

ZFW ARTCC General Policy

FORTWORTH

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Table of Contents

Change Log.....	4
Chapter 1: General	5
Section 1: Introduction	5
1-1-1. Purpose.....	5
1-1-2. Cancellation.....	5
1-1-3. Abbreviations	5
Chapter 2: ARTCC Staff.....	6
Section 1: Senior Staff.....	6
2-1-1. Air Traffic Manager	6
2-1-2. Deputy Air Traffic Manager.....	6
Section 2: ARTCC Staff.....	7
2-2-1. Training Administrator.....	7
2-2-2. Events Coordinator.....	7
2-2-3. Facility Engineer	8
2-2-4. Webmaster.....	8
Section 3: Support Staff	9
2-3-1. Weather Desk Manager.....	9
Section 4: Assistant Staff	9
2-4-1. Staff Member Assistants	9
Chapter 3: General Procedures	10
Section 1: Controller Conduct.....	10
3-1-1. Professionalism and Expectations	10
3-1-2. Callsigns	10
Section 2: Controller Activity	11
3-2-1. Home Controllers	11
3-2-2. Visiting Controllers	11
3-2-3. Leave of Absence (LOA)	11
Section 3: Events Department.....	11
3-3-1. Expectations	11
3-3-2. Position Authority	11
Section 4: Major Airspace.....	12
3-4-1. Major Designated Airports and Airspace	12
Chapter 4: Miscellaneous.....	12
Section 1: Administrative.....	12
4-1-1. Controller Removal	12
4-1-2. ARTCC Communications	12
Section 2: Pilot Interactions	13
4-2-1. Goal/Mission Statement	13
4-2-2. Pilot Difficulties	13

Change Log

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Chapter 1: General

Section 1: Introduction

1-1-1. Purpose

This document provides the formal rules, regulations, and procedures which govern all controllers and members operating within the Fort Worth Virtual Air Route Traffic Control Center (vZFW ARTCC) facility. This document is considered a supplement to any applicable FAA, VATSIM, Executive Committee (EC), VATSIM North America Region (VATNA), and VATSIM United States of America Division (VATUSA) policies and procedures that also govern controllers and members operating within this facility.

1-1-2. Cancellation

This policy cancels the previous “ZFW ARTCC General Policy” publication.

1-1-3. Abbreviations

ARTCC	Air Route Traffic Control Center
ATM	Air Traffic Manager
DATM	Deputy Air Traffic Manager
C1	Controller 1
C3	Controller 3
CIC	Controller in Charge
COC	VATSIM Code of Conduct
COR	VATSIM Code of Regulations
EC	Events Coordinator
FE	Facility Engineer
GRP	VATSIM Global Ratings Policy
I1	Instructor 1
I3	Instructor 3
LOA	Letter of Agreement/Letter of Absence
NOTAM	Notices to Airmen
OBS	Observer
PDC	Pre-Departure Clearance
RAPCON	Radar Approach Control
S1	Student 1
S2	Student 2
S3	Student 3
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TA	Training Administrator
TRACON	Terminal Radar Approach Facility
VATNA	VATSIM North America Region
VATUSA	VATSIM United States Division
vZFW	Virtual Fort Worth ARTCC
WM	Webmaster

Chapter 2: ARTCC Staff

Section 1: Senior Staff

2-1-1. Air Traffic Manager

Duties:

- Reports to the VATUSA Deputy Director ATS (Central) (VATUSA5)
- Oversees ARTCC operations and management
- Is responsible for hiring/terminating of staff members as defined by this SOP
- Establishes an ARTCC website and oversees its operation and maintenance
- Outlines the ARTCC Standard Operation Procedures and submits these documents to the VATUSA Southern Region ATD for approval
- Recommends disciplinary actions to the Regional Air Traffic Director
- Establishes testing and training as defined, and in accordance with, the VATUSA Training
- Policies as well as VATSIM GRP
- Works with the ARTCC and Division Events Coordinators on events that may affect the ARTCC
- Other duties as assigned by the VATUSA Staff

Requirements:

- Must hold at least a Controller 1 (C1) rating or higher
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

2-1-2. Deputy Air Traffic Manager

Duties:

- Serves as the assistant to the ATM
- Serves as the Air Traffic Manager in the absence of the ATM
- Serves at the request of the ATM and may be removed from the position at any time provided there is ample justification for removal
- Oversees the day-to-day operations of the ARTCC
- Manages the VATUSA and ARTCC rosters
- Other duties as assigned by the Air Traffic Manager and/or VATUSA Staff

Requirements:

- Must hold at least a Controller 1 (C1) rating or higher
- Member of the vZFW ARTCC, either as a visitor or home controller, for at least 6 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)

Section 2: ARTCC Staff

2-2-1. Training Administrator

Duties:

- Serves as the lead instructor and the manager of the ARTCC training department
- Serves at the request of the ATM, with the approval of the VATUSA Division Training Director (VATUSA3), and may be removed from the position at any time provided there is ample justification for the removal
- Reports to the ATM and VATUSA Deputy Director Training Services (VATUSA3)
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Manages and oversees a staff of Instructors (I1)
- Manages and oversees a staff of ARTCC Mentors
- Maintains up to date training materials and an efficient training program for controllers and students
- Ensures a fun learning environment for all controllers
- Other duties as assigned by the Air Traffic Manager and/or VATUSA Staff

Requirements:

- Must currently hold an Instructor (I1) rating
- Previous training staff (mentor, instructor, etc.) experience
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Member of the vZFW ARTCC, either as a visitor or home controller, for at least 6 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

2-2-2. Events Coordinator

Duties:

- Reports to the ATM, DATM, and VATUSA Events Manager (VATUSA15)
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Serves as the manager of event operations for the ARTCC
- Serves as Controller-in-Charge (CIC) during ARTCC events, or selects a CIC to serve in his or her absence
- Is considered the liaison officer and works closely with virtual airlines, neighboring ARTCCs and VATSIM/VATUSA event staff
- Plans and organizes high quality ARTCC events
- Creates event banners and descriptions for publication and advertisement
- Serves at the request of the ATM and may be removed from the position at any time provided there is ample justification for removal

ZFW ARTCC General Policy

- Other duties as assigned by ATM, DATM, or VATUSA Staff

Requirements:

- Must hold a Student 3 (S3) rating or higher
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Member of the vZFW ARTCC, either as a visitor or home controller, for at least 6 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

2-2-3. Facility Engineer

Duties:

- Reports to the ATM and DATM
- Serves as the manager of the ARTCC sector files and associated controlling client software files
- Updates related files as new and updated AIRACs are released
- Works with the TA in managing and maintain training files and works with other staff members to facilitate materials for their positions and respective departments
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Serves at the request of the ATM and may be removed from the position at any time provided there is ample justification for removal
- Other duties as assigned by the ATM and DATM

Requirements:

- Must hold a Student 3 (S3) rating or higher
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Member of the ZFW ARTCC, either as a visitor or home controller, for at least 6 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

2-2-4. Webmaster

Duties:

- Reports to the ATM and DATM
- Serves as the manager of the ARTCC website, TeamSpeak, Discord, databases and associated applications
 - (Discord management may be directed to the Discord Engineer)
- Manages backups, implements new ideas and scripts, organizes content, and works with other staff members to facilitate the operations of their departments
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures

- Serves at the request of the ATM and may be removed from the position at any time provided there is ample justification for removal
- Other duties as assigned by the ATM and DATM

Requirements:

- Must hold a Student 3 (S3) rating or higher
- Must hold knowledge and experience in working and using the related applications and programs related to the position
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Member of the ZFW ARTCC, either as a visitor or home controller, for at least 6 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

Section 3: Support Staff

2-3-1. Weather Desk Manager

Duties:

- Reports to the ATM and DATM
- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Conduct weather briefings for ARTCC Events, Staff-ups, group flights, etc

Requirements:

- Must hold a Student 2 (S2) rating or higher
- Must hold knowledge and experience in the appropriate field
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Member of the ZFW ARTCC, either as a home controller, for at least 3 months
 - (Requirement may be waived at the discretion of the ATM)
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Must be able to work in a team environment
- Must comply with all duties and requirements as outlined in this SOP

Section 4: Assistant Staff

2-4-1. Staff Member Assistants

The TA, EC, FE, and WM staff members may appoint one assistant with ATM approval.

- Assistants may be removed from their assistant staff position for any reason, with or without justification, by the ATM or the staff member.

Requirements:

- Must control at least the minimum number of hours required by the ARTCC Standard Operating Procedures
- Must be an active member of the network, in good standing
- Must comply with all duties and requirements related to the staff member he/she is assisting as outlined by this SOP

Chapter 3: General Procedures

Section 1: Controller Conduct

3-1-1. Professionalism and Expectations

When actively controlling with vZFW, regardless of home or visiting controller status, all controllers will be held to the highest professional standard. Controllers should understand that their professionalism and behavior when controlling with vZFW is not only a reflection of their own personal character, but the character and reputation of the ARTCC.

When actively controlling on the VATSIM network, especially within vZFW, controllers are providing a customer service to the pilots who visit the airspace. Unlike in the real world where pilots get dispatched on certain routes, pilots on the VATSIM network regularly chose when and where they fly. As such, the highest level of customer service, curtesy, and professionalism shall be provided to each and every pilot that operates within vZFW.

3-1-2. Callsigns

vZFW controllers observing on the network should use the official vZFW observer callsign. This callsign is the three-letter ARTCC identifier (ZFW), followed by the controller's operating initials, followed by the observer suffix. Each section of this callsign should be separated by an underscore.

Example: ZFW_DT_OBS

vZFW staff members, including instructors and mentors, are authorized to utilize the approved observer callsigns relative to their staff title(s). Staff members should follow the guidelines and restrictions outlined in VATUSA Division Policy, Section 6 (VATUSA DP001-6).

Example: ZFW_ATM, ZFW_DATM, LBB_I_APP, LBB_M_TWR

When opening an active control position within vZFW, controllers should only use approved position suffixes outlined by VATSIM Code of Conduct, C4. The position prefix should be the three-letter airport identifier. An underscore should separate the prefix and the suffix.

Example: LBB_GND, OUN_TWR, MAF_APP, FTW_CTR

Section 2: Controller Activity

3-2-1. Home Controllers

A home controller is any member who has their home ARTCC listed as Fort Worth ARTCC (vZFW) on the official VATUSA roster. In order to maintain active status within vZFW, these controllers must control a minimum one hour per calendar month within vZFW.

3-2-2. Visiting Controllers

A visiting controller is any member whose home airspace is not vZFW. In order to maintain active status within vZFW, these controllers must control a minimum one hour per calendar month within vZFW.

3-2-3. Leave of Absence (LOA)

Any student, controller, mentor or instructor may request a leave of absence (LOA) in writing. Requests should be sent to either the ATM or DATM and should give an estimated length of leave and a brief reason (The reason does not need to be so specific that they reveal any personal information). During their leave of absence, a member is relieved of all duties and/or responsibilities of their position and including the activity requirement until such time they return. The controller must contact the ATM or DATM if the leave needs to be extended or the controller wishes to return.

Section 3: Events Department

3-3-1. Expectations

Controllers wishing to sign up for a control position for a posted vZFW event should do so on the vZFW website. Controllers should only sign up for a control position if they can commit to controlling the entirety of the event. Controllers who sign up and fail to show up will have their ability to sign up for vZFW events removed at the discretion of the ATM or EC. Controllers who continually show up late to events or leave early will have their ability to control events removed at the discretion of the ATM or EC.

3-3-2. Position Authority

The ATM, DATM, EC, and/or CIC have full authority over positions staffed during events and which positions controllers are authorized to control. Controllers who did not sign up to control the event on the vZFW website are encouraged to control. However, before signing onto a position, the controller shall obtain permission from the event CIC before logging onto a position.

Section 4: Major Airports and Airspace

3-4-1. Major Designated Airports and Airspace

Major designated airports and airspace within the vZFW ARTCC require additional training and certification. These airspaces see increased traffic loads and require special operations and procedures that controllers need to follow.

The following airports and airspaces are designated major and require this additional training and certification:

- Dallas Fort-Worth International Airport (KDFW)
- Dallas Fort-Worth (Regional) TRACON (D10)

Chapter 4: Miscellaneous

Section 1: Administrative

4-1-1. Controller Removal

The ATM and DATM reserve the right to remove any controller, regardless of home or visiting controller status, for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to meet the minimum activity requirements outlined by this order
- Breach of the Controller Professionalism & Expectations policy outlined by this order
- Failure to return to active status following an LOA and/or failure to extend the length of a requested LOA
- Repeated violations of any section outlined in this order
- At the discretion of the ATM or DATM provided there is ample justification for removal

The removal of the controller shall not violate any policy that supersedes this order.

4-1-2. ARTCC Communications

The preferred method of communication with controllers within vZFW is via the email address associated with the controller's VATSIM account. Any important announcements, news, or NOTAM's will be announced through email.

Controllers can also find important announcement regarding vZFW operations within the Discord. Controllers should check the ARTCC Discord on a regular basis.

vZFW also utilizes a TeamSpeak 3 and Discord server for inter-facility coordination as well as for controller training purposes. Controllers should connect to the TeamSpeak and Discord Servers with their full name as it appears on their VATSIM account.

TeamSpeak and Discord usage is a privilege. Any controller may be forcefully removed from the servers, temporarily or permanently, at the discretion of the ARTCC staff.

Section 2: Pilot Interactions

4-2-1. Goal/Mission Statement

At all times, controllers shall provide a realistic and enjoyable experience to pilots flying on the network.

4-2-2. Pilot Difficulties

Due to the nature of the network, there will be times when controllers will have to deal with pilot difficulties. Whether it is a technology, knowledge, or competency issue, controllers shall always remain professional. Here is a step-by-step process to follow when dealing with these situations:

1. If you have time, explain in a calm and helpful manner what needs to be corrected.
 - a. Comments that are made with an attitude do not help the situation.
2. Only after a repeated behavior of disruption should a supervisor be called.