Vancouver Area Control Centre
Standard Operating Procedures

1. **Purpose:** This order provides direction and guidance for the day-to-day operation of the Vancouver Area Control Centre (VACC). Centre controllers shall familiarize themselves with the provisions of this order as they pertain to their responsibilities and area of specialization.

2. **Airspace:** The Vancouver Area Control Centre is responsible for all airspace in the Vancouver FIR, excluding that of Comox MTCA, Victoria Terminal, and Vancouver Terminal when those units are in operation. A large portion of the airspace covers the Rocky Mountains, which results in exceptionally high MEAs and MRVAs. Be very attentive to the minimum safe altitudes when vectoring traffic, and remember there is no radar coverage in the tighter valleys, so radar vectors below 15,000 ft are generally not available.

3. **Oceanic Transfers:** When San Francisco Radio (ZAK_E_FSS) is online, VACC and the FSS coordinate traffic.

- **Domestic to Oceanic:** VACC is normally responsible for obtaining an Oceanic Clearance prior to the aircraft departing CZVR or overflying an CZVR and then entering oceanic airspace.

    - The request for clearance shall consist of the callsign, Transfer Control Point (TCP) or first oceanic fix, cruise altitude, and estimated time the flight will reach the TCP fix or FIR boundary.

      Examples:

        - If entering oceanic airspace at a transfer control point, "OC ACA33 DOLFF FL360 2312Z"
        - If entering oceanic airspace on a random route: "OC, ACA1028 46N30 FL320 0450Z" (aircraft will enter FSS at N46-00.0 W130-00.0)

    - Send the request via private text.

    - If the clearance is approved by the FSS, the approval will consist of the callsign and the controller's operating initials. It may also include a clearance time, if the oceanic controller needs it to delay arrival into oceanic airspace.

      If the approval includes a clearance time, it will look like this (initials may or not appear):

      "ACA33 2340Z <initials>"

In this case, delay the aircraft's arrival into oceanic airspace so that the aircraft does not enter oceanic airspace earlier than the time specified in the clearance.

If the flight's estimated time of control turnover should become more than 5 minutes different from the clearance time, VACC must obtain a revised clearance. Example: "ACA33, was DOLFF 2312Z, now 2320Z". The FSS may accept or amend the clearance as necessary.

San Francisco Radio may waive the above requirements from time to time and request that aircraft communications be transferred without VACC obtaining/relaying a clearance.

Prior to the aircraft reaching the transfer control point, release the aircraft to Oceanic. Since the FSS is not a radar position, do not use the radar client handoff feature to turn aircraft over to the FSS. The FSS needs no interphone call, if no special conditions exist and the aircraft is within five minutes of the estimated TCP time. Just issue the frequency change to the aircraft. Specifically, the following actions should be taken to handoff aircraft:

- Advise the aircraft they are entering the oceanic airspace.
- Issue a beacon code of 2000.
- Terminate surveillance services.
- Issue a frequency change.

Example: CZVR_CTR: "Air Canada 33, entering the oceanic airspace. Squawk 2000. Surveillance services terminated. Report position to San Francisco Radio on 131.95."

- **Oceanic To Domestic**

  VACC controllers can expect San Francisco Radio to advise CZVR via private text of incoming traffic.

  From: https://pacificoceanic.vatsim.net/docs/Endorsement.pdf:

  > *8.2 Coordination between Oceanic and Continental/Domestic control units.*
  >
  > *Oceanic sectors must provide coordination to continental/domestic sectors in accordance with published policies of the respective Agreement parties. In situations where a policy does not specify coordination requirements, coordination for aircraft passing from an oceanic sector to a continental/domestic sector shall entail provision of an estimate and level to the continental/domestic sector, no less than 15 minutes prior to the aircraft's estimate for the sector boundary.*

  Since there is no LOA with ZAK, the last sentence in the section above applies.

  Ref: https://pacificoceanic.vatsim.net/docs/ZAK_SOP_OCT2012.pdf

4. Transfers With Adjacent Domestic Sectors: Transfers to adjacent sectors are handled normally, except:

- The standard descent clearance for flights to CYYC is FL240 prior to initiating handoff (there is no LOA, but this is the practice).
- Traffic from the U.S. is on a different system, and handoffs are not normally counted as a surveillance identification method. Treat traffic from Anchorage and overflights from Seattle as targets requiring identification.
- Traffic from the northern border with Edmonton is considered procedural and not surveillance identified. Treat traffic from along the northern border with Edmonton as targets requiring identification.
- Treat arrivals from the Eastern border with Edmonton as already identified, even if Edmonton Centre is offline.
- Traffic arriving from Seattle already in descent for the Vancouver Terminal airspace get special handling - treat them as already identified, even if Seattle Center is offline.

Subject	Authorized	Date
Oceanic, adjacent	Brad Crockett	April 22, 2020
Minor Revisions	Brad Crockett	February 14, 2019
Minor Revisions	Tomas Hansson	March 23, 2016
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