

Traffic Separation Zones

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A Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) is an area in the sea where navigation of ships is highly regulated. It is meant to create lanes in the water and ships in a specific lane are all going in (roughly) the same direction. A TSS is created in locations with dense shipping where ships can go in different directions and where there is a high risk of collisions.

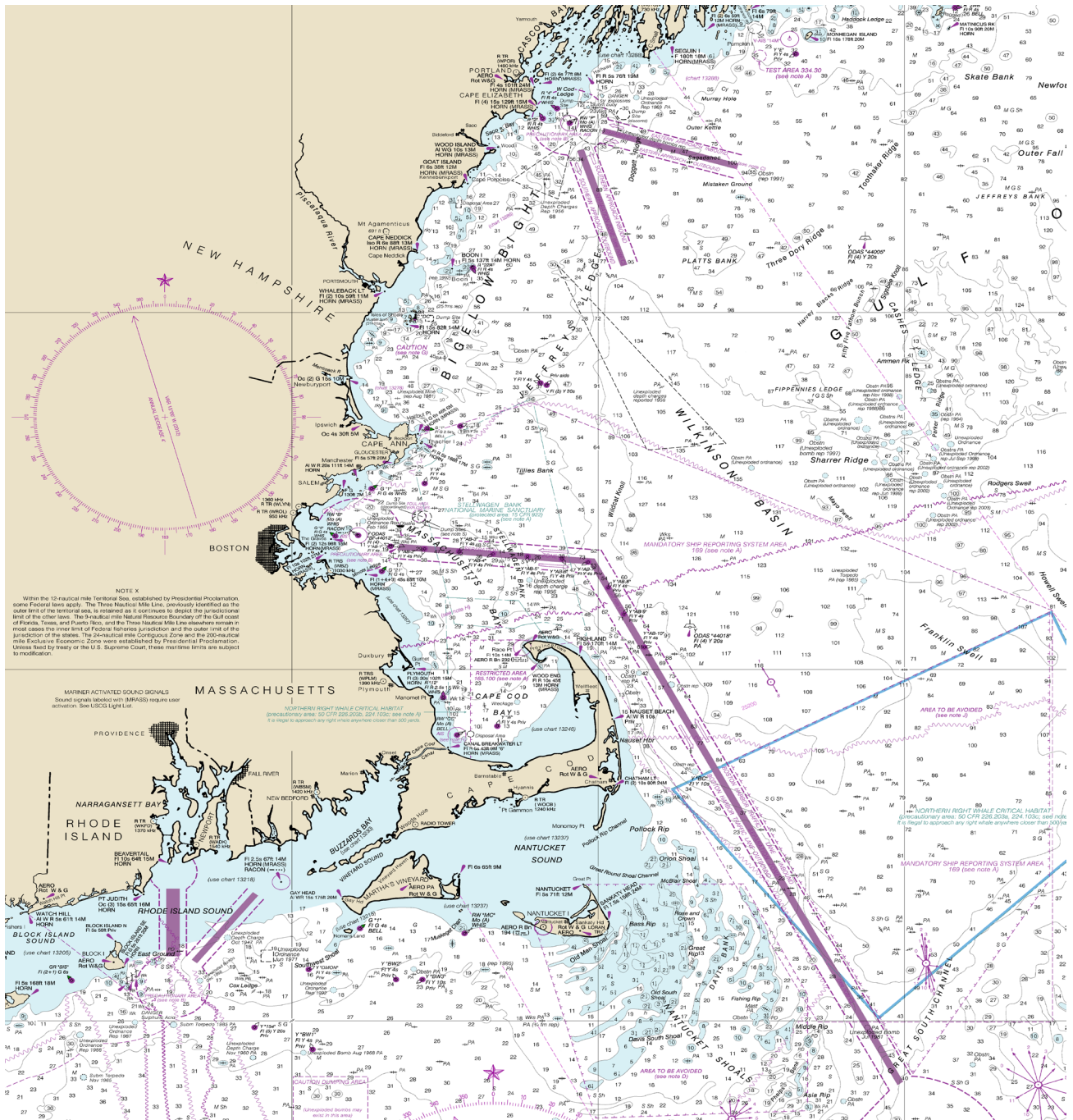
The TSS's are not marked by aids to navigation except for the whale watch buoys in the Boston zone.

A vessel using a traffic separation scheme shall:

- i. Proceed in the appropriate traffic lane in the general direction of traffic flow for that lane.
- ii. So far as is practicable keep clear of a traffic separation line or separation zone.
- iii. Normally join or leave a traffic lane at the termination of the lane, but when joining or leaving from either side shall do so at as small an angle to the general direction of traffic flow as practicable.

A vessel, shall so far as practicable, avoid crossing traffic lanes but if obliged to do so shall cross on a heading as nearly as practicable at right angles to the general direction of traffic flow

TSS zones for Boston, Narragansett Bay, and Portland are shown below from [Chart 13006](#).



Traffic Separation Schemes (Traffic Lanes) (317) to increase the safety of navigation, particularly in converging areas of high traffic density, routes incorporating traffic separation have been adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in certain areas of the world. In the interest of safe navigation, it is recommended that through traffic use these schemes, as far as circumstances permit, by day and by night and in all weather conditions. When approved or established, traffic separation scheme details are announced in [Notice to Mariners](#) and later depicted on appropriate charts and included in the U.S. [Coast Pilot](#). See [33 CFR 167, Chapter 2](#), for regulations. (318) The IMO is recognized as the only international body responsible for establishing and recommending measures on an international level

concerning ships' routing. In deciding whether or not to adopt or amend a traffic separation scheme, IMO will consider whether the scheme complies with the design criteria for traffic separation schemes and with the established methods of routing. IMO also considers whether the aids to navigation proposed will enable mariners to determine their position with sufficient accuracy to navigate the scheme in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea ([72 COLREGS](#)). (319) The IMO approved routing measures which affect shipping in or near U.S. waters are: (320) IMO-Approved Traffic Separation Routes Portland, Maine (approaches to) Boston, Massachusetts (approaches to) Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island.