Area Control Centre Operating Procedures

Revision 2.0

Vancouver FIR

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1. General

This SOP provides direction and guidance for the day-to-day operation of the Vancouver Area Control Centre (VACC) within the Vancouver FIR (CZVR).

2. Airspace

The VACC 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.

3.1. Domestic to Oceanic

VACC is normally responsible for obtaining an Oceanic Clearance (OC) at least 30 minutes prior to an aircraft entering oceanic airspace for overflights/departures from within CZVR, or as soon as practicable once the aircraft becomes airborne.

3.1.1. 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.

Example: If entering oceanic airspace at a transfer control point, *"OC ACA33 DOLFF FL360 2312Z"*

Example: If entering oceanic airspace on a random route: *"OC ACA1028 46N30 FL320 0450Z" (aircraft will enter FSS at N46-00.0 W130-00.0)*

3.1.2. Send the request via private text.

3.1.3. 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:

Example: *"ACA33 2340Z <initials>"*

Acknowledge with your initials to complete the coordination.

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 3 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 (KZAK) 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 KZAK. 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 5 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: *"Air Canada 33, entering the oceanic airspace. Squawk 2000. Surveillance services terminated. Report position to San Francisco Radio on 131.95."*

If KZAK is offline, you shall instead clear the aircraft enroute but with all the other elements.

> Example: *"Air Canada 33, entering the oceanic airspace. Squawk 2000. Surveillance services terminated. Cleared enroute frequencies."*

3.2. Oceanic to Domestic

VACC controllers can expect San Francisco Radio to advise CZVR via private text of incoming traffic at least 30 minutes prior to the TCP. If no changes are required, respond with your initials. KZAK will advise if the aircraft's ETA over the TCP changes by more than 3 minutes. Expect a voice handoff 5 minutes prior to the aircraft crossing the TCP.

4. Transfers With Adjacent Domestic Sectors

Transfers to adjacent sectors are handled normally, except:

4.1.1. Treat overflights from Seattle as targets requiring identification.

4.1.2. 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.

4.1.3. Treat arrivals from the Eastern border with Edmonton as already identified even if Edmonton Centre is offline.

4.1.4. Treat arrivals from the Northern border with Anchorage as already identified even if Anchorage Centre is offline.

4.1.5. Do not issue descents for traffic inbound to CYYC. If an aircraft requests descent and both CZEG_FSS/CTR and CYYC_APP are offline, switch the aircraft to UNICOM for descent unless a traffic conflict is anticipated.

4.1.6. 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.

5. CPDLC

5.1. General

Controllers may accept a CPDLC logon request at any time, including prior to departure. However, CPDLC may only be utilized above FL285. Note that PDC is considered ACARS which is distinct from CPDLC. Centre controllers may issue PDCs using their CPDLC logon ID.

When utilizing CPDLC, ensure your controller details include your logon code.

Example: *CPDLC - CZVR*

PDCs sent through the Hoppie software should be done using the free text option. You can copy the text into the Hoppie client the same way you would normally send a PDC through PMs using the CZVR Scope plugin.

CPDLC should only be used for non-time critical functions. CPDLC does not give the pilot the authority to stop monitoring voice. If an aircraft does not acknowledge a CPDLC message within 5 minutes, attempt to reach the aircraft via voice.

5.2. [Reserved for Future Use]

5.3. [Reserved for Future Use]

Revision History

Version	Subject	Authorized	Date
2.0	Branding, revised oceanic procedures to comply with KZAK SOPs, revised adjacent transfers to update with current LOAs, added CPDLC	Josh Jenkins	June 25, 2025
1.3	Oceanic, adjacent	Brad Crockett	April 22, 2020
1.2	Minor Revisions	Brad Crockett	February 14, 2019
1.1	Minor Revisions	Tomas Hansson	March 23, 2016
1.0	Initial	Daniel Oordt	May 12, 2015