Vancouver FIR

Controller Policies and Procedures

Revision 3.1

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1. General

This document provides supplemental policies governing the operation of the Vancouver FIR.

1.1. Audio Hardware

ATC is primarily about communication. A microphone is highly recommended as this will permit you to be understood over the Vatsim network, the pilot's hardware setup, and any ambient sound. You do not need to buy a headset that is hundreds of dollars, there are lots of affordable headsets or microphones that will do the job. However, if you are trying to use a laptop microphone or wireless earbuds it may not be understandable. Don't expect to go online if your instructor is unable to assess your performance due to poor mic quality.

1.2. Visiting Controllers

We welcome visiting controllers from both within and outside of VATCAN. As per VATSIM policy, all visiting controllers must adhere to the same policies as regular controllers. Controllers may apply through the VATCAN website. An orientation and/or written exam will be required before visiting controllers are put on the roster and obtain a solo endorsement for any position in the FIR. Details as to CZVR's Visitor Induction Policy may be found in the CZVR Training Standards document.

1.3. Adaptation of Real-World Procedures

To provide the best available services to our global community of pilots, the following rules apply.

1.3.1. VFR Flights Under IMC Conditions - Every pilot can set "Clear Skies" in their simulator hence we cannot close an airport due to bad weather. Advise pilots of the weather conditions but do not deny services.

1.3.2. Simulation of Tower Closures During Night Time - Since VATSIM is a global environment where both pilots and controllers are in different time zones, we will never close ground or tower just to follow real-world procedures.

1.3.3. Runway Assignments - We should attempt to accommodate requests to depart from a non-standard runway and educate pilots on how the FIR operates in reality. This is always traffic permitting. Advise the pilot of any anticipated delays, for example: "Runway 13 for departure, expect a 20-minute delay for arriving/ departing traffic. Be advised this runway is only used in extreme weather."

1.3.4. NOTAMs - Any real-world NOTAMs can be supported at the controller's discretion and the pilot's acceptance.

2. Controller Conduct

2.1. Member Behaviour

CZVR members must recognize they represent their CZVR throughout the VATSIM network. This includes VATSIM and VATCAN related discords, flying as a pilot, and home or visiting controlling. All CZVR members are expected to be respectful, kind, and courteous through all of their VATSIM interactions and to adhere to the VATSIM CoC and User Agreement at all times.

2.2. Minimum Length of Login

Pilots will look for signed-on controllers when they decide where to fly. They understand that the longer a controller has been logged on, the more likely they are to disconnect by the time they load their sim and connect.

Do not log on if you do not plan on staying connected for at least 45 minutes. This excludes any unforeseen events that come up in real life. The 45 minutes need to be continuous on the same position (e.g. Vancouver Ground) unless you move to a higher position when it is vacated (e.g. Vancouver Tower). Except for events, a controller may not move from one facility to another within 45 minutes.

2.3.   Activity Requirements

For CZVR home and visiting controllers the minimum activity requirements are:

2.3.1. Home and Visiting Controllers (S1-C1, C3, I1, I3): 3 hours per calendar quarter.

2.3.2. When changes are made to any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the form of SOP document changes or Virtual Aeronautical Information Circulars (vAICs), all of which will be announced and published both on the CZVR website and the CZVR Discord server, controllers must read the relevant changes prior to controlling the relevant positions.

2.3.3. A controller may be marked inactive in the event that they fail to meet the requirements for any given calendar quarter without a LOA. Once marked as inactive you will be notified by email. You will need to recertify with an instructor prior to connecting to the VATSIM network. This recertification will be done so as to not disrupt the training waitlist and will not necessarily be prioritized.

2.3.4. A controller may be removed from the roster at the discretion of the CZVR Executive team after missing two consecutive quarters without any form of communication being received by the CZVR Executive team from the controller.

2.4.   Leave of Absence

Controllers may request a Leave of Absence for extenuating circumstances requiring the activity requirements to be suspended. This may or may not be granted by the CZVR Executive Staff based on a variety of factors.

Upon returning from an LOA the CZVR Executive team reserves the right to impose a recertification process. If recertification is deemed necessary after an approved LOA this will be prioritized by the training team.

2.5.   Sign-On Procedure

Always check in on both Teamspeak and as an Observer before signing on to an active position. Get a proper briefing both from controllers above and below before switching callsign to an active position. Do not rely on VatSpy or similar traffic tools to determine if a position is active as they have a delayed feed and often do not update

properly. Stay on Teamspeak while in an active position. We have dedicated controlling voice rooms if the lobby is not appropriate.

Radar controllers must announce on the ATC channel when you sign on.

2.6.   Shift Change Briefings

Before soliciting briefings from controllers above and below you, check the current ATIS to determine the current runway configuration at the airport that you will control and the current ATIS letter. If you are taking over ATIS, use the same letter in the alphabet when setting up the ATIS. In the briefing itself, discuss the status of any aircraft that will be under your control including any amendments or non-standard items.

When taking over the same position (e.g. Centre), log in with a number in the callsign. A Centre controller relieving another will log in with the callsign CZVR_1_CTR and use the same primary frequency. As the new controller is briefed on every aircraft that will fall under his control, do a manual transfer in the radar client.

2.7.   Sign-Off Procedure

Before signing off, check on Teamspeak and Discord to see if there is a controller interested in the position. If there is no controller above you and no controller will take over the position, inform each aircraft individually that you are signing off.

2.8.   Appropriate Use of the .wallop Command

In the case where you as a controller feel you need to get in touch with a supervisor, you would use the .wallop command in the text box of your radar client. It does not matter what frequency this is used. You will also need to include a brief message regarding what you need help with.

Most often, this will be used if you have a pilot who is being disruptive. Examples of this are as follows:

2.8.1.   A pilot who is blocking transmissions on a frequency by keeping their mic open and talking and is not responsive to requests to stop.

2.8.2.   A pilot who is using vulgar, abusive, or hateful language towards another Vatsim member.

2.8.3.   A pilot who is intentionally spawning on a runway, trying to fly into other aircraft, or in any way attempting to use their aircraft to be disruptive and has not heeded communications to cease this behavior.

2.8.4.   If a pilot is in the air and unresponsive for longer than 30 minutes, or is causing conflict with other aircraft.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. The intention of contacting a supervisor is not to get someone banned or kicked but to resolve a situation peacefully so that all members can enjoy the network. Once you contact the supervisor in this way they will reach out to you and the pilot. If unable to resolve the situation, the supervisor may decide to kick or ban, however, it is unnecessary to advocate for this. Simply provide your recount of the events that led you to contact a supervisor. In most situations, this should be done with the aircraft still on the network. Otherwise, the supervisor may have limited ability to do anything to help.

2.9.   Position Restrictions

No controller is allowed to sign on a position they are not cleared for unless being directly monitored by a CZVR Mentor or Instructor. A current list of position endorsements is always posted on the CZVR website. The "In Training" indicator on the controller page is *not* an endorsement for a position.

The following positions are restricted from use unless for the purposes of training, events, or at the approval of a CZVR executive staff member:

2.9.1.   CYVR_A_GND (Apron Control),

2.9.2.   CYVR_R_APP (ILS Monitor),

2.9.3.   CYVR_DEP (Departure) without another controller covering CYVR_APP's (Arrival's) airspace,

2.9.4.   CYVR_F_CTR (Pacific Radio) without another controller covering CZVR_CTR's (Centre's) airspace,

2.9.5.   CYVR_P_GND (Pad Control) without another controller covering CYVR_GND,

2.9.6. Any other GND (Ground), TWR (Tower), DEP (Departure), APP (Arrival), or CTR (CTR) split without another controller covering the rest of that position's airspace. All combined position frequencies can be found in the relevant SOPs.

2.10. Tier 2 Positions

No controller is allowed to sign on a tier 2 restricted position without a tier 2 endorsement, tier 2 solo endorsement, or under supervision of an instructor. The following positions (and all of their sub-positions) are considered to be tier 2 restricted as well as the minimum rating needed to start training on said position:

2.10.1. CYVR_TWR (S1 with a tower solo)

2.10.2. CYVR_DEP (S2 with an arrival solo)

2.10.3. CYVR_APP (S2 with an arrival solo)

2.10.4. CZVR_CTR (S3)

2.10.5. All AAS/RAAS positions (S1 with a tower solo)

2.11. Long Shifts

While controllers are encouraged to spend as much time as they want controlling on the network, regular usage of a position for an extended period of time can tie up that position's availability for other controllers. This is especially the case for positions such as CYVR_DEL where it is one of only two delivery positions in the FIR.

2.11.1. If your controlling session on a single position exceeds four (4) hours in length, a "relief" message must be posted in #atc-flight-coordination channel in our discord server where the position is offered to any other controllers interested in taking over.

2.11.2. Subsequent relief messages must be posted every 60 minutes.

2.11.3. Only the first relief message must include an @ATC Online ping.

2.11.4. If another controller elects to take over, you may switch to any other position in the FIR you are certified for.

2.11.5. Scheduled positions during events or OTS's are exempt from this policy.

2.11.6. Approval may be requested from any of the FIR Executive Staff for an extended shift that exceeds 4 hours without needing to offer the position to another controller.

> Example initial message text: *"@ATC Online, Relief message for CZVR_CTR if anyone wants to take over."*

> Example subsequent message text: *"Hourly relief message for CZVR_CTR if anyone wants to take over."*

3. Staff Regulations

3.1. General Staff, Instructor, and Mentor Requirements

All applicants for a staff position at CZVR must meet the rating criteria and must have a clean VATSIM record (no minor infractions in the last 6 months and no major infractions in the last 24 months). The following staff positions are available at the Vancouver FIR:

3.1.1.   FIR Chief (FC) - Responsible for day-to-day operations of the FIR. In the absence of a Chief Instructor, the Chief is primarily responsible for all ATC training in the FIR. The FC represents the FIR's interests on the VATCAN Executive Committee. *Appointed by the VATCAN Division Director.*

3.1.2.   Deputy FIR Chief (DFC) - Assists the FC in all matters related to the day-to-day operations of the FIR. Primarily responsible for roster and Visiting Controller supervision. The DFC takes over FC's responsibilities in the absence of the FC. *Appointed by the FC. Subject to final approval by the VATCAN Division Director.*

3.1.3.   Chief Instructor (CI) - Primarily responsible for all training, exam assignments, and promotions in the FIR. *Jointly appointed by the FC and VATCAN Training Director - Minimum C1 VATSIM Rating and eligible to upgrade to an I1 VATSIM rating. An Assistant Chief Instructor (AEC) may be recommended by the CI and appointed by the FC.*

3.1.4.   Instructor - Assists the CI with all training. *Jointly appointed by the FC, CI, and VATCAN Training Director - Minimum I1 VATSIM rating.*

3.1.5. Mentor - Assists the Instructors with all training. Recommends students for position endorsements and exams. Can only train at positions lower than his rating (i.e. Mentors with S3 rating can teach Delivery, Ground, and Tower). *Jointly appointed by the FC and CI.*

3.1.6. Events Coordinator (EC) - Organizes all events in the FIR. Liaisons with Virtual Airlines and neighboring ARTCCs/FIRs. Responsible for maintenance of event sign-up pages, website graphics, write-ups, and supervising events. *Appointed by the FC. An Assistant Events Coordinator (AEC) may be recommended by the EC and appointed by the FC.*

3.1.7. Facility Engineer (FE) - Keeps all radar client sector files current. Monitors changes in real-world procedures and notifies the FIR of updates. *Appointed by the FC.*

3.1.8. Webmaster (WM) - Keeps the website current. Processes all new user registrations on the website within 12 hours of receipt. Ensures all updates to the website are promptly posted. Works under the guidance of the FC to enhance and maintain the website functionality. *Appointed by the FIR Chief. Additional FIR members may be jointly appointed by the FC and WM to form a web team to assist the WM in day-to-day operations.*

3.2. Instructor and Mentor Connection Procedures

When connecting as an instructor while not also controlling, connect to the same facility as the student, not above, unless there is an active controller at that upper level. Connecting alone above your student will be misleading for pilots. For example, connecting as _TWR when the student is on _GND will make it appear on VATSIM connection sites (VatSpy, Vattastic, etc.) as though a position is staffed when it is not.

Instructors not controlling shall connect with a (CYVR/CZVR)_I_(position) callsign.

Example Instructor Connection: *CZVR_I_CTR*

Mentors not controlling shall connect with a (CYVR/CZVR)_M_(position) callsign.

Example Instructor Connection: *CYVR_M_TWR*

3.3. Student Promotions

Training progression for all students will follow the outlined training syllabus defined in the CZVR Training Standards document. The latest version of this document can be found on the CZVR website. Supplemental documentation regarding the training process may also be found on the VATCAN website and the VATSIM Global Controller Administration Policy.

For all promotions (S2, S3, and C1), the student must pass a VATCAN written test and an Over The Shoulder (OTS) examination administered by a CZVR Instructor. Training on the next higher position after a consolidation period of 25 hours logged on the network by the student with their new position after a posted promotion or at the discretion of the student's assigned instructor.

The FIR Chief or the Chief Instructor can waive certain requirements in exceptional cases (for example, a real-world Air Traffic Controller).

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Revision History

Version	Subject	Authorized	Date
3.1	Added additional clarification to restricted positions, fixed typos	Josh Jenkins	February 1, 2024
3.0	Major changes to comply with VATSIM GCAP	Josh Jenkins	December 28, 2023
2.1	Change to long shift policy	Josh Jenkins	September 14, 2023
2.0	Major Revision to align with FIR branding, activity requirements, controller conduct	Emily Wyatt	November 13, 2022
1.10	Text for Complicated Transmissions, shift changes allowed for events, monitoring by instructors	Brad Crockett	May 7, 2021
1.9	.wallop guidance	Brad Crockett	March 7, 2021
1.8	Clarified squawk codes for aircraft arriving from unstaffed sectors	Brad Crockett	December 7, 2020
1.7	Use of "Break", verb/adverb order	Brad Crockett	November 29, 2020
1.6	Audio hardware	Brad Crockett	November 28, 2020
1.5	Staff rating requirements, connection requirements	Brad Crockett	November 24, 2020
1.4	Separated login and activity, keep same ATIS letter, revised signoff, revised runway assignments	Brad Crockett	July 4, 2020
1.3	Added simulation of handoff from unstaffed sectors	Brad Crockett	October 13, 2018
1.2	Revision	Brad Crockett	July 4, 2018
1.1	Revision	Brad Crockett	May 14, 2018
1.0	Initial	Tomas Hansson	January 7, 2017