

# **Controller Policy Manual**

ZAB Order 7210.001

Albuquerque ARTCC

06 May 2018

# Contents

<b>1 Purpose</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Distribution</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4 General Global Policies</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>5 Controller Login Policies</b>	<b>1</b>
5.1 Minimum Login Time . . . . .	1
5.2 Position Staffing . . . . .	1
5.3 Announcing Position Opening/Closing . . . . .	2
5.4 Logging in as an Observer . . . . .	2
5.5 Instructor and Mentor Login . . . . .	2
<b>6 Event Operation Policies</b>	<b>2</b>
6.1 Local Events . . . . .	2
6.2 Neighboring ARTCC and Virtual Airline Events . . . . .	2
6.3 Controller Expectations . . . . .	3
6.4 Staff Expectations . . . . .	3
<b>7 Time and Attendance Policies</b>	<b>3</b>
7.1 Certified Controllers . . . . .	3
7.2 Controllers Rated OBS . . . . .	3
7.3 Failure to Meet Requirements . . . . .	4
<b>8 Visiting and Transferring Controller Policies</b>	<b>4</b>
8.1 Transferring Controllers . . . . .	4
8.2 Visiting Controllers . . . . .	4
<b>9 Disciplinary Policies</b>	<b>4</b>
9.1 Foreword . . . . .	4
9.2 Abuse, Harassment, and Disruptive Behavior . . . . .	4
9.3 Hostile Environment . . . . .	4
9.4 Failure to Adhere to Policies . . . . .	5
<b>10 Conclusion</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. Purpose

This manual contains important policies, procedures and regulations that are common to all ZAB Albuquerque ARTCC Controllers, Staff, Visiting Controllers and its new members. Failure to abide by any material contained within this manual could be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including removal of controlling privileges, removal from the ARTCC, or access to the VATSIM Network. Each ARTCC is granted the authority to establish local policies and procedures to guide the operation of the facility.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

These policies shall be maintained, revised, updated or cancelled by the Air Traffic Manager (ATM) or Facility Advisory Board (FAB) and shall be in effect unless such policy is in conflict with the VATUSA/VATSIM policies, in which case those shall supersede local policy.

## 3. Distribution

This policy is intended for use by any individual wishing to control within the ZAB airspace and shall serve as a reference for such controllers and for use by the administrative staff in maintaining an entertaining and friendly environment consistent with the goals and visions of VATSIM. Controllers shall become familiar with these and all policies at ZAB and exercise their best judgment when encountering situations not covered by these policies.

## 4. General Global Policies

- As a member of VATSIM all pilots, controllers and observers must adhere to the policies set forth in the VATSIM User Agreement, Privacy Policy, Code of Conduct, Code of Regulations, Approved List of Software, Special Operations Guidelines, Global Rating Policy and the Broadcast Policy. These policies are available on the VATSIM website at <http://www.vatsim.net/network/docs>.
- Follow VATUSA General Division Policy and Visiting Controller Policy. These policies are available on the VATUSA website at <https://www.vatusa.net/info/policies>.

## 5. Controller Login Policies

### 5.1. Minimum Login Time

Once logged into an active controlling position, a **30 minute minimum** is required, although controllers are strongly urged to spend at least 1 hour on position. Controllers logging out before 30 minutes should be able to provide the ATM or DATM with an acceptable explanation of the circumstances if requested. Exceptions are made to a controller that is moving to a new position to replace another controller or to voluntarily allow for training of another controller on the same position.

### 5.2. Position Staffing

Every position within the ZAB ARTCC is open on a “first come, first served” basis. If the position a controller wants to work is already occupied, then another position should be found. Controllers should adhere to the following guidelines regarding position staffing.

- Controllers may not log in to a position above their current rating and/or certification unless for training purposes and supervised and monitored by a certified mentor or certified instructor or hold a Temporary Training Solo Endorsement (TTSE) for that position (ZAB Training & Instructor Policy Manual - 7210.002).

- Controllers should make every effort to work with the training staff in allowing a position to be vacated when requested for the purpose of training. This also allows for controller interface and coordination which is good experience for all controllers.
- Controllers should be aware of scheduled events and vacate their position per section **6.??6.3** of this policy manual.
- A controller working a position at a “Designated Training Facility” should be courteous and vacate that position when a controller holding a TTSE for that position requests to occupy that position.

### 5.3. Announcing Position Opening/Closing

Announce your position open to other controllers by using the "ATC Message" feature in your radar client. When getting ready to close, give a **minimum 5 minute warning** to pilots text and fellow controllers using the "ATC Message" feature in your radar client. Use of the **.break** command is strongly encouraged as well. Advise the time in UTC that you plan on closing. Announce once again to pilots and other controllers when you are officially closed via text.

### 5.4. Logging in as an Observer

Controllers are strongly urged to login as an observer prior to choosing an active position. New controllers with an OBS rating wishing to observe as well as any controller should login with ZAB\_xx\_OBS where “xx” are the operating initials you were given when joining the ZAB ARTCC. Senior Staff members are authorized to log in with special callsigns listed below.

- Air Traffic Manager - **ZAB\_ATM**
- Deputy Air Traffic Manager - **ZAB\_DATM**
- Training Administrator - **ZAB\_TA**
- Events Coordinator - **ZAB\_EC**
- Webmaster - **ZAB\_WM**
- Facilities Engineer - **ZAB\_FE**

### 5.5. Instructor and Mentor Login

Certified Instructors and Mentors, while monitoring a student and not also occupying an active controller position, shall use the position of the student with either an “I” or “M” to show they are monitoring such student without a solo endorsement (e.g. PHX\_I\_APP or ABQ\_M\_CTR). If occupying an active controlling position, they should use the normal call sign for their position.

## 6. Event Operation Policies

### 6.1. Local Events

The Events department at ZAB shall periodically plan events which generate an additional load of traffic to and from the ARTCC. Controllers are encouraged but not required to attend these events. This is often a chance for controllers to advance their controlling skills and be a testament to the abilities of the ARTCC.

### 6.2. Neighboring ARTCC and Virtual Airline Events

Our neighboring ARTCC's appreciate the support of their events by our staffing of relevant positions. Often Virtual Airlines (VA) have fly-ins that they wish to have staffed. The EC shall notify all controllers of neighboring or VA events through the ZAB website or forums. Depending on the size and expected pilot turnout, the EC/ATM/DATM may, at their discretion, post a sign-up sheet for these events.

### 6.3. Controller Expectations

Controllers are expected to adhere to the following items regarding events.

- If a sign-up sheet has been made available on the website or forums, controllers are encouraged to sign up for a position they feel they will be able to perform efficiently during times of stress. Positions shall be filled either on a "first come, first served" basis, or will be assigned to a position by the EC, depending on the type and expected traffic levels of an event.
- If a sign-up sheet has been made available, but the list is full or desired positions are full, controllers are urged to be present on the day of the event to take other open positions or to relieve other controllers.
- If no sign-up sheet has been made available, controllers are encouraged to attend the event and control a position that they will be able to perform efficiently and to be courteous and fair to other controllers who also make their time available.
- Controllers should be aware of any SOP changes that may take place during events that may vary from normal operating procedures. Controllers should address all concerns during an event to the Controller in Charge (CiC) of the event.
- No training of controllers shall take place during local events without the permission of the TA, ATM or DATM.
- Controllers occupying a position that is scheduled for an event shall vacate their position through coordination with the scheduled controller at the start time of the event. Coordination should be made with the CiC to move to another position (if desired).
- The ATM or DATM, at their discretion, may make changes to the event sign up sheet based on the skill and competency of each controller in order to ensure efficient and expedited service to pilots. However, every effort will be given to maintain each controller's desired position as much as possible without prejudice.

### 6.4. Staff Expectations

Staff Members are expected to adhere to the following items regarding events.

- Events shall be planned, organized and executed by the Events Coordinator (EC) and approved by the Deputy Air Traffic Manager (DATM). Members of the ZAB ARTCC and its staff are encouraged to offer ideas to the Events staff for future events. The EC shall provide all necessary materials prior to the posting of such on the ZAB, VATUSA or VATSIM websites to the DATM for approval.
- The EC is the de-facto Controller in Charge (CiC) for all local events, unless another controller has been designated to act as the CiC by the EC, ATM or DATM.
- Senior staff members (ATM, DATM, TA) are highly encouraged to attend all local events when able.
- The ATM or DATM reserve the right to make any changes to events, including cancellation.

## 7. Time and Attendance Policies

### 7.1. Certified Controllers

In order to maintain an active and concise roster of controllers who are experienced and practiced, it is required that all controllers, including visitors, control on the live VATSIM network, on an authorized ZAB Position for no less than **2 hours** in a rolling 60-day time period.

### 7.2. Controllers Rated OBS

Controllers with an OBS rating are required to attend at least **1 training session** within 60 days of receiving their welcome letter upon joining the ARTCC.

### **7.3. Failure to Meet Requirements**

Controllers who fail to meet the above criteria will be removed from the ARTCC without prior warning or notification. If the controller was a home controller, they will be placed on an inactive status with VATUSA, and will need to request transfer back into ZAB to be reinstated. If the controller was a visiting controller, they will need to follow the current application process for visiting controllers to be reinstated.

## **8. Visiting and Transferring Controller Policies**

### **8.1. Transferring Controllers**

Controllers desiring to transfer from inactive or from another ARTCC shall request a transfer to Albuquerque via the VATUSA website. Once accepted, controllers may be issued either a written exam, a practical exam, or both prior to being given certification to control within the ZAB airspace. The TA, ATM or DATM may make a determination of which examination process shall be followed and what materials a controller should review prior to certification. The ATM or DATM shall have 7 days to accept or deny all requests. Any controller whose request is denied for any reason or fails to pass appropriate examinations must wait a period of sixty (60) before re-applying. Passing scores, for the purpose of this section, shall remain valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of examination.

### **8.2. Visiting Controllers**

Controllers wishing to visit at ZAB shall follow the application process outlined on the ZAB website (<https://zabartcc.org/visiting>). ZAB does not wish to place undue burden on controllers wishing to visit, and therefore does not have any extraneous requirements to become a visitor.

## **9. Disciplinary Policies**

### **9.1. Foreword**

It is not the desire of the ZAB senior staff to police the members of ZAB. However it is necessary to outline disciplinary processes and procedures so that, should an issue arise, it can be dealt with in a swift manner.

### **9.2. Abuse, Harassment, and Disruptive Behavior**

Item A1 in the VATSIM Code of Conduct states "Members should, at all times, be courteous and respectful to one another." This code shall and will be adhered to at all times in all forms of communication at ZAB. Any ZAB member who knowingly harasses another known member for any reason through any form of communication (e.g. forums, email, Skype, Teamspeak, telephone, chat, telegraph, carrier pidgeon, etc.) will not be tolerated at Albuquerque. Offenders will be reprimanded and could face punishment including suspension or termination of local controlling privileges based on the circumstances. If necessary, violators will be referred to the VATUSA or VATSIM Conflict Resolution team for further action.

Those who feel they have become victim to any abusive behavior by another VATSIM member should record or log all evidence of such behavior and immediately contact the ATM or DATM. They should not retaliate in any way or they could face the same consequences as the offender.

### **9.3. Hostile Environment**

Members who foster a hostile or disruptive environment through actions and/or words may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the VATSIM Code of Regulations and Code of Conduct.

#### **9.4. Failure to Adhere to Policies**

Failure to adhere to any of the policies contained herein or any VATUSA/VATSIM policies could result in disciplinary action as follows.

- No action.
- Verbal warning.
- Formal written warning.
- Removal of Mentor, Instructor or Staff position (if applicable).
- Suspension of ZAB controlling privileges.
- Removal from the ZAB roster.
- Referral to a network supervisor (SUP) or Dispute Conflict Resolution (DCRM).
- Temporary suspension from the VATSIM network.
- Termination of VATSIM membership.

### **10. Conclusion**

Remember, the goal of VATSIM is to educate and provide realistic simulation of air traffic procedures to pilots and controllers and, most importantly, to provide a fun environment for everyone to enjoy. This is a free service to everyone, and should be respected as such. Your membership is a privilege and not a right.