Coast Guard Application of VTS Authority

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Coast Guard VTS Authority

- Ports and Waterways Safety Act (1972)
- Port and Tanker Safety Act (1978)
- Oil Pollution Act (1990)
- National VTS Regulations (1994)
VTS Center Services

- Information
  - Weather and waterway updates

- Traffic organization
  - Advance planning of vessel movements
  - Enforcing rules and regulations

- Navigational assistance
  - Assist mariners’ navigational decision-making
  - Provided to mariners on request, or when considered necessary by a VTS center
Traffic Management Activities

- Four levels
  - Monitor
  - Inform
  - Recommend
  - Direct
Inconsistent Understanding of Authority to Direct Traffic

- Monitor
- Inform
- Recommend
- Direct
San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, San Francisco, California
VTS Watchstander Intervention and Navigational Assistance

- Emphasis on being non-intrusive
- Conflicting statements on when and how to provide navigational assistance services
- Reluctance to intervene when unsure if something is unsafe
Sabine-Neches Canal, Port Arthur, Texas
Pilots’ Perceptions of VTS Watchstanders

- Generally satisfied with VTS system
- VTS watchstanders (at times) provide too much information
- VTS centers should not provide vessel maneuvering orders to mariners
Houston Ship Channel, Lower Galveston Bay, Texas
VTS System Limitations Affecting Watchstander Performance

• Early detection of unsafe traffic situations
  • VTS center monitoring of the bridge-to-bridge radio frequency
  • Display of vessel traffic data in VTS centers
Bridge-to-Bridge Radio Frequency

• Used by mariners to coordinate vessel meeting, crossing, and passing arrangements

• VTS watchstanders monitor this frequency to identify problems and help resolve communication errors
AIS Data Displays in VTS Centers

- A surveillance technology used in VTS centers
- Helps watchstanders monitor the movement of vessels on visual displays
- May not provide an accurate representation of certain types of vessel operations on the waterway