

**Translation from Finnish**  
**Legally binding only in Finnish and Swedish**  
**Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland**

**Government Decree on Vessel Traffic Service**  
(763/2005; amendments up to 1216/2018 included)

By decision of the Government, made on the presentation of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the following is enacted under the Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005) adopted on 5 August 2005:

**Section 1 (1216/2018)**  
**On-the-job training plan**

The VTS service provider shall have an on-the-job training plan for each VTS centre and the plans shall be approved by the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency or (before 2019) by the Finnish Transport Agency.

The on-the-job training plan shall include a method for assessing whether the training period has been completed successfully and whether the employee concerned has the capability to start working independently as a VTS operator.

The on-the-job training plan shall include instructions for the procedure to be followed in revalidating expired endorsements.

**Section 2 (1216/2018)**  
**VTS operator training**

VTS operator training shall be arranged in accordance with the training programme prepared for the purpose. The training programme shall be based on the recommendation drawn up by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The training shall include VTS theory and simulator practice.

Participants may be granted partial or full exemption from training programme modules on the basis of prior learning. In order to be exempted, the candidate shall present acceptable documentary evidence of prior learning before the start of the training course.

The VTS operator training shall have been completed before the completion of the on-the-job training referred to in section 4.

**Section 3 (1216/2018)**  
**VTS supervisor training**

VTS supervisor training shall be arranged in accordance with the training programme prepared for the purpose. The training programme shall be based on the recommendation drawn up by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The VTS supervisor training shall include training in advanced VTS theory.

Participants may be granted partial or full exemption from training programme modules on the basis of prior learning. In order to be exempted, the candidate shall present acceptable documentary evidence of prior learning before the start of the training course.

Participants in VTS supervisor training shall have successfully completed the VTS operator training.

#### **Section 4 (1216/2018)** **VTS operator on-the-job training**

The VTS service provider is responsible for providing VTS operators with on-the-job training at VTS centres.

On-the-job training takes place as practical work under the supervision of an on-the-job training instructor. On-the-job training instructors shall supervise and assess the trainee's action during training by observing the radio communication and traffic image and, if necessary, intervene in the trainee's action. When operational watchkeeping is practised, one on-the-job training instructor may only be in charge of one trainee. A record shall be kept of on-the-job training, showing training progress, quantity and periods.

In the on-the-job training, the trainee shall receive education and training in

- 1) the VTS area, its fairways and vessel traffic;
- 2) the VTS centre's technical systems and equipment;
- 3) the VTS centre's procedures, instructions and regulations; and
- 4) the VTS centre's instructions for emergencies and exceptional circumstances.

The vessel traffic services that the VTS operator is entitled to provide and the VTS area or sector in which he/she is entitled to operate are detailed in the endorsement entered on the certificate by the VTS service provider. Endorsements are valid for one year. The validity of an endorsement may be extended if the holder of the certificate has, in the assessment of qualifications and skills referred to in section 8, demonstrated that he/she is qualified to provide the vessel traffic service entered in the endorsement.

On-the-job training may last for a maximum of six months.

#### **Section 5 (1216/2018)** **Language skills required of VTS operators**

The applicant for a VTS operator certificate shall have good oral and written skills in Finnish or Swedish and satisfactory oral skills in the other language. In addition, proficiency level 4 referred to in the Act on National Language Proficiency Examinations (964/2004) is required in the English language.

The skill requirement in the other language laid down in subsection 1 above does not, however, apply to applicants who have completed the deck officer's training laid down in the Government Decree on the Manning of Ships and Certification of Seafarers (508/2018).

## **Section 6**

### **Language skill requirements for VTS supervisors**

What is laid down in section 5, applies to the language skills required of VTS supervisors.

## **Section 7 (1216/2018)**

### **Revalidation of certificates**

The application for revalidation of a VTS operator certificate shall be submitted to the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency. Candidates shall demonstrate that they have maintained their professional qualifications and completed the recurrent training referred to in section 9.

Candidates are considered to have maintained their professional qualifications if they have

- 1) a valid endorsement for providing vessel traffic services in at least one VTS area or sector; or
- 2) at least one year (1,600 hours) of work experience in operational vessel traffic management during the past five years; or
- 3) at least six months (800 hours) of work experience in operational vessel traffic management and at least six months (800 hours) of experience handling the administrative duties of a VTS supervisor during the past five years.

The on-the-job training provided by on-the-job training instructors may be included in the instructors' operational working hours. The training time of persons receiving on-the-job training may be included in their operational working hours.

Candidates unable to demonstrate that they have maintained their professional qualifications in accordance with subsection 2 shall, before participation in the recurrent training referred to in section 9, pass an exam in which they demonstrate sufficient basic knowledge of vessel traffic service tasks. The examiner and the form and content of the exam shall be approved by the VTS service provider.

## **Section 8 (1216/2018)**

### **Revalidation of endorsements**

The VTS service provider shall assess the qualifications and skills of certificate holders annually. If the assessment is carried out during the three months preceding the last date of validity of the endorsement, the period of validity of the new endorsement will begin from the end of the previous endorsement period. If a candidate's performance is assessed more than three months before the expiry of the endorsement the validity of the new endorsement will begin on the date of the assessment.

The work performance can be assessed in a practical demonstration of skill at a VTS centre or a simulator. The assessment shall comprise at least the following modules:

- 1) vessel traffic management in accordance with the type of service provided and valid regulations and instructions;
- 2) communication; and

3) command of technical equipment and systems.

If the candidate's performance does not meet the requirements, the candidate shall complete the on-the-job training period for the module concerned in order to achieve sufficient qualifications and skills.

### **Section 9 (1216/2018)** **Recurrent training**

Recurrent training for VTS operators shall consist of continual training in VTS theory.

Recurrent training shall take place during the 12 months preceding the last date of validity of the certificate. Training for revalidation of an expired certificate shall be completed before a new certificate can be issued.

### **Section 10 (1216/2018)** **Notification duty of the VTS service provider**

The VTS service provider shall notify the relevant authorities of other European Union Member States located along the intended route of the ship concerned of any relevant information that it may have on the ship if

- 1) the ship has been involved in an incident or accident at sea referred to in section 23 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005);
- 2) the ship has failed to comply with the notification and reporting requirements laid down in the Vessel Traffic Service Act;
- 3) the ship has, in the course of its voyage, violated the applicable rules in ships' routing systems and vessel traffic service placed under the responsibility of a EU Member State;
- 4) ships which have failed to notify, or do not have, insurance certificates or financial guarantees pursuant to any EU legislation and international rules;
- 5) ships which have been reported by pilots or port authorities as having apparent anomalies which may prejudice their safe navigation or create a risk for the environment;
- 6) there is proof or presumptive evidence of deliberate discharge of oil or other infringements of the Protocol of 1978 relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, in waters under the jurisdiction of a EU Member State; or
- 7) the ship has been refused access to ports of EU Member States or has been the subject of a report or notification of a Member State in accordance with Annex I to Directive 2009/16/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on port State control.

The VTS service provider shall ensure that the information communicated to it under subsection 1 is transmitted to the relevant port authorities and any other authorities referred to in section 18, subsection 1 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act.

## **Section 11**

### **Contents of notifications concerning accidents and incidents at sea**

The notifications made under section 23 of the Vessel Traffic Service Act shall contain

- 1) ship identification;
- 2) the ship's position data;
- 3) the ship's port of departure;
- 4) the ship's port of destination;
- 5) an address where information on any dangerous or polluting goods carried on board can be obtained;
- 6) the total number of persons on board;
- 7) detailed information on the incident; and
- 8) the relevant information referred to in IMO Resolution A.851(20).

### **Section 11a § (1216/2018)**

#### **Plan for accommodating ships in need of assistance**

The plan for accommodating ships in need of assistance referred to in section 20b of the Vessel Traffic Service Act shall include:

- 1) contact details of the Finnish Border Guard and the other authorities taking part in maritime search and rescue operations;
- 2) contact details of the Finnish Environment Institute;
- 3) contact details of the VTS service provider;
- 4) details of Finland's shoreline and details of the places of refuge located on the Finnish coast and other details of environmental, economic and social aspects as well as natural conditions on the basis of which a preliminary assessment and a decision with regard to a place of refuge to accommodate a ship can be made without delay;
- 5) assessment procedures on the basis of which the ship in need of assistance is granted or denied entry to a place of refuge;
- 6) details of the means and facilities for assistance, salvage and pollution response;
- 7) international coordination and decision-making procedures; and
- 8) procedures concerning the financial security and liabilities of the ships accommodated in the places of refuge.

When the plan is being prepared, the Finnish Border Guard shall consult all interested parties. The plan may also be prepared as part of the maritime search and rescue plan or the plan to combat marine environmental damage.

The Finnish Border Guard shall also notify the authorities in the countries neighbouring Finland of the plan.

**Section 11b (1216/2018)**  
**Cooperation between authorities**

The authorities referred to in sections 20b and 20c of the Vessel Traffic Service Act and the VTS service provider shall meet on a regular basis to share experiences and to enhance the quality of the measures contained in the plan.

The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for arranging the cooperation and for ensuring that the plan referred to in section 11 a is updated and revised on the basis of the cooperation between the authorities.

**Section 12**  
**Entry into force**

This Decree enters into force on 1 October 2005.

Measures necessary for the implementation of this Decree may be undertaken before the Decree's entry into force.

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