

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE  
FERRY OPERATIONS WORK GROUP MARCH 2019  
STREAMLINING COMMUNICATIONS ON VHF CHANNELS 13 AND 14**

**MEETING OUTLINE**

1. Introduction
  - a. Comments by Ferry Ops Work Group Chair, Tom Kirsch, Blue and Gold Fleet
  - b. Background
  - c. Structure of the meeting
  
2. Channel 14
  - a. Current operations
  - b. VTS/USCG comments
  - c. Open discussion
  
3. Channel 13
  - a. Current Operations
  - b. Open discussion
  
4. Related Issues
  - a. General
  - b. Specific
  
5. Next Step
  - a. Follow up emails
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting if needed
  - c. Presentation to the HSC of Work group findings and possible actions

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**WINTER ONE WAY WEEKDAY TRANSITS**

	SERVICE	AM (ONE WAY)	PM (ONE WAY)
<b>FERRY SERVICES</b>	Golden Gate		
	Larkspur	10	10
	Sausalito	3	6
	Tiburon	4	3
	SF Bay Ferry		
	Vallejo	7	7
	Alameda	9	9
	Oakland	9	9
	Bay Farm	4	5
	SSF	3	3
	Richmond	4	4
	Blue & Gold		
	Al/TIB/Sau	3	3
	Bay Cruise	2	6
	Alcatraz Cruises		
	Alcatraz	7	10
	Other Bay Destinations	2	
	Prop SF		
	Emeryville	2	2
	Redwood City		
	SSF		
	Alameda		
	Tideline		
	Berkeley	2	2
Bay Farm			
SSF			
Yellow Water Taxi			
Waterfront			
<b>TOUR SERVICES</b>	Red & White		
	Bay Cruise	2	2
	Hornblower		
	Bay Cruise		
	Commodore		
	Bay Cruise		
	Other "T" boat Tour Companies and smaller ops		
	A-Cat		
	Emerald Lady		
	Wine T		
Sub Total	73 or 146 Round trips	81 or 162 round trips	

- ❖ AM Over a 7 hour period about 21 per hour or < every 3 minutes
- ❖ PM over a 10 hour period 16 per hour or < every 4 minutes
- ❖ NOT Included:
  - Debris Reports
  - Whale Reports
  - Misc Reports
  - Deep draft reports

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Chart 18649 Current Ferry Routes including Scheduled tour routes



- Routes equals to as many as 29 Vessels on a given workday

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Comments

1. Introduction

- Welcome to this Ferry Operations Work Group to discuss Streamline options for use of VHF 13 and 14.
- My name is Tom Kirsch and I am a captain for Blue and Gold. B card at the sign in table
- My other role is the chairperson for the Ferry Operations work group on the SF Harbor Safety Committee

2. Reason for meeting

- I was approached by the HSC chairperson Capt. Lynn Korwatch. She mentioned feedback from the industry on the periodic congestion that occurs on these communication channels.
- I've initially divided the meeting into 3 segments: 1. Discuss channel 14, 2. Discuss channel 13, 3. Discuss other issues that arise
- As a captain, I have experienced the issue of radio congestion:
- Having to make a required sail plan call prior to departure at the same time other captains are.
- Converging on the same point having to make passing arrangements.
- Overall things seem to work themselves out, but how much longer can we rely on that
- And if you look at this more closely; it's a system reaching its effective limits

3. Table (channel 14)

- Looking at table one, shows the minimum number of calls on a given weekday required by ferry services and tour companies. It doesn't include any additional reports i.e., debris, whale, misc
- What are the most logical solutions to revise the reporting requirements
  - One call per shift
  - One call per transit, no second check in
  - No call for micro shift
  - Consolidated call i.e. FB to A & O

4. Chart (channel 13)

- Looking at the chart each color represents a ferry route or regular bay tour route.
- On a given weekday that will include 29 vessels and the 29 captains
- Any line that crosses or where lines converge represents a potential conflict and call
- An increase in the number of "blind" calls
- What are the most logical solutions to revise the reporting requirements
  - More protocols
  - Staging at the ferry building
  - Blind calls on different medium

# **FERRY OPERATIONS WORK GROUP MEETING**

**STREAMLINING COMMUNICATION ON VHF CHANNELS 13 & 14**

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**SIGN-IN SHEET**

NAME									
COMPANY									
EMAIL									

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Follow up notes

Notes from 3/27/19 Harbor Safety Committee: Ferry Operations Work Group Meeting

Thank you all for attending today's meeting and providing your input; it was really productive.

Overview

Passenger Ferry services have been growing significantly over the past few years. Subsequently, so have the number and length of calls to VTS; VHF channel 14. Also, the number and length of calls on VHF channel 13, bridge to bridge have increased. Often this can lead to congestion on the airway, especially at peak times when several vessels are departing at once or converging on the same area.

Purpose

The intent of the meeting was to hear from the industry on ways communication can be done more efficiently.

Ch 14

Although the Sail Plan call requirement to VTS will continue, the length of call can be greatly reduced.

- VTS can electronically transmit a symbol or information that appears on plotting software (Rosepoint) such as minimum wake requests.
- Captains can standardize sail plan language for regular or scheduled transits i.e., "Traffic, Hydrus: Ferry Building to Gateway, over."
- Ferry Service Operators can work with VTS and MTC to maintain a real time ferry schedule leading to sail plan codes identifying a specific sail plan i.e., "Traffic, Hydrus 601" where the code signifies the 1630 departure from the Ferry Building to Gateway"

Ch 13

Bridge to Bridge calls can become long or 'wordy' as captains use an informal vernacular or propensity to be overly polite. The length of call can be reduced thru more standardization.

- Captains can adhere more closely to established ferry lane protocols.
- Where possible, captains utilize Target Tracking on equipped RADAR and plotters
- When a call is necessary, the give way vessel initiates a call and passing arrangement
- A more standardize language can be introduced into daily operations i.e., "Port to Port" vs. "see ya on one" or "one whistle"

Again this was first meeting to begin the discussion. Please feel free to give me more input on the subject. The goal is to establish a format that can be adopted into our Best Management Practices which will be part of the Harbor Safety Plan and other operating protocols on the bay.