

vZMA ARTCC Standard Operating Procedure

Last Revised February 16, 2016 by Sergio Lopez S.L.

Section 1 - General Operating Agreement

1.0.1 All personnel staffing a controller position within the Miami ARTCC shall be a member-in-good standing of VATUSA.

1.0.2 All personnel staffing a controller position within Miami ARTCC shall be either a member of Miami ARTCC or have been granted Visiting Controller privileges by the ZMA Air Traffic Manager.

1.0.3 All personnel staffing a controller position within Miami ARTCC do so with the implied understanding that they have read and comprehend all of the Standard Operating Agreements and Procedures that apply to the position being staffed, and that they agree to provide ATC service in accordance with the Procedures herein.

1.0.4 All personnel staffing a controller position within Miami ARTCC do so with the implied understanding that they have read and comprehend all of the Service Bulletins posted on the Miami ARTCC web site, and that those Service Bulletins supersede any information contained within these Operating Agreements and Procedures.

§ 1.1.0. Rules of Conduct

1.1.1 All personnel staffing a controller position shall abide by the VATSIM Code of Conduct.

1.1.2 If a controller staffing a position within Miami ARTCC observes or becomes involved in an incident with a pilot or another controller, the following steps shall be taken:

- a. If the conflict begins on a voice channel, immediately switch to text communications so a text record of the interaction can be preserved using the .log feature of VRC.
- b. When possible, an unedited text transcript of the incident shall be forward to the ZMA Air Traffic Manager.
- c. The names and VATSIM Identification numbers of all parties shall be submitted to the Air Traffic Manager.
- d. The date and specific time of day (UTC preferred) of the incident shall be reported to the Air Traffic Manager.
- e. If a controller becomes directly involved in a conflict with another controller or pilot, the controller should log off immediately and submit a report to the Air Traffic Manager.
- f. If a controller becomes aware of a conflict between two other controllers, or between a controller and a pilot, the controller should submit a report to the Air Traffic Manager.

1.1.3 All controllers must be observant of the Controller List (CL) so that they are aware of which other controllers are available.

1.1.4 If a pilot conducting operations in controlled airspace does not make contact with ATC, a controller shall:

- a. Make no more than (2) attempts initially, then one (1) attempt every 10 minutes to contact the pilot via the .contactme or <HOME> feature of VRC.
- b. Keep track of the amount of time the pilot remains unresponsive.
- c. Coordinate with other affected controllers with regard to the non-communicative pilot.
- d. If a clear problem exists, seek assistance from a VATSIM Supervisor only if 30 minutes has elapsed since the pilot first fails to respond.
- e. Controllers shall not use private chats to make initial contact with pilots.

1.1.5 If a pilot is observed to be stationary and on the ground, no controller will attempt to contact the pilot.

1.1.6 Controllers shall severely limit the amount of any private text communication with pilots.

1.1.7 All controllers shall remain sensitive to any technical difficulties experienced by another controller or by a pilot.

1.1.8 Controllers shall never insist that communications be conducted via voice.

1.1.9 When a controller must discontinue service for any reason and is able to communicate with pilots, he will provide a minimum of five minutes notice before doing so. Pilots who are receiving the controller's service shall be informed the controller will discontinue service, and the radio frequency and callsign of the controller (if present) who is able to continue service shall be provided.

1.1.10 Any controller who is a member of Miami ARTCC but is not designated as an Instructor or Mentor shall not provide any form of unsolicited instruction to any other member. Such instruction shall include any form of advice, helpful tip, or correction of an observed error.

1.1.11 No controller may staff a control position within Miami ARTCC without the explicit certification to do so, or with the written permission to do so from either the Air Traffic Manager or Training Administrator. Certifications are published on the Roster Page of this web site, and all position restrictions are published on the Policy Page of this web site.

§ 1.2.0 Observing

1.2.1 If a controller logs on to observe, the following shall apply:

- a. The first three characters (prefix) of the callsign shall be ZMA.
- b. The controller will use two (2) letters representing the initials of the observing controller after the prefix, preceded and followed by an underscore (e.g. _XX_, where XX represents the operating initials of the observing controller).
- c. The last three characters (suffix) of the callsign shall be OBS.

1.2.2 Members observing on the network must limit the amount of observation time to that time that they are actively observing, i.e. monitoring, watching, learning from the experience, etc. Members shall

not log on as an observer if they are not actively observing, monitoring and learning, and must log off once the active observation is complete.

1.2.3 Instructors and Mentors shall observe using the suffixes INS and MTR, respectively, and shall not be time limited IF they are actively engaged in instructing during the time they are observing.

1.2.4 ZMA Staff members logging in to observe, while conducting the business of their staff position, will use the following callsigns:

- a. Air Traffic Manager: ZMA_ATM
- b. Deputy Air Traffic Manager: ZMA_DATM
- c. Training Administrator: ZMA_TA
- d. Events Coordinator: ZMA_EC (During event operations only)

1.2.5 No controller shall monitor the voice channel of another controller unless any of the following conditions exist:

- a. The controller who will monitor is an Instructor or Mentor assigned to Miami ARTCC.
- b. An observing controller has asked the permission of the controller who will be monitored.
- c. Monitoring is agreed to by both controllers as a part of ATC coordination.

§ 1.3.0 Cause for Removal and Leave of Absence

1.3.1 Any controller who is a member of Miami ARTCC and has failed to staff an eligible ATC position within Miami ARTCC for a total of three (3) hours during the preceding month, shall be considered inactive. The following provisions shall then apply:

- a. An inactive controller may be removed from the roster of the ARTCC without further notice.
- b. If within six (6) months of removal for inactivity the controller requests a transfer back to Miami ARTCC without an intervening assignment at another ARTCC, the controller's transfer request will be accepted and all certifications held by the controller prior to removal shall be restored.
- c. If within six (6) months of removal for inactivity the controller requests a transfer back to Miami ARTCC following an intervening assignment at another ARTCC, the controller's transfer request will be accepted and only those certifications held by the controller prior to removal shall be restored. The following conditions shall also apply:
 1. The Air Traffic Manager of any intervening assignment(s) must submit a positive conduct report in support of the controller.
 2. The controller must provide a written statement explaining his/her reasons for leaving any intervening assignment(s), and a reason for wishing to return to Miami ARTCC.
 3. Requests to return to Miami ARTCC within ninety (90) days of removal for inactivity and following an intervening assignment shall be denied.
- d. If more than six (6) months after removal for inactivity, but less than one (1) year, the controller requests a transfer back to Miami ARTCC without an intervening assignment at another ARTCC, the controller's transfer request will be accepted with the following conditions:

1. The controller must undergo an Over-The-Shoulder observation while staffing the highest previously certified position and satisfactorily answer all oral questions posed by the examining instructor.
2. The controller may be restricted to a position below any previously held certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.
3. The controller may be asked to retake any local position test prior to occupying any previously certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.

e. If more than six (6) months after removal for inactivity, but less than one (1) year, the controller requests a transfer back to Miami ARTCC following an intervening assignment at another ARTCC, the controller's transfer request will be accepted with the following conditions:

1. The Air Traffic Manager of any intervening assignment(s) must submit a positive conduct report in support of the controller.
2. The controller must provide a written statement explaining his/her reasons for leaving any intervening assignment(s), and a reason for wishing to return to Miami ARTCC
3. The controller must undergo an Over-The-Shoulder observation while staffing the highest previously certified position and satisfactorily answer all oral questions posed by the examining instructor.
4. The controller may be restricted to a position below any previously held certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.
5. The controller may be asked to retake any local position test prior to occupying any previously certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.

f. If more than one (1) year has passed since the controller has been removed for inactivity, the controller's transfer request will be accepted with the following conditions:

1. The Air Traffic Manager of any intervening assignment(s) must submit a positive conduct report in support of the controller.
2. The controller must provide a written statement explaining his/her reasons for leaving any intervening assignment(s), and a reason for wishing to return to Miami ARTCC
3. The controller will retain his/her VATUSA rank.
4. The controller will lose all previously earned position certifications until passing each local position exam that would have normally been taken prior to attaining their current VATUSA rank. All waiting periods between exams shall be waived and the controller shall have the option of taking any and all exams for which they are eligible to take at their leisure.
5. Any controller returning to Miami ARTCC with a VATUSA rank of C-1 or higher may be asked to submit to an Over-The-Shoulder observation prior to certification to work an Enroute Center position.

1.3.2 Leave of Absence

Any Student, Controller, Mentor or Instructor may request a leave of absence by request in writing to the ZMA ATM and detailing estimated length of leave and a brief reason (the reason need not be so specific that personal information is divulged).

The member must contact the ZMA ATM at the end of the requested leave period if an extension of the leave is required.

Unless specifically authorized by the ZMA Air Traffic Manager, no individual may plug into any control position in ZMA if the ZMA Crew Roster located at www.zmaartcc.net indicates that the individual is on a leave of absence.

1.3.3 Any member controller found staffing a position for which they have not been certified within Miami ARTCC shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- a. The controller will receive a written warning that they have violated §1.1.11 above and any subsequent violation will be cause for immediate removal from the membership of the ARTCC.
- b. If the controller is found to have a second violation of §1.1.11 above, the controller shall be immediately removed from the membership roster of the ARTCC.

1.3.4 Any member controller who, after a careful investigation, admission, or documentation, has been found to have cheated on any Miami ARTCC Exam, distributed Miami ARTCC Exam passwords, or who has accepted a password wrongful obtained and used it to complete a Miami ARTCC exam, shall be immediately removed from the membership roster of the ARTCC.

1.3.5 Any member controller who behaves in an insubordinate manner to the Air Traffic Manager, Deputy Air Traffic Manager, Training Administrator, or any Instructor or Mentor, or who continually demonstrates a disruptive influence or attitude shall be subject to the following actions:

- a. The controller will receive a written warning that they have demonstrated an insubordinate or disruptive attitude, and any subsequent conduct of this nature will be cause for immediate removal from the membership of the ARTCC. A copy of this warning shall also be submitted to the VATUSA Conflict Resolution Manager.
- b. If the controller is found to persist in an insubordinate or disruptive attitude, the controller shall be immediately removed from the membership roster of the ARTCC and an official report shall be filed with the VAUTSA Conflict Resolution Manager.
- c. If it is determined by the VATUSA Conflict Resolution Manager that the removal was unwarranted, the controller's membership shall be restored with all former ratings and certifications held at the time of the removal.

1.3.6 Any member controller who, after a careful investigation, admission, or documentation, has been found to have violated any article of the VATSIM Code of Conduct as either a controller or pilot shall be immediately removed from the membership roster of the ARTCC.

1.3.7 All new controllers who have selected Miami ARTCC as their first ATC assignment, and all newly approved Visiting Controllers, shall be placed on probationary status during the first 14 days of their membership with the following conditions:

- a. All new and transfer members shall be required to take and pass the Miami ARTCC Basic/SOP exam with a minimum score of 80%. Transfers will not be approved until this test is passed.
- b. After successful completion of the Basic/SOP exam, all new members must schedule and complete a training session with a member of the instructional staff during the probationary period.
- c. New Visiting Controllers must log a total of 1 hour online an ATC position for which they have been approved within Miami ARTCC during the 14-day probationary period.

d. Any new controller or Visiting Controller not meeting all probationary period requirements may be removed from the membership roster without further notification, or have all Visiting Controller privileges revoked.

X KEN B.

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