

VATUSA (VATSIM – United States Division)

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SUBJECT: **VATUSA General Division Policy**

PURPOSE: To establish division-wide clarification on the VATSIM Code of Conduct (CoC) and Code of Regulations (CoR) in addition to the establishment of rules and procedures for common division operations. These policies are provided as a supplement to and a local implementation of the VATSIM Code of Conduct and Code of Regulations.

POLICY:

1) Emergencies and Hijackings

A. ATC may deny an emergency for any reason.

B. If an emergency is denied the pilot should resume normal flight. If unable to resume normal flight the pilot should log off the network immediately.

C. Simulation of the hijacking of any aircraft is a violation of VATSIM policy and will not be allowed at any time. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action as defined in the VATSIM Code of Regulations.

2) Use of the Guard Channel (121.5) and the ATC Channel(/)

A. Use of the Guard Channel (121.5) is prohibited at all times within VATUSA.

B. Use of the ATC Channel (/) is authorized under the following situations:

- Opening a ATC service position
- Closing a ATC service position
- In an emergency where a private message may not be received by the intended recipient(s) fast enough; such as, large events or inoperable inter-ARTCC coordination
- Controllers should consult local SOPs regarding the format of these messages

3) FSS Callsign Suffix

- A. Use of the _FSS suffix for other than Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) air traffic control services is not permitted within VATUSA airspace.
- B. FSS activities, which include weather and other advisories, serve no useful purpose in this environment and contribute to lag on the network.
- C. IFR control positions requiring exceptional geographic radio coverage such as oceanic control or other large areas may use the _FSS suffix as a callsign. This should be done only when necessary to permit sufficient radio coverage for IFR operations.
- D. The only permitted FSS callsigns in VATUSA are:
- ZAK_(INIT)_FSS
 - ZNY_(INIT)_FSS
 - ZHU_(INIT)_FSS
 - ZMA_(INIT)_FSS

4) Conflict Resolution

- A. To the extent possible, VATUSA strives to prevent conflicts and disputes from reaching a point that detracts from our activities or results in disciplinary action. It is not the intention of VATUSA be involved in "personality conflicts". However, if disputes become disruptive in nature, or if specific complaints are brought forward, the Division Conflict Resolution Manager (DCRM) may intervene.
- B. The DCRM will facilitate a method by which conflicts between VATUSA members can be mediated and compromise achieved, if possible.
- C. The DCRM may also intervene if there are disagreements or complaints about established policies and procedures, and will consider constructive comments offered by VATUSA division members. The DCRM may recommend changes or additions to other members of the VATUSA Division Staff for consideration.
- D. The VATUSA staff is encouraged to consult with the DCRM as a source of mediation.
- E. The DCRM will recommend disciplinary actions to appropriate personnel of VATSIM when other avenues have failed.

5) Aircraft Priority Handling

- A. No aircraft will be given priority over any other by virtue of its call sign, status, virtual passengers, or pilot flying the aircraft.
- B. VATUSA Controllers have the right to approve and allow special procedures for aircraft under their control within ARTCC and VATUSA policy and guidelines.
- C. Pilots should not expect any special treatment, queuing, or clearances over that of their fellow pilots. Pilots not familiar with this policy and demanding special treatment will be asked to conform to the policy and follow the controller's instructions.
- D. Failure on the pilot's part to follow ATC instructions as it relates to this policy will result in a call for a Supervisor to disconnect the pilot(s) should they interfere with normal ARTCC operations.

6) IVAO-VATSIM Transfer Policy

- A. Since VATUSA does not recognize ratings issued by the IVAO network, any current IVAO or former IVAO member requesting assignment in the VATUSA Division will be handled as any other new Division member.

7) VATUSA Staff Callsign Policy

- A. VATUSA staff members, when operating in an official capacity shall use their staff callsign when signed on to the Air Traffic Control client. Staff callsigns are identification to VATSIM members such as new students, controllers and pilots of those to whom they can go for questions, answers or issues.
- B. VATUSA Staff Callsigns (these are the ONLY VATUSA-related staff callsigns that will be recognized within VATUSA).
 - VATUSA Staff shall use their official VATUSA staff number. An example would be: VATUSA1 or VATUSA4.
 - Air Traffic Managers shall sign in as _ATM. An example would be: (Facility name)_ATM, ie: ZBW_ATM or BOS_ATM.

- Deputy Air Traffic Managers shall sign in as _DATM. An example would be: (Facility name)_DATM, ie: ZBQ_DATM.
- ARTCC Training Administrators shall sign in as _TA. An example would be: (Facility name)_TA, ie: ZAU_TA or JAX_TA.
- Instructors shall sign in as _INS. An example would be: (Facility name)_(Operating initials)_INS, ie: ZBW_JT_INS or BOS_JT_INS.
- Mentors shall sign in as _MTR. An example would be: (Facility name)_(Operating initials)_MTR, ie: ZDC_JT_MTR or DC_JT_MTR.
- TMU members shall sign in as USA_TMU. This callsign is used ONLY by identified TMU team members during VATUSA endorsed events.
- Event Coordinators shall sign in as _EC during ARTCC specific events only. This callsign should not be used at any time other than ARTCC or VATUSA endorsed events. An example would be: (Facility name)_EC, ie: ZAU_EC or HOU_EC.

8) ATM Replacement Guidelines

- A. Resigning ARTCC ATMs shall submit resignations directly to their Air Traffic Director (Region specific).
- B. Upon notification from the retiring ATM, the VATUSA membership will be notified that applications are being accepted to fill the vacant position via the VATUSA webpage and any pertinent forums.
- C. In the event the current DATM is not selected as the replacement, the DATM should submit a resignation to the incoming ATM when selection is complete. The incoming ATM may elect to either accept the resignation and choose a new DATM, or refuse the resignation and ask the current DATM to remain in the position.
- D. Members from within the affected ARTCC will be given first consideration for appointment. Only after all attempts have failed to find a qualified replacement from within the ARTCC should applications be considered from other candidates.
- E. To be considered, applicants shall have attained a rating of Controller (C1) or higher.

F. The retiring ATM will be consulted as to the best-qualified individuals within the ARTCC that should be considered. Optionally, a retiring ATM may also be asked to comment on any or all applications received. (Exception in 8-H)

G. The Air Traffic Director will nominate an ATM replacement to the VATUSA Director and Deputy Director for approval. Once approved the VATUSA Director and/or Deputy Director will notify the VATUSA Communications Manager for announcement.

H. In the event an ARTCC ATM vacates the position in an unacceptable manner, or is removed for cause, the outgoing ATM forfeits any and all privileges to either make recommendations for or offer consultation regarding a successor.

9) ARTCC Transfers

A. Any VATUSA controller may request a transfer out of their existing ARTCC to another ARTCC using the VATUSA password-protected "Transfer Request Form" on the VATUSA website.

B. The ARTCC ATM of the requested ARTCC reserves the right to accept or refuse (with cause) any and all transfers to his ARTCC from any outside ARTCC, VATSIM Division, or VATSIM Region. "Cause" is defined by a current VATUSA/ARTCC approved policy.

C. The ARTCC ATM shall submit his decision using the VATUSA automated Transfer Approval/Denial system in the "ATMs' Secure Site" of the VATUSA website.

D. The ARTCC ATM reserves the right to propose his ARTCC Transfer policies governing controllers transferring from outside of his ARTCC. Each ARTCC's transfer policy is subject to the approval of the responsible VATUSA Air Traffic Director. No amendments of such policies may be made without the approval of the appropriate Air Traffic Director. In order to refuse a transfer with cause, an ARTCC must have a posted policy (displayed in a public part of their ARTCC website) addressing controller transfer requirements and procedures. Those ARTCC's not wishing to establish a transfer policy shall be considered "open to transfers", thus having no right of refusal.

E. No individual may transfer ARTCC's more than once within a contiguous 90-day period. This excludes new controllers that opt to leave an ARTCC that they selected when first joining VATUSA. In such cases, the request must be made within 30 days of initial ARTCC assignment and subsequent transfers may not be requested for 90 days.

F. ATMs are encouraged to discuss transfer requests amongst themselves to evaluate a request before approving or refusing with cause.

G. All transfer refusals shall also be sent to the appropriate VATUSA Air Traffic Director (by the automated system) to insure that the refusal is in compliance with published transfer policies.

H. All transfer requests will be processed as expeditiously as possible. At the discretion of the appropriate Air Traffic Director, transfer requests may be approved or denied by the Air Traffic Director if the ARTCC ATM has not processed a decision within 14 days of the original request submission date. Transfer requests not processed within 21 days may be accepted or denied by the VATUSA Director (or his designee).

I. Refused transfers may be contested by the requesting individual provided a review is requested within 14 days of receipt of notification of the transfer refusal. The review request must be presented to the VATUSA Division Conflicts Resolution Manager (DCRM) for a complete investigation and final ruling.

J. VATUSA controllers who are within the 90 day transfer window are not eligible to apply for visiting controller privileges at the ARTCC to which they wish to transfer with the exception of controllers who applied to be a visiting controller at that facility at least 30 days prior to the transfer request - any other exceptions may only be made in written form by an Air Traffic Director and the receiving Air Traffic Manager. In the event of such a written exception, the Division Director and/or Deputy Director shall be notified.

10) Roster Removal and Reinstatement

A. Controllers who do not provide air traffic control services within their assigned ARTCC for a specified period of time may be removed from that ARTCC's list of active or visiting controllers. Facility ATMs should retain information on these controllers' certifications for a period of one year after the last recorded date of their air traffic control service activity.

B. Controllers who are dropped from an ARTCC's controller roster, or from their list of approved visiting controllers due to inactivity, and who return to control at that facility within six months of the last recorded date of their air traffic control service activity, may return with the same rights/certifications as when they left, and shall not be required to re-certify on the position before providing air traffic control services. Such controllers should however notify the ARTCC ATM of their intent to return, and familiarize themselves with any SOP/LOA changes that have been put into place since their last air traffic control services activity.

C. Controllers who leave a facility for more than six months but less than one year may be required, at the discretion of the ARTCC ATM, to undergo OTS evaluation(s) to demonstrate that they have retained the ability to provide air traffic control services in that airspace before being allowed to return with the same certifications as before.

D. Controllers who leave a facility for more than one year lose the automatic right to control at that facility and if they return, will retain their controller rating (S1/S3/C1/C3), but may be required by the ARTCC ATM to undergo the same certification process required of visiting controllers to again control at that facility

11) Website/Forum Access, Permissions and Usage

A. Access and use of the VATUSA website and forum(s) are a privilege extended to members in good standing of the VATUSA/VATSIM network. All members are required to abide by all currently applicable requirements of the VATSIM Codes of Regulation and Conduct as well as the User Agreement in exercising their privileges of use.

B. The VATUSA password which you have selected, or has been provided to you is your exclusive VATUSA membership identification. You may not give permission or knowingly allow your identification and password to be used by anyone else.

C. The VATUSA Website contains several secure areas whose access is granted only to certain individuals. You may not attempt to gain access to these areas without specific authorization to do so. Any attempt to gain access without such authorization will be viewed as a malicious act and will be dealt with in accordance with all applicable VATSIM/VATUSA disciplinary authority up to and including permanent banishment from the VATSIM network.

D. All files and information contained in a Secure Area of this website are considered confidential in nature and as such, may not knowingly be transferred, shared or otherwise made known to any person or persons not authorized to view such. Examples of secure files would include but are not limited to website software, code segments, personnel files, documents, email message, forum posts, etc. designated as Secured Material or otherwise located in a Secure Area. Knowingly transferring or sharing these materials without specific authorization to do so will be viewed as a malicious act and will be dealt with in accordance with all applicable VATSIM/VATUSA disciplinary measures up to and including permanent banishment from the VATSIM network.