

**VIRTUAL AIR TRAFFIC SIMULATION NETWORK
UNITED STATES DIVISION
Virtual Denver ARTCC (ZDV) Organization Policy
Effective Date:
June 1, 2016**

The following pages contain information that pertains to the operation of the Virtual Denver ARTCC (ZDV) on VATSIM, the Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network. It is not for use in any real world application.

The purpose of this notice is to provide a means of consistency with regards to the operation of the Virtual Denver ARTCC on VATSIM. It provides information for all members of the ARTCC, from prospective students to active students, regular controllers, training staff members, and the ARTCC administrators.

All revisions and bulletins associated with this document will be maintained on the List of Changes within this document. The most current revision will be maintained on the ZDV website. In the event of a new revision, old revisions should be deleted or archived.

In the event a situation is not covered by this SOP, action to resolve the situation should be taken with respect for the VATSIM Code of Conduct (CoC) and VATSIM Global Ratings Policy (GRP). Exercise good judgment when such situations occur.

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I. Membership

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A. General

ZDV accepts two types of membership:

- ZDV-Based Controller
 - Members listed on the official Virtual Denver ARTCC (ZDV) roster located at vatusa.net.
 - Trained by ZDV Training Staff for the purpose of rating and endorsement obtainment.
- Visiting Controller
 - Members listed on the ZDV roster located at <http://denartcc.org> under "Visiting Controllers"
 - Trained by their home ARTCC for the purpose of rating obtainment. Trained by ZDV Training Staff for purpose of endorsement obtainment.

The following terms apply when talking about ZDV membership:

- General Membership
 - Includes all members not designated as a staff member.
- Staff
 - Includes all training staff members, and ARTCC positions listed on the official ZDV roster at <http://vatusa.net>.

B. Joining Process

To join as a ZDV-Based Controller:

- Go to <https://www.vatusa.net/info/join>

- Follow the steps to join the ZDV ARTCC.
- Upon receipt of the ZDV welcome e-mail follow the steps in First Steps after Joining document.
- To transfer into ZDV or become a Visiting Controller: Refer to the ZDV Transfer and Visiting Controller Policy.
 - To join ZDV you must:
 - Not have transferred ARTCCs within the previous contiguous 90-day period unless you are a new controller that is opting to leave your initial ARTCC that you selected when first joining VATSIM. In such cases, the request must be made within 30 days of initial ARTCC assignment.
 - Have a clean VATSIM disciplinary record
 - Have no history of being removed from any ARTCC, FIR, or ACC due to inactivity more than once within the preceding 12 months.
 - Have a foreseeable availability to train and control.
 - Have a mature, responsible and constructive attitude.
 - Be in compliance with all VATSIM regulations including, but not limited to:
 - Using your real and full name.
 - Having no history of duplicate accounts.
 - Having no history of being removed due to inactivity from ZDV within the preceding 6 months.
 - Not having any record of repeated noncompliance with Denver ARTCC policies.
 - VATSIM members who do not meet one of the above criteria, but believe they should be considered nonetheless, can request a waiver by sending an e-mail to info@denartcc.org in which they include:
 - Their full name.
 - Their VATSIM CID.
 - The section of this policy they wish to have waived.
 - The situation that resulted in noncompliance with the section. v. and why they believe they should get a waiver.
 - Any other relevant information.
 - Transfer applicants who do not meet two or more of the above criteria shall not have their request approved.
 - Members who are found to have submitted untruthful information in their ARTCC transfer request are subject to immediate removal and loss of any ZDV endorsements.

C. Member Activity Requirement

- ZDV – Based and Visiting Controllers shall be considered for removal from the ZDV roster if the VATSIM Statistics Center does not show a minimum of sixty (60) consecutive minutes on a ZDV control position within the last thirty (30) days. Controllers with a Denver ATCT, D01 TRACON or Denver Center endorsement are encouraged to control a minimum of sixty (60) consecutive minutes on the highest level allowed by their endorsements to stay current in Designated Airspace procedures.
 - An observer callsign is not considered a control position.
- New students and transfer controllers must complete the steps found in the First Steps after Joining document within the first two weeks of being added to the ZDV roster or will be subject to removal.
- OBS-rated members must log sixty (60) minutes of training every 30 days, or their membership may be considered for termination.

D. Roster Removal

- A member will be removed from the ZDV roster if:
 - His or her LOA expires and the member remains inactive. (see Section I-E below).
- A member may also be removed from the ZDV roster as a result of:
 - Suspension from VATSIM due to an incident while online.
 - Violations of the VATSIM Code of Conduct (CoC).
 - Staffing an unendorsed position on the VATSIM servers.
 - Frequent connections as a controller on the VATSIM servers with sessions lengths of less than 30 minutes.
 - Repeated accounts of negative feedback received for being rude or unfriendly.

E. Leave of Absence (LOA)

- An option to take up to two (2) leave of absences per year is offered to all ZDV-Based Controllers who foresee difficulty in maintaining the activity requirement in Section I-C above. Visiting Controllers may not take a leave of absence.
- Request Process:
 - Submit a written LOA request to info@denartcc.org.
- Expiration
 - An LOA will expire the earlier of

- when a member on LOA meets the activity requirement in Section I-C above.
 - when sixty (60) days from the date of the LOA approval has transpired.
 - Example: If a member is approved for an LOA on the 15th of October, the LOA will expire on the 15th of December unless the member signs onto a live ZDV position (i.e. DEN_TWR) prior to the 15th of December.
- Conditions
 - LOAs must be separated by one activity period, which is thirty (30) days, during which time the member satisfies the above activity requirement.
 - An LOA request within thirty (30) days of the expiration date of the last LOA will be denied.

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II. Operational

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A. General

- This section applies to controlling the airspace of the ZDV ARTCC.

B. Operating Initials (OIs)

- All ZDV members are assigned a two-character set of OIs that must be used for the purpose of observing and coordination in ZDV. A list of operating initials is available on the ZDV website roster.

C. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- SOPs are published for all towered airports, all radar approach control facilities, and the en-route control areas of the ZDV ARTCC. Comply with all SOPs unless otherwise coordinated.
- Use your best judgment to rectify situations that are not covered by an SOP. Keep the VATSIM CoC in mind when making such decisions.

D. Mandatory Briefing Items (MBIs)

- MBIs are created to supersede any revisions and bulletins in this SOP. They include procedural and phraseology revisions as well as long-term runway and taxiway closures.
- All controllers must check the MBI board on the ZDV forums prior to plugging in to their control position and comply with all MBIs as instructed while on the position.

E. Controller in Charge (CIC)

- The CIC has the responsibility to ensure the most efficient staffing arrangement is present in the facility at all times. This will be determined based on the number of available controllers and their ratings and/or certifications, current sector workload, and other conditions that may impact ATC operations.
- The CIC is the following person. When he or she is not online, the next person in this list is the CIC:
 - ATM
 - DATM
 - TA
 - Most senior I1-rated member.
 - Member working the highest ATC position in the VATSIM ATC position tier.
 - DEL, GND, TWR, DEP, APP, CTR in order from least to greatest.
- The CIC has the authority to recommend a staffing rearrangement when the situation warrants it. Controllers should comply with CIC recommendations.

F. Plugging In and Relieving Other Controllers

- Only connect to control Denver ARTCC airspace if you foresee at least one hour of availability. Frequent connections as a controller with session lengths under 30 minutes may result in being contacted by the ARTCC administration.
- Members are required to comply with the procedures set forth in Appendix 2, Plugging In/Position Relief Checklist, when plugging in to a control position and relieving another controller of ATC duties.

G. Airport, Runway and Taxiway Closures

- Controllers may never restrict VATSIM pilots from accessing any airport despite its real world closure. In the event of an airport being closed in the real world:
- Departures:
 - Treat the airport as if it were open.
- Arrivals
 - Advise the pilot of the real world closure and ask if he or she would like to deviate to his or her filed alternate or another airport.
 - If the pilot says no to deviating, allow the pilot to proceed as originally intended;
 - use standard procedures and clearances in assisting the pilot to the airport.
- Controllers may elect to simulate temporary runway and taxiway closures at towered airports as broadcast by a real world NOTAM source by inserting a closure NOTAM in the ATIS for that airport.
- Do not simulate gate closures at any airport.
- Do not deny access to a runway if specifically requested by the pilot.

H. Voice ATIS

- VATSIM policy that supersedes this section can be found in the VATSIM Code of Regulations.
- The local controller is responsible for the ATIS unless otherwise coordinated. Clearance Delivery and Ground Control may be responsible for the ATIS if the controller working either position is rated S2 or higher AND there is a local controller providing service at the airport.
- The Voice ATIS that is broadcast on the appropriate ATIS frequency must be consistent with the text ATIS, which is editable via the Controller Info Template in VRC.
- Controllers should create the first ATIS of their session with one of the following:
 - The identifier "Alpha."
 - If relieving the last controller, use the ATIS identifier that comes after the last one used in that controller's ATIS recording.
 - If the real world identifier is determined by the controller, he or she may use the real world identifier.
- Disseminate ATIS updates to all tower cab and TRACON position controllers. If not recording the ATIS, verify the controller making the ATIS disseminates updates to you.
- When working an ATCT or TRACON position, make an announcement to all aircraft when a new ATIS has been created, including the altimeter.
 - "Attention all aircraft, information Bravo now current for Denver International Airport. Denver altimeter 2992."
- See Appendix 1, ATIS Management, for details on creation of the Voice ATIS.

I. Airport Surface Detection Equipment (ASDE) Simulation

- At ZDV airports whose real world counterparts simulate ASDE:
 - Insert "squawk standby on all taxiways" in the NOTAMs section of the ATIS.
 - Advise aircraft squawking normal on taxiways to "squawk standby."
 - Advise arriving aircraft to "squawk standby" if not already doing so when commencing their taxi to parking.

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III. Training

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A. General

- For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:
 - Rating
 - An irrevocable designation on one's VATSIM Certificate ID which indicates a particular skill level in accordance with the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy.
- Endorsement
 - A designation obtained through training that supplements a rating. It allows controllers to operate control positions at a Major Airport.
- The ZDV ARTCC Training Staff is responsible for training ZDV-based VATUSA members for purposes of obtaining VATSIM ATC ratings and ZDV Major Airport endorsements.
- Denver International Airport (DEN) is defined as a Major Airport per Appendix B of the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy (GRP). The Terminal Airspace, D01 TRACON, overlying DEN, APA, BJC, and FTG is defined as VATSIM Designated Airspace. All positions at these facilities require Major Facility training:
 - NOTE: The Pueblo (PUB) and Grand Junction (GJT) satellite sectors of the D01 TRACON are minor positions.
- Because VATSIM Controllers are required to provide top down service, a D01 TRACON Endorsement is

required prior to receiving training to obtain a Denver Center (KZDV) endorsement.

B. Conduct

- All ZDV Training Staff members are volunteers who commit high levels of time to the hobby of virtual air traffic control. Because their time is a valuable luxury, ZDV enforces the following conduct requirements on all students:
 - Students must come prepared to all lessons. The complete reading of SOPs and LOAs for the position at which training will take place is required.
 - Students must arrive within fifteen (15) minutes after their scheduled training time, or, without sending such notification to their mentor or instructor, their session is subject to cancellation.
 - Students should take notes during all sessions, complete all assigned materials prior to the next training session, and maintain focus during lectures and labs.
 - Conflict resolution between a Training Staff Member and a student will be handled by the ZDV Training Administrator.

C. Syllabus

- The Training Department SOP containing the following items will be made available to the public on the ZDV website at all times:
 - Rating and certification sequence.
 - Testing standards for all major position certifications.
 - Testing standards for all ratings are contained within the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy (GRP).

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IV. Events ([toc](#))

A. General

- ZDV Events Department is responsible for the creation, advertising, and execution of all ZDV events and is responsible for implementing ATC control position staffing plans for virtual airline- and virtual flying club-sponsored events.
- The ZDV ATM bears final responsibility and reserves the right to act on behalf of the events department and/or overrule any and all decisions/actions by the events department.

B. Position Assignments

- Positions usually are assigned to controllers for the duration of an event, but they may be assigned in shifts. No controller may occupy another controller's position without the approval of the CIC or ED.

C. Awards Policy

- All controllers participating in an event that features controller prizes, regardless of ARTCC position, rating, or certification level, will be considered eligible for event prizes.

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APPENDIX 1 **ATIS MANAGEMENT**

Configuration of ATISMaker

1.) The default ATISMaker version in VRC no longer reflects realistic ATIS broadcasts. Copy and paste the below text into the Voice ATIS Template section of the ATISMaker module in VRC.

"NaV info NaV %time% weather. Wind NaV. Vis NaV, NaV. NaV. Temp NaV. Dewpt NaV. Altim NaV. Expect visual approach. NaV NOTAMS: Advise on initial contact you have info NaV."

2.) Prior to creating the voice ATIS, review the Voice ATIS Template to ensure all necessary components are modified to reflect the current airport operation.

Things to consider:

- What kind of approach is being conducted?
- Coordinate with ground control to determine the most effective departure configuration.
- Coordinate with approach control to determine the most effective approach type and landing runways.
- Change “Expect visual approach” to the appropriate approach type when it differs from the template.
- What are today's NOTAMs?
- Check the MBI Board for information on relevant airport NOTAMs, which may need to be included after “NOTAMs: .”

Recording the Voice ATIS

Take special considerations to ensure that the Voice ATIS is a quality, realistic broadcast.

- Do not speak too quickly or too slowly.
- Coordinate runways in use with the affected ground and radar controllers.
- Know correct ATIS phraseology:

Start of ATIS

- Denver International Airport information Alpha
- Denver Tower information Alpha
- *Note: Saying “ATIS information” instead of just “information” is also acceptable.*

Time

- Do not prefix by saying “time.” Just state each digit of Zulu time individually, followed by saying “Zulu.”
- Two one five tree Zulu.
- “Weather” is often stated after the time. This is not required.
- Two one five tree Zulu weather.
- You must state “special” after the time if the METAR that corresponds with the ATIS is released at a non-standard time. This is done when the weather change is too important to wait for the next standard METAR update, usually on the 53rd minute of each hour.
- Two one one six Zulu special.
- OR
- Two one one six Zulu special weather.

Wind

- Wind is always said as “wind,” never as “winds.”
- Never state “degrees” or “knots.”
- Wind two one zero at six.

Visibility and Obscurations

- Do not add “statute miles” or “miles” to the end of the visibility.
- State obscurations as indicated in the ATIS, making sure to prefix them with “light” or “heavy” as indicated with the “+” or “-” signs, if included with the obscuration indicator.
- 4SM +SN would be read “Visibility four, heavy snow.”

Cloud Coverage and Type

- Except when the type of cloud coverage is “FEW,” altitudes are read before the amount of cloud coverage (SCT, BKN, OVC).
- State “ceiling” before the first, and only the first, layer of either BKN or OVC cloud coverage. “Ceiling” is stated before the altitude and cloud type.
- If the METAR reads “FEW060 SCT080 BKN100 OVC120,” you should read it “*Few clouds at six thousand. Eight thousand scattered. Ceiling one zero thousand broken. One two thousand overcast.*”

Temperature and Dew point

- Prefix both temperature and dew point accordingly.

- Do not state “degrees” after either.
- Temperature eight. Dew point five.”

Altimeter

- Prefix with “altimeter.”
- Pronounce each digit individually.
- “Altimeter 2988.”

Approach Information and Runways In Use

- Provide the approach in use when there is an approach controller online.
- Insert runways in use. For each set of runways (departing and arriving), we recommend beginning with the lowest number and increasing, and stating the right-side runway first when two or more runways share a number.
- Example: “Expect visual approach Runway 16R, Runway 16L, Runway 17R. Departing Runway 8, Runway 17R, Runway 17L, Runway 25.”

NOTAMs

- Insert pertinent NOTAMs in the ATIS as dictated by SOP, MBI Board, and/or airport conditions.

Reminder and PAUSE

- Be sure to state “Advise on initial contact you have information Alpha,” or the appropriate ATIS ID, at the end of the ATIS.
- Remain quiet for 3-5 seconds after the above reminder PRIOR to stopping the recording. This ensures no overlap between the end and beginning of your looped ATIS and makes it sound professional.

Inter-Facility Coordination

Advise Ground Control, Local Control, and Approach Control when a new ATIS is recorded. These controllers should make an announcement on their frequency regarding the new ATIS. See below.

Aircraft Notification

Make a broadcast on your frequency that advises aircraft of new ATIS and the current altimeter.
 “Attention all aircraft, information Alpha is now current. |Airport name| altimeter 2988.”

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APPENDIX 2
PLUGGING IN/POSITION RELIEF CHECKLIST

No overlying controllers
 PRIOR TO PRIMING FREQUENCY
 MBI Board.....checked
 Sector file.....loaded and configured
 Audio Settings.....confirm all components connected and correct settings in Settings . Audio Devices.
 Runway Configuration.....determine
 VATSIM Callsign.....disconnect from OBS callsign, reconnect as appropriate position identifier
 Voice ATIS Template.....modify runways in use and NOTAMs
 Voice ATIS.....record
 Flight Strip Bay.....configure auto-add strip functionality and other features

FREQUENCY PRIMed
 Pilots.....contact me messages sent
 ATC channel.....announce open if appropriate

With overlying controllers
 PRIOR TO PRIMING FREQUENCY
 MBI Board.....checked
 Sector file.....loaded and configured
 Audio Settings.....confirm all components connected and correct settings in Settings . Audio Devices.

Position Relief Briefing.....obtain from appropriate overlying controller
Runway Configuration.....determine
Voice ATIS Template.....modify runways in use and NOTAMs
Voice ATIS.....record
Flight Strip Bay.....configure auto-add strip functionality and other features

FREQUENCY PRIMed

Pilots.....contact me messages sent
ATC channel.....announce open if appropriate

Position Relief Checklist

1.) Equipment Status

- . VATSIM and voice server status
- . NAVAID closures
- . ATIS Letter

2.) Airport Conditions and Activity

- . Runway and taxiway configuration and closures
- . Aircraft in runway traffic pattern
- . Aircraft standing by for clearance/instructions/with request pending

3.) Weather Conditions

- . IMC/VMC, ceiling, visibility obscurations, approach in use

4.) Airspace Flow Program and Restrictions

- . Ground stops, EDCTs, holding program, etc.

5.) Coordinated SOP Deviations

- . Sector changes due to training, events, etc.

6.) Traffic Briefing

The original document is available at <http://www.denartcc.org/docs/tiki-index.php?page=GP%3A+ZDV>