.
Navigational assistance may include information about the vessel's position and bearings/courses over ground to for example the fairway centre line or the pilot boarding position. Bearings or COG's can also be given so that vessels can pass navigational hazards, for example shoals, at a safe distance.
Assistance is advisory and normative in nature. The responsibility for navigating the vessel remains with the vessel's master.
The information, warnings, advice, and instructions provided by the VTS are based the situational awareness system at the VTS center.

Vessel traffic is organized
in order to improve traffic flow and safety. Methods of organization include, among others, permanent meeting and overtaking prohibition areas, departure procedures for ports, and traffic organization based on time or distance. The aim is to prevent dangerous meeting and overtaking situations and congestion.

Contact information

Emergency number in Finland

Emergency number in Finland
112

Only call the emergency number 112 in real emergencies when you need urgent assistance from the authorities.

Maritime Rescue Centres

National Maritime Search and Rescue alarm number
VHF 16 / DSC 70 / MF-DSC 2187,5 kHz
Alarm hotline +358 294 1000

Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre MRCC Turku
VHF 16 / DSC 70 / MF-DSC 2187,5 kHz
mrcc@raja.fi
Alarm hotline +358 294 1001

Maritime Rescue Subcentre MRSC Helsinki
VHF 16 / DSC 70 / MF-DSC 2187,5 kHz
mrsc.helsinki@raja.fi
Alarm hotline +358 294 1002

Helsinki VTS Sector 1

Helsinki VTS Sector 1
VHF 71 (Radio call: Helsinki VTS)
helsinki.vts@fintraffic.fi
+358 20 448 5385

Gulf of Finland Vessel Traffic Centre Supervisor
supervisors.hki@fintraffic.fi
+358 20 448 5391

All phone calls will be recorded.

Helsinki VTS Sector 1 Ports

Port of Helsinki
VHF 12
port.helsinki@portofhelsinki.fi
+358 207 641000

SF Port Service
service@sfportservice.fi
+358 40 129 3745

Nordic Port Services
shipservice@nordicportservices.fi
+358 (0)41 3180238

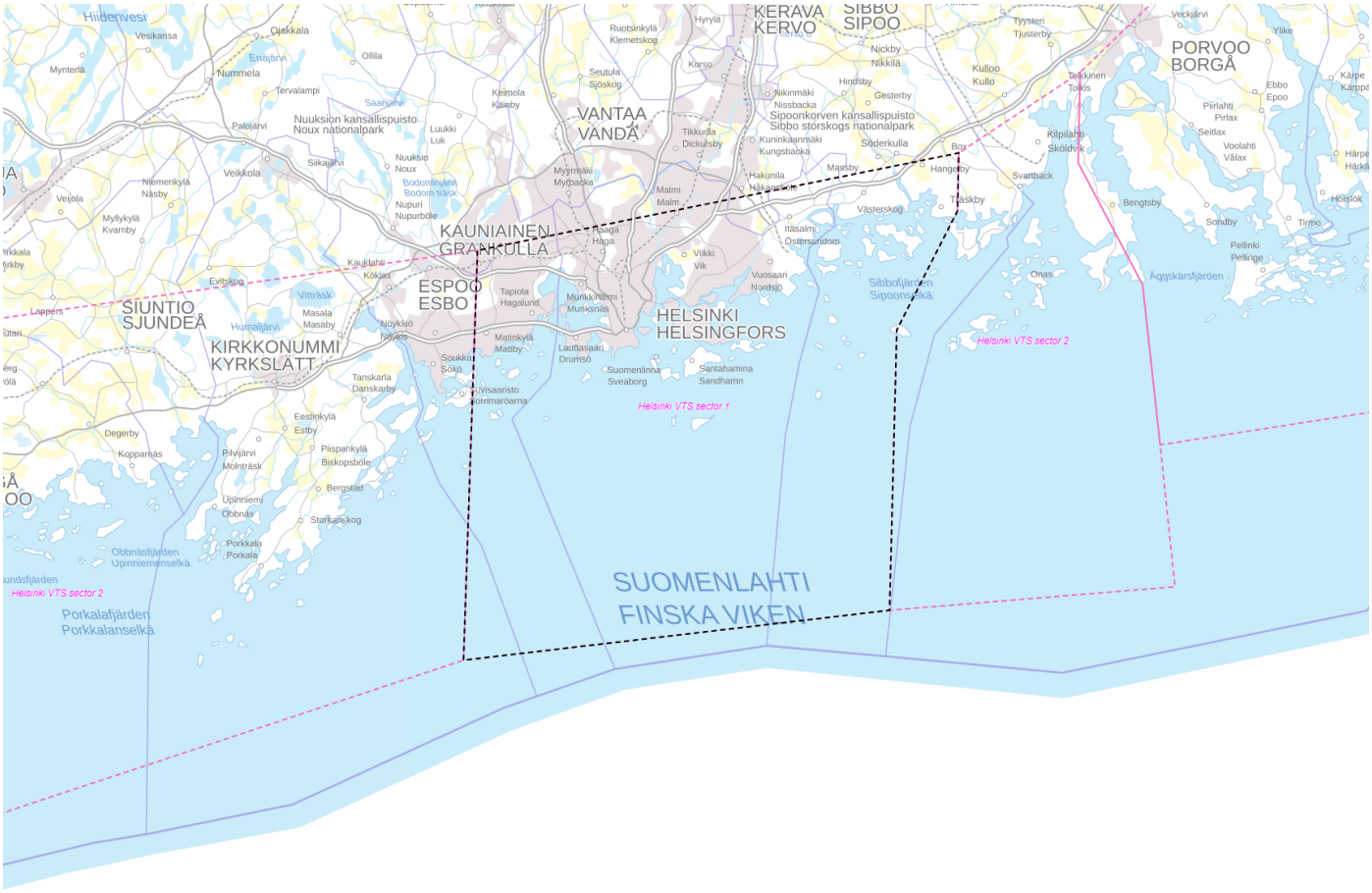
Vuosaari harbour
VHF 12
shipservice.vuosaari@portofhelsinki.fi
+ 358 (0) 40 129 3745

Pilot Dispatch Hanko - Helsinki Area

Pilot Dispatch Hanko - Helsinki Area
pilotdispatch.hankohelsinki@finnpilot.fi
+358 29 5253 420

Get familiar with Helsinki VTS Sector 1

VTS area corner point coordinates:
Restriction point coordinates:
Reporting point coordinates:



Helsinki VTS Sector 1 Area Info

Reporting procedures

The working channel of Helsinki VTS sector 1 is VHF 71.

Reports should include the following information:

- Name of the vessel
- Name of reporting point
- Destination
- Intended route. If an alternative route is selected, this must be reported

Required reports:

- upon entry into the VTS Area
- before anchoring
- before leaving an anchorage
- after berthing
- before leaving port; for Port of Helsinki, see chapter “Permission to depart from the port of Helsinki”
- at the reporting points in the area, see the reporting points below

Reporting points:

1. Vessels must report 15 mins before arriving at

   the Kustaanmiekka or Särkänsalmi straits
2. Northbound vessels must report when passing

   Itätoukki
3. Vessels must report 15 mins before passing

   Kuiva Hevonen
   in the coastal fairway

Reporting for local traffic

Vessels in local traffic operating in Helsinki and equipped with a functioning and active Automatic Identification System (AIS) are required to report according to
Reporting procedures
only when visibility is less than 1 nautical mile.

Departure permissions

Before departure from Port of Helsinki, vessels shall request a permission to depart from VTS.

Helsinki South Harbour and West Harbour
In Helsinki South Harbour and West Harbour, vessels must submit a departure report when they are ready to depart in 5 minutes. In West Harbour during strong winds (maximum wind speed 15 m/s) the vessel will not be granted permission to depart if another vessel, with a length over 215 m, is already in or about to enter the manoeuvering basin.

Vuosaari Harbour

In Vuosaari Harbour vessels must submit a departure report when they are ready to leave port. VTS grants or denies permission to depart from the port depending on the traffic situation. VTS does not grant permission to depart if there is a vessel in the fairway entering the harbour, and that vessel has passed Itätoukki, reported 15 minutes to Kuiva Hevonen or entered the area from the east from another sector. A granted permission to depart is in force for 15 minutes during which time the vessel must get underway. The vessel is required to give a report when underway. If the vessel is not ready to depart within 15 minutes and there are other vessels waiting for their turn to enter the area where meeting and overtaking is prohibited, the vessel misses its turn to depart. In that case the vessel must request a new permission to depart from VTS. The procedure regarding permission to depart also concerns vessels moving from one berth to another in the harbour area.
All vessels, except those in liner traffic sailing according to a published timetable, must give a preliminary notice of departure after berthing. Any changes to the time of departure indicated in the notice of departure or in the published liner traffic timetable must be reported to VTS as soon as possible. If a vessel departs later than the time reported in the notice of departure, the vessel must immediately report also this to the VTS. VTS uses the data in the notice of departure for advance planning of the use of the fairway and the icebreaking in the harbour area. The procedure of giving a notice of departure does not apply to piloted vessels.

Vuosaari fairway procedures

Vessels reporting at Itätoukki, entering the sector 1 area from the east or reporting 15 minutes prior to passing Kuiva Hevonen, will be given information by the VTS about meeting traffic and other information relevant to the safe passage of the ship.
During strong winds (mean wind 13 m/s or more) the VTS recommends that vessels in Vuosaari fairway only meet south of Östra Rödhällen. The VTS does not organize the traffic of meeting vessels outside the area where meeting and overtaking is prohibited, but vessels are requested to agree among themselves on how to meet safely.
When the use of the fairway is restricted due to the wind situation and vessels have to wait for entrance into the fairway, they have the option to reduce speed in order to ensure a safe meeting south of Östra Rödhällen. When organizing the traffic, the VTS makes sure that the vessel does not lose its turn to enter the fairway because of its reduced speed, by taking into account the original speed at which the vessel would have arrived at Itätoukki.

West harbour procedures

VTS organizes inbound and outbound vessels to the West Harbour according to the schedules submitted by the vessels in advance.

Inbound vessels are informed about the order in which to enter the fairway well in advance. The order is based on the agreed berthing times obtained by the Port of Helsinki.

Meeting and overtaking prohibitions

Meeting and overtaking is permanently prohibited in the following areas covered by Helsinki VTS sector 1:

1. **Särkänsalmi**
   : Buoys Försök and Länsi-Musta 1 – buoy Särkkä itä between latitudes 60º 08,8’ N and 60º 09,1’ N in Särkkä fairway.
2. **Kustaanmiekka strait**
   : Between latitudes 60º 08,1’ N and 60º 08,6’ N in Kustaanmiekka-Sörnäinen fairway.
3. **Katajaluoto - Lintupaadet**
   : Buoy Katajaluoto - buoys Lintupaasi and Tallskär between latitudes 60° 06,1′ N and 60° 06,7′ N in Helsinki West harbour fairway.
4. **Vuosaari fairway northern part**
   : Buoy V 13 – buoy V 23 between latitudes 60° 11,1’ N and 60° 12,5’ N in Vuosaari fairway.

The meeting and overtaking prohibition areas do not apply to tugs when they are assisting within the meeting and overtaking prohibition area, or to vessels performing icebreaking assistance.

Speed limits

1. In all fairway sections leading to a Helsinki port north of the latitude 60°06.0’N with Itäkari as the eastern limit: 30 km/h
2. In the harbour basins in the Port of Helsinki and around Klippan: 10 km/h
3. In the Vuosaari fairway a speed limit of 30 km/h is in force between Östra Rödhällen and Krokholmshället.
4. A speed limit of 17 km/h is in force between Krokholmshället and Vuosaari Harbour as well as in the Vuosaari Harbour area.
5. During the winter season (1 November - 31 March) a speed limit of 24/h will be in force in the Vuosaari fairway between Krokholmshället and Vuosaari Harbour.

Anchoring

There are following official anchorages in the Helsinki VTS Sector 1 area:
1. Helsinki West harbour fairway 4710: Anchorage swept depth 13 m (MW 2005). Corner point coordinates (WGS84):

60°01.64'N 025°29.17'E
60°00.15'N 025°28.33'E
59°59.78'N 025°30.92'E
60°01.79'N 025°32.06'E
60°01.64'N 025°29.17'E

A vessel must always notify both the VTS and the Finnish Border Guard when anchoring in Finland's territorial waters. The vessel must make the notification either itself or through its agent. In addition, a vessel anchoring in territorial waters is required to make an electronic customs declaration, even if the vessel is not going to call at a Finnish port.
After leaving a port in Finland, the vessel must also check with the Finnish Border Guard whether anchoring in Finnish territorial waters is possible. Also in this case, a vessel remaining at anchor must make an electronic customs declaration.

Aids to Navigation

1. Remotely operated AtoNs

There are no remotely operated AtoNs in the Helsinki VTS sector 1 area.

2. Permanent Virtual AtoNs (V-AIS)

There are following permanent V-AIS-AtoNs in the Helsinki VTS sector 1 area:

- Ulkomatala 60°01.75'N 025°16.24'E
- Västra Balkan 60°04.01'N 025°19.21'E

3. Fault Reporting

AtoNs not working correctly? Please inform Helsinki VTS by VHF radio on channel 71 or call Turku Radio 0800-181818.

Harbour areas

Port of Helsinki

- +358 93 101 621
- port.helsinki@portofhelsinki.fi
- VHF 12

Port of Helsinki, Vuosaari

- + 358 (0) 40 129 3745
- shipservice.vuosaari@portofhelsinki.fi
- VHF 12

Pilot boarding positions

- Helsinki N
  60°04.00′N 024°58.20′E
- Helsinki S
  59°59.00′N 024°56.90′E
- Vuosaari
  60°04.96′N 025°09.79′E

Notice of channel use

Use of channels that deviates from the channel design refers to a situation where a vessel uses a channel in a manner that deviates from the channel's design and the adequacy of the channel space cannot be ensured based on the design. If the vessel's static draught is greater than the channel's design draught taking into account the current water level, the vessel shall ensure that her net under keel clearance remains adequate and demonstrate it to the VTS Centre that is responsible for monitoring the fairway.

Vessel's operator, agent or master shall give the notice of channel use at least 24 hours before its arrival at the pilot boarding position, or if the vessel is expected to arrive in less than 24 hours, no later than when the vessel has left the port of departure for a Finnish port. A vessel departing a Finnish port shall give the notice of channel use as soon as possible, at latest when the departure report is given.

The notice of channel use shall include the following items:

1. Ship identification details
2. The channel or channel section the ship intends to use in a manner deviating from the channel design
3. Planned control measures for maintaining the net underkeel clearance
4. Length between perpendiculars and maximum breadth (LBP, Breadth)
5. Static draught
6. Centre of buoyancy (KB)
7. Centre of gravity (KG)
8. Metacentric height (GM)
9. Block coefficient (Cb)

10. Individual underkeel clearance calculation based on the information above
When ensuring the adequate net UKC and giving the notice of channel use, it is recommended to utilize the tools provided by the Finnish Transport and Infrastructure Agency. The notice of channel use can be given in the form of a squat calculation made with the Squat Calculator with regard to items D–I. The calculation can be shared as a link, or as a pdf-printout sent by e-mail to the VTS Centre. When using the Squat Calculator, it is enough to write the information of points 1.–3. in the e-mail.

Special situations
The notification obligation will be considered fulfilled in a situation where:

1) a deck officer on board the ship has a valid Pilot Exemption Certificate (PEC) issued in compliance with section 39 of the Pilotage Act (561/2023) that grants an exemption from compulsory pilotage for both the channel and the ship in question; and
2) underkeel clearance calculations that cover the prevailing conditions have been prepared for the ship and the channel in question; and
3) the ship in question operates in the relevant channel in a scheduled service referred to in section 2, subsection 1, paragraph 28 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

Sending the notice
In Hanko VTS, Helsinki VTS and Kotka VTS monitoring areas the notice of channel use should be sent to the email address supervisors.hki@fintraffic.fi. Title the email ”Notice of channel use”.

Accidents and incidents

Accidents and incidents

In coastal areas vessels involved in an accident or in imminent danger shall first contact the MRCC or MRSC (tel. +358 294 1000).

Vessels must immediately report all accidents and incidents relating to maritime safety to the VTS centre. Some examples of such accidents and incidents are listed in section 23 in the Finnish Vessel Traffic Service Act.

Exceptional situations

In exceptional situations, such as extraordinary weather conditions, search and rescue situations or any other incidents in which vessel traffic is restricted or put at risk, the VTS can temporarily close a fairway or fairway section, issue speed limits or instruct vessels to anchor.

Unable to participate?

If the master of the vessel, for a valid reason relating to the vessel’s safety, is unable to participate in the vessel traffic services, or to follow the instructions given by the VTS in exceptional situations, he must immediately inform the VTS about this.

The vessel’s participation in the vessel traffic services does not affect the master’s responsibility for manoeuvring the vessel.