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# Training Program

Operation and Management

## **RECORD OF CHANGES**

Initial Publication – October 15, 2022

- Initial publication of vZDC Training Order 3120.4, *Training Program Operations and Management*.
- Consolidates GOP training policies and miscellaneous guides to combined policy document that defines all training department aspects of operation and conduct

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# Chapter 1. General

## Section 1. Introduction

### 1-1-1. PURPOSE OF THIS ORDER

This order prescribes all aspects of the Virtual Washington ARTCC (vZDC) Training Program. The requirements of this publication establish standards used throughout each element of training and codify best practices and established practices for delivering training within vZDC. This order is for use with vZDC, VATUSA, and the VATSIM network and is not associated with or applicable to any facility outside the VATSIM network.

### 1-1-2. AUDIENCE

This order applies to all vZDC controllers and any non-assigned (i.e., visiting) controller receiving training from the vZDC Training Department to work any facility or airspace delegated to vZDC.

### 1-1-3. WHERE TO FIND THIS ORDER

This order is available on the vZDC web site at <https://www.vzdc.org/controllers/files> under the SOPs tab.

### 1-1-4. WHAT THIS ORDER CANCELS

This order cancels Chapter 6, *Training Policies*, and Chapter 7, *Training Standards*, from the vZDC General Operating Policy. Additionally, this publication consolidates the retained elements of the vZDC Training Staff Guide.

### 1-1-5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES

Review of this document in its entirety is necessary for all controllers involved in providing training as well as controllers currently in a training status. There has been significant change made throughout all consolidated policy. As such, individual change markers are not present in this document, and it should be read as a new publication in its entirety.

### 1-1-6. EFFECTIVE DATES AND SUBMISSIONS FOR CHANGES

This publication is independent of normal publication cycles and will be revised when changes are determined necessary. When this document is under revision, notification will be made through normal facility notification methods to communicate to all controllers for solicitation of feedback. Feedback will be submitted in accordance with the prescribed instructions at the time of notification and along the timeline announced.

### 1-1-7. RECOMMENDATION FOR PROCEDURAL CHANGES

During published revision periods recommendations will be submitted in accordance with the process prescribed in paragraph 1-1-6 of this section. Outside published revision periods, send recommendations for change to [ta@vzdc.org](mailto:ta@vzdc.org) with any supporting documents and additional information.

**1-1-8. TRAINING CULTURE**

**a.** Aviation is inherently complex and is always undergoing change. To manage change, training is tailored to provide what is needed to the controller to adjust to and learn from the change. The willingness to embrace change, learn from it, and communicate it fairly and in its proper context is a core element in successfully navigating change. It is this leadership that drives the culture desired at vZDC.

**b.** Respect is the most important tenant in a positive training culture. Treating everyone with respect at all times is paramount. Training can present challenging scenarios and feedback that is intended to be constructive can be perceived as pointed. It is each controller's responsibility to always remain calm, professional, and respectful.

**c.** Learning the right way from the beginning and avoiding bad habits or incorrect technique early provides a foundation that will set the controller up for success in subsequent training. For this reason, all training events will be conducted in a manner that would be acceptable on the live network.

**d.** Good communication between trainers and trainees is vital to effective training. This includes communicating during training events by asking questions, seeking feedback, and ensuring an open dialogue is maintained. Good communications beyond formal training events is also important. Trainers and trainees are expected to respond to communications outside of training events in a reasonable amount of time. Lastly, anytime someone is running late or needs to reschedule, communicating this as early as possible shows respect for the others time and is expected.



## Section 2. Terms of Reference

### 1-2-1. WORD MEANINGS

As used in this order:

- a. "Controller" means any person of any rating, including Observer (OBS), regardless of their assigned facility.
- b. "Instructor" means controller holding the VATSIM rating of I1 or I3 and assigned to vZDC.
- c. "Mentor" means controller designated by the vZDC Training Administrator, and assigned to vZDC, to serve as a mentor within vZDC and perform training as authorized by this instruction.
- d. "Senior Staff" refers to the Air Traffic Manager (ATM), Deputy Air Traffic Manager (DATM), and Training Administrator (TA).
- e. "Trainee" means any controller that is actively enrolled in or seeking training as offered through the vZDC Training Program.
- f. "Trainer" means any person, either instructor or mentor, authorized to conduct a training event under the provisions of this instruction.

### 1-2-2. ABBREVIATIONS

As used in this order, the abbreviations listed below have the following meanings:

- a. GOP. General Operating Policy for vZDC.
- b. TA. Training Administrator.
- c. VATSIM. Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network.
- d. VATUSA. United States Division of VATSIM Network.
- e. vERAM. Virtual En Route Automation Modernization.
- f. VRC. Virtual Radar Client.
- g. vSTARS. Virtual Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System.
- h. vZDC. Virtual Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center.

## Section 3. Scheduling

### 1–3–1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING

Trainees must be active in pursuing their training goals. This includes coordinating training events with their training team. Trainers are responsible for engaging with trainees regularly and providing time monthly to offer training. Both trainees and trainers will work to ensure that each trainee is progressing in the vZDC Training Program.

### 1–3–2. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

Instructors should make available a minimum of two training sessions per month. These sessions should be made available in the vZDC designated scheduling program.

### 1–3–3. MENTOR AVAILABILITY

Mentors should make available a minimum of two training sessions per month. These sessions should be made available in the vZDC designated scheduling program.

### 1–3–4. TRAINEE AVAILABILITY AND BOOKING LIMIT

Controllers actively seeking to increase their current qualification should strive to schedule one training session weekly. Controllers may have no more than two sessions scheduled at any given time. If a controller has been assigned to a formal training team, the controller may communicate availability directly with the training team for targeted impromptu training opportunities.

### 1–3–5. IMPROMPTU TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

a. Impromptu training opportunities occur when a trainer has unplanned availability to offer a training session and an available trainee responds to the offering. Trainees will not solicit trainers for impromptu training sessions. Impromptu training opportunities will be posted in the respective Discord channel.

b. If a training session is scheduled within 24 hours, trainees will advise the advertising trainer of the scheduled session so that a trainee without a session scheduled may take advantage first. If no other trainee takes the impromptu offering, the trainee with a scheduled session may take the impromptu session offering.

### 1–3–6. REQUESTING, SCHEDULING, AND CANCELING TRAINING SESSIONS

a. Requests for training are made using the appointment scheduling tool on the vZDC website. To access the scheduling tool from the vZDC website, select “Controller Dashboard”, select “Training”, then select “Schedule a Training Session.”

b. Impromptu training events should be placed on the trainer’s schedule for record keeping purposes when possible.

c. Available sessions are made available up to three weeks in advance and reflect availability as set by trainers. Sessions are available first come, first serve.

d. Trainees will have no more than two scheduled training sessions at any given time.

e. When booking a session less than 24 hours from its start time, the trainee will confirm with the trainer following the booking to verify the trainer is still available for the selected session.

f. Training sessions may be canceled up to four (4) hours prior to the scheduled start time via the provided link in the confirmation email or training calendar. If the session is scheduled to begin in four hours or less, the controller must notify the other controller via email of the cancellation and courtesy copy (cc) the Training Administrator ([ta@vzdc.org](mailto:ta@vzdc.org)).

### **1-3-7. TYPES OF TRAINING TO SCHEDULE**

The following types of training are available for scheduling:

- a. Clearance Delivery and Ground (DEL/GND Training).
- b. Local Control (TWR Training).
- c. Approach Control (APP Training).
- d. En Route (CTR Training).
- e. Over-the-Shoulder (OTS).
- f. Visitor/Transfer GRP.

## Chapter 2. Training Staff

### Section 1. Appointments

#### 2-1-1. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Training Administrator (TA) will publish an announcement anytime a position within the training department becomes and available. Vacancy announcements are intended to ensure the widest distribution of the announcement and ensure all members interested in filling the position have the opportunity to express their interest.

#### 2-1-2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The vacancy announcement will include specific instructions for submission. At a minimum, this will include deadline for submission, required elements of the application, and any minimum eligibility requirements to be appointed to the position sought.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 2-3-1, Trainer Eligibility.*

#### 2-1-3. PROBATIONARY PERIODS

a. All training department positions incur a three-month probationary period. During this period the newly appointed trainer will be evaluated to ensure they are meeting the standards required of the position and that the role is a good fit for them.

b. Appointments to instructor ratings are made by VATUSA and additional instructor rating probationary requirements are established by VATUSA.

**NOTE –**

*The vZDC established probationary requirements exceed the minimum probationary period established by VATUSA.*

**REFERENCE–**

*VATUSA TO 3120.2C, Probationary Instructor Appointment.*

#### 2-1-4. PERMANENT APPOINTMENT STATUS

a. Upon completion of the probationary period, the appointment will be considered permanent, and the trainer will hold the role until they choose to vacate the position, it is determined no longer necessary by the TA, or are removed from the position for cause.

b. Instructor ratings may also be removed by VATUSA in accordance with division policy.

**REFERENCE–**

*VATUSA TO 3120.2C, Probationary Instructor Appointment.*

## Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities

### 2-2-1. TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR

Duties and responsibilities for the Training Administrator (TA) are contained in the vZDC General Operating Policy (GOP), paragraph 2-5(c).

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 5, Training Administrator.  
vZDC 7210.1C, Para 1-4-3, Training Administrator.*

### 2-2-2. ASSISTANT TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR

The Assistant Training Administrator position may be filled at the discretion of the TA with approval of the Air Traffic Manager (ATM). Duties and responsibilities are those listed in the GOP and as delegated or assigned by the TA.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 7210.1C, Para 1-4-3, Training Administrator.*

### 2-2-3. INSTRUCTOR

Instructor duties and responsibilities include:

- a. The primary duty of providing training to controllers seeking training at vZDC.
- b. Administer all knowledge validations and skills validations for controllers completing training under the Refreshed Curriculum.
- c. Approve S1 promotions for controllers completing training under the Legacy training program upon recommendation by a mentor at their discretion. Instructors should review the most recent three training feedbacks before approving the S1 rating.
- d. Administer certification events (Over-the-Shoulder) for trainees completing a block or phase of training.
- e. Enroll trainees in the respective rating course in the VATUSA Academy.
- f. Enroll trainees in the respective vZDC course for their current rating in the VATUSA Academy.

**NOTE –**

*Lesson plans and associated curriculum are under development and courses are not available for all tracks of training.*

- g. Complete training feedback documentation following each training session in a timely manner and in a way that provides constructive feedback for reference by the trainee in self-study.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 5, Instructor.*

### 2-2-4. MENTOR

Mentor duties and responsibilities include:

- a. Augment the instructor group by providing training sessions for controllers for initial and recurrent training programs.
- b. Engaging with trainees to understand their training progress and help guide them through the training program to achieve successful certification at vZDC.
- c. Run simulator sessions for trainees to teach fundamental air traffic control concepts and techniques and evaluate trainee performance based on applicable publications and guidance.
- d. Complete training feedback documentation following each training session in a timely manner and in a way that provides constructive feedback for reference by the trainee in self-study.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 5, Instructor.*

**2–2–5. TRAINEE**

Trainee duties and responsibilities include:

- a. Studying all available training materials to be prepared for the next lesson or block of training. Primary reference publications include FAAO 7110.65, *Air Traffic Control*, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the facility in training at and adjacent vZDC facilities and airspace, and Letters of Agreement (LOA) for all facilities with an LOA with the facility in training.
- b. Scheduling training on a regular basis. Trainees should strive for at least one session per week when training team availability permits.
- c. Training with a positive attitude that is receptive to feedback. Feedback provides a critical piece of the training program and allows progression and improvement when it is accepted and applied.

## Section 3. Requirements

### 2-3-1. TRAINER ELIGIBILITY

a. Instructors must hold a C1 or higher rating, be fully certified in vZDC, currently serving as mentor with vZDC, and not have had any recent unprofessional activity or suspension. Instructor candidates must have a demonstrated record of strong technical knowledge and skill while also maintaining excellent interpersonal skills.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA TO 3120.2C, Instructor Nomination.*

b. Mentors must hold S2 or higher and be certified in all vZDC major facilities. Mentors will have logged at least 30 hours in a control position in vZDC as a certified S2 before being eligible to apply to become a mentor.

### 2-3-2. CONTINUING QUALIFICATION

Trainers are expected to remain current on all changes that effect operations at vZDC. This includes changes to applicable FAA Orders, VATSIM, VATUSA, and vZDC publications (i.e. SOP, LOA, etc.). Trainers will ensure that changes are communicated with trainees, that trainees are aware of changes, and that trainees are using the currently publication.

### 2-3-3. MONTHLY SERVICE COMMITMENT

Trainers should conduct two training sessions per calendar month. Sessions may be scheduled Sweatbox sessions, impromptu sessions on either Sweatbox or live traffic, or formal training sessions where a trainee is monitored working on the live network. Training team members performing additional duties for the training department unable to provide two training sessions will have their monthly service commitment recognized complete assuming the additional duties have been completed in a timely manner and an attempt to offer at least one training session was made.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 1-3-2, Instructor Availability.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 1-3-3, Mentor Availability.*

### 2-3-4. APPROVAL TO CONDUCT TRAINING

a. *Legacy Training Events* may be conducted to the level approved for the individual trainer by the Training Administrator.

b. *Refreshed Training Curriculum* training events may be trained by any member of the training staff that holds the rating and certification that the training event is preparing the trainee to achieve.

## Chapter 3. Curriculum and Standards

### Section 0. Legacy Training Progression

#### 3-0-1. EXPLANATION AND SUMMARY

This section is included in this publication for the purpose of maintaining continuity between the “legacy” vZDC Training Progression plan and the new Curriculum and Standards established in this order in subsequent sections. This section will be removed upon full implementation of the new curriculum. This section will establish the transitional stage for each element in development.

#### 3-0-2. STAGE IN USE REFERENCE

*TBL 3-0-2*  
Stage In Use Status

Training Path	Legacy Status	Revised Status
OBS to S1	In Use	Development
S1 to S2	In Use	On Hold
S2 to S3	In Use	On Hold
S3 to C1	In Use	On Hold
Visitor	In Use	On Hold

#### 3-0-3. APPLICABILITY

Unless specifically excepted in this section, the training progression established in the following paragraphs is applicable to all new trainees (OBS) to vZDC as well as transfer and visiting controllers, unless excepted by the ATM, DATM, or TA.

#### 3-0-4. OBS TO S1

- a. Request DEL/GND training through the vZDC website.
- b. Training will begin at Washington-Dulles (KIAD).

c. Upon completion of training at KIAD, and at the discretion of the instructor, the trainee will be awarded S1 Major Certification at KIAD. Trainees must complete additional familiarization with a trainer for KBWI and KDCA endorsement.

#### **REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3-5-2, Listing of Certifications.*

#### 3-0-5. S1 TO S2

- a. Complete the vZDC S2 Knowledge Exam.
- b. After completing the vZDC S2 Knowledge Exam, request training for S2 through the vZDC website.
- c. Training will be completed at Washington-Dulles (KIAD).
- d. Instructors may grant solo certification at their discretion.



e. Upon completion of training at KIAD, the trainee will be recommended for the S2 Over-the-Shoulder (OTS).

f. Complete the VATUSA S2 Rating Exam prior to the S2 OTS.

g. Following a successful OTS, additional familiarization training will be provided to complete the major certification for KBWI and KDCA.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–2, Listing of Certifications.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–3, Authorized Solo Certifications.*

**3–0–6. S2 TO S3**

a. Complete the vZDC S3 Knowledge Exam.

b. Upon successful completion of the vZDC S3 Knowledge Exam, the trainee may request approach training through the vZDC website.

c. Training for approach will begin with either Chesapeake (CHP) or Shenandoah (SHD) within Potomac Approach airspace at the discretion of the Training Administrator. Trainees will complete CHP and SHD before progressing to MTV.

d. Instructors may grant solo certifications in accordance with this order.

e. When training in either CHP or SHD is complete, the trainee will be recommended for the S3 Over-the-Shoulder (OTS).

f. The VATUSA S3 Rating Exam must be completed prior to being administered the S3 OTS.

g. Following a satisfactory S3 OTS, the trainee will be promoted to S3, certified in the area they trained (either CHP or SHD), and granted Minor Approach certification in vZDC.

h. Training will continue in either SHD, or CHP, and then finish with MTV.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–2, Listing of Certifications.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–3, Authorized Solo Certifications.*

**3–0–7. S3 TO C1**

a. Prior to beginning training for C1 the trainee must have received major certification in CHP, SHD, and MTV.

b. Complete the vZDC C1 Knowledge Exam.

c. Center training is completed online and via Sweatbox.

d. Instructors may grant solo certification for the center in accordance with this order.

e. The training team will recommend the trainee for OTS. When recommended for OTS, the trainee will complete the VATUSA C1 Rating Exam.

f. Upon completion of the VATUSA C1 Rating Exam the controller will be evaluated during an OTS. Following a satisfactory OTS, the controller will be awarded C1 and certified for Washington Center.

**REFERENCE –**

vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–2, *Listing of Certifications.*

vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–3, *Authorized Solo Certifications.*

## **Section 1. VATUSA Academy Graduate**

### **3-1-1. DEFINITION**

Controllers new to VATSIM that first complete the VATUSA Academy and then transfer to vZDC as their first facility as a VATSIM controller are VATUSA Academy Graduates and will follow the progression established in this section.

### **3-1-2. PROGRESSION**

The legacy training path is currently in use for VATUSA Academy Graduate controllers in training at vZDC.

#### ***REFERENCE –***

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3-0-4, OBS to S1.*

## Section 2. Transferring Controllers

### 3–2–1. DEFINITION

A transferring controller is any controller that transfers their home facility to vZDC from any facility other than the VATUSA Academy and holds a rating of other than Observer (OBS).

### 3–2–2. PROGRESSION

The legacy training path is currently in use for all transferring controllers transferring to vZDC.

#### **REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–0–4, OBS to S1.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–0–5, S1 to S2.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–0–6, S2 to S3.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–0–7, S3 to C1.*

## Section 3. Visiting Controllers

### 3-3-1. DEFINITION

Any controller not assigned to vZDC as their home facility is a visiting controller to vZDC and subject to the requirements of this section.

### 3-3-2. SCOPE

This order provides policy for training and certification only. Administrative policy regarding visiting controllers is contained in the vZDC GOP, Chapter 9, *Visiting & Transferring Controllers*. Visiting controllers are provided training as necessary for major facility certification as necessary. Fundamental air traffic control principles are expected to be learned from the home facility.

### 3-3-3. LIMITATIONS

a. Visiting controllers will not receive training towards a rating. Training is limited to that required to obtain a specific certification within their currently held VATSIM rating.

b. To receive a major certification at vZDC, the trainee must hold a major certification for the facility type sought at their home facility.

#### **EXAMPLE –**

*An S3 visiting controller holds a major tower rating at their home facility but only minor approach may only be certified to work minor approach at vZDC.*

c. An increase in VATSIM rating does not automatically grant the visiting controller increased privileges at vZDC. Following VATSIM rating promotion, the visiting controller will request check out to receive the minor certification.

### 3-3-4. INITIAL CERTIFICATION

Visiting controllers will schedule a check out session for a Visitor/GRP session. The trainer conducting the training will validate knowledge and practical skills during the GRP to ensure the trainee meets the appropriate standard as defined in VATUSA and VATSIM policy. Furthermore, the trainer will review vZDC specific topics of discussion. The Visitor/GRP session will have one of two outcomes:

a. A *Satisfactory* grade from the Visitor/GRP checkout will result in minor facility certification for the equivalent VATSIM rating held.

#### **EXAMPLE –**

*Satisfactory S2 Visitor/GRP validation receives Minor Local certification.*

*or*

*Satisfactory S3 Visitor/GRP validation receives Minor Approach certification.*

b. An *Unsatisfactory* grade from the Visitor/GRP checkout will result in denial of authorization to work any vZDC control position and notification of the vZDC Training Administrator. The TA will notify the visiting controller's home facility and VATUSA3 and include the competencies graded unsatisfactory.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 1–3–6, Requesting, Scheduling, and Canceling Training Sessions*

**3–3–5. ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS**

Additional vZDC certifications may be obtained by requesting training and completing the training footprint for the associated training path. Following the request for continued training in available vZDC certifications, the TA will prescribe the series of training events necessary to complete the requested level of certification.

**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–3–3, Limitations.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–2, Listing of Certifications.*

## Section 4. Returning Controllers

### 3-4-1. DEFINITION

As used in this order, a “Returning Controller” refers to any controller returning to vZDC following removal from the active roster for any reason.

### 3-4-2. LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AWAY

Upon completion of the following requirements, the TA will reinstate appropriate certifications at vZDC. Controllers removed from the active roster for less than six months will:

- a. Rejoin vZDC.
- b. Complete familiarization and refresh on all SOP, LOA, and FAAO 7110.65 changes through self-study.
- c. Notify TA via [ta@vzdc.org](mailto:ta@vzdc.org) that the required publications have been reviewed and that they are ready to resume active controlling status.
- d. All previously held certifications will be restored at the discretion of the TA.

### 3-4-3. NOT MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY

Upon completion of the following requirements, the TA will reinstate appropriate certifications at vZDC. Controllers removed from the active roster for not more than twelve (12) months will:

- a. Complete VATUSA specific requirements for returning to active status.
- b. Rejoin vZDC.
- c. Complete familiarization and refresh on all SOP, LOA, and FAAO 7110.65 changes through self-study and complete a knowledge validation with an approved trainer.
- d. Complete a familiarization session via simulator or live network with an approved trainer and receive a satisfactory skills validation. The skills validation may be conducted as the familiarization session at the discretion of the trainer.
- e. The trainee must inform the trainer of the certification(s) sought to renew.

### 3-4-4. MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY

Controllers that have not held an active qualification at vZDC for more than twelve (12) months must complete all VATUSA specific requirements and then rejoin vZDC. Upon rejoining, the controller will be placed in the appropriate training pathway based on assessed proficiency, knowledge, and experience. Until demonstrated and validated by the TA otherwise, all prior certifications are considered void, and the controller must recomplete the certification process.

## Section 5. Certifications

### 3–5–1. DEFINITION

Certifications are awarded for specific control positions or categorizations of control positions in vZDC and are independent of the VATSIM controller rating. The VATSIM Rating determines eligibility to obtain a certification.

### 3–5–2. LISTING OF CERTIFICATIONS

- a. Minor Ground/Delivery.
- b. Minor Local Control.
- c. Minor Approach Control.
- d. Baltimore (BWI) Ground/Delivery (Major).
- e. Baltimore (BWI) Tower (Major).
- f. Dulles (IAD) Ground/Delivery (Major).
- g. Dulles (IAD) Tower (Major).
- h. Washington (DCA) Ground/Delivery (Major).
- i. Washington (DCA) Tower (Major).
- j. Chesapeake Area, Potomac TRACON (CHP).
- k. Shenandoah Area, Potomac TRACON (SHD), including James River Area (JRV).
- l. Mount Vernon Area, Potomac TRACON (MTV).
- m. Washington Center.

#### **NOTE –**

*Certifications for all three major facilities (BWI, DCA, IAD) may be given individually or during a single session based on the training received, performance evaluated, and instructor discretion. Trainers will ensure trainees are fully aware of what certifications have been granted and will document the certifications awarded accurately in the vZDC training feedback system and dossier entry.*

#### **REFERENCE –**

vZDC 7120.1C, Para 1-3-3, Major Facilities.  
vZDC 7120.1C, Para 1-3-4, Minor Facilities.

### 3–5–3. AUTHORIZED SOLO CERTIFICATIONS

Trainers may issue trainees “solo certifications” as authorized by the Training Administrator to obtain experience on the network by controlling without a monitor. Trainers granting the solo may apply additional restrictions to the solo endorsement as determined necessary by the authorizing trainer. Solo certifications may be made for any vZDC certification. The following requirements must be met to grant a solo certification:



**REFERENCE –**

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 3–5–2, Listing of Certifications.*

- a. Three training sessions must be documented for the specific facility a solo certification will be granted.
- b. Solo certifications will include the specific airport and associated facility the certification applies to.
- c. Only one solo certification may be active at any given time, and it will only be for the position the trainee is actively in training for.

**3–5–4. SOLO CERTIFICATION RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

- a. Trainees may not work events in a position that only a solo certification has been made unless waived by the vZDC Senior Staff.
- b. Solo certifications are valid for thirty (30) days and may be extended for one additional 30-day period by the Training Administrator.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 1-4, Solo Certifications.*

*vZDC 3120.4, Para 5–1–5, Callsign with Solo Certification.*

## Section 6. Standards

### 3-6-1. PRIMARY TABLE OF STANDARDS

VATUSA Division Training Policy, Chapter 2, *Training Standards*, is a complete listing of each standard established for each rating based on the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy (GRP) and adopted to the standards applicable to air traffic control in the National Airspace System and VATUSA's, and vZDC's, area of operations.

#### **REFERENCE –**

VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-1, *Training Standards*.

VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-2, *Delivery/Ground (S1) Competencies*.

VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-3, *Tower (S2) Competencies*.

VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-4, *Approach/Departure (S3) Competencies*.

VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-5, *En Route (C1) Competencies*.

### 3-6-2. LOCAL ADAPTED STANDARDS

Standards requiring additional training or emphasis for vZDC specific operation types are presented here and require additional review and study for proficiency.

#### **NOTE –**

*Local standards will be added in future updates of this policy. No local standards are included at this time.*

# Chapter 4. Controller Applications

## Section 0. Upcoming Application Releases

### 4-0-1. TEMPORARY NOTICE

This section is temporary and will be maintained while application transition is planned for, executed, and completed over the next year.

### 4-0-2. SUMMARY

Virtual Radar Client (VRC) is currently the most utilized application for controlling by controllers at vZDC. Following the release of the next generation of air traffic control software (CRC), VRC will no longer be supported and will ultimately not be able to connect to the VATSIM network. For this reason, controllers utilizing VRC will be required to transition to vSTARS and vERAM along with the built-in tower modes of CRC.

### 4-0-3. ANTICIPATED SOFTWARE

The following is a general listing of anticipated software that will form the complete suite of tools utilized to control traffic at vZDC:

- a. Consolidated Radar Client (CRC). CRC will include tower cab modes, ASDE-X for available airports, and vSTARS and vERAM, all in a single application.
- b. Virtual En Route Decision Support Tool (vEDST). vEDST is a flight data management and conflict probing tool. vEDST is expected to work closely with CRC (vERAM) and provide accurate simulation of the associate controller (D/A-Side). vEDST will facilitate preferred route application, identification of needed routing corrections, and make managing an en route sector more efficient.
- c. Virtual Tower Data Link Services (vTDLS). vTDLS is a web-based application that simulates the real-world system used by controllers to issue pre-departure clearances (PDCs). vTDLS will be used in conjunction with CRC.

## **Section 1. Concept of Environment and Use**

### **4-1-1. OVERVIEW**

This chapter is provided to establish guidelines and general operating practices regarding the various applications available for use to control on VATSIM and in vZDC with a narrowed focus on training specific areas of emphasis. As new applications are made available this chapter will be updated to best incorporate the changes and provide a standardized approach to training with these new tools.

## **Section 2. VRC**

### **4-2-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

Virtual Radar Client (VRC) is an end-of-life application used to connect to the VATSIM network and provide air traffic control service. VRC simulates multiple forms of radar systems and provides simplified modes of operation that are effective in training environments or working cab positions. VRC is supported by vZDC Facilities Engineering. Sector files, position files, and alias files are available for download from the vZDC website.

## **Section 3. vSTARS**

### **4-3-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

Virtual Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (vSTARS) is a stand-alone application that simulates the real-world STARS used in all terminal radar facilities, FAA and DOD, in the National Airspace System. The application is a realistic representation and does require some adjustment when transition from VRC as there are some differences in its operation that must be learned to be effective using to control.

## **Section 4. vERAM**

### **4-4-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

Virtual En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM) is a stand-alone application that simulates the real-world ERAM system used in all Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC) in the United States. Due to the accuracy in simulating the real-world application, ERAM requires training and active learning to fully understand its principles and utilize it effectively on VATSIM.

## **Section 5. vATIS**

### **4-5-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

Virtual Automated Terminal Information Service (vATIS) is a utility designed to allow controllers to setup and broadcast an ATIS for any airport under their control. vATIS uses the currently published weather observation and maintains profiles for standard airport configurations. The system will notify the controller when a new observation is available, and the controller can release the new ATIS.



## Section 6. Sweatbox Server

### 4-6-1. DESCRIPTION

VATSIM operates two servers not connected to the live network. These networks are called the Sweatbox servers. These servers allow trainers to run simulation software that enables adding, deleting, and manipulating aircraft to simulate air traffic for trainees to practice and develop their skills as controllers.

### 4-6-2. ACCESSING SWEATBOX SERVERS

In the client being used to control, select Sweatbox or Sweatbox 2 for the server to connect to. If using VRC, the following additional steps may be necessary to connect to a Sweatbox server:

- a. Create a text file and save the file as:

```
myservers.txt.
```

- b. Place the file in the following location: C:\Users\<<YOUR USERNAME>\Documents\VRC.  
*Note: the directory is the default Documents folder in Windows, not the VRC installation directory.*

- c. Open the file that was created and add the following text:

```
sweatbox.vatsim.net SWEATBOX  
sweatbox-2.vatsim.net SWEATBOX-2
```

### 4-6-3. AUTHORIZED USE

Use of the Sweatbox server is restricted to members of the training team and vZDC staff members. Trainee use without a training team member is not permitted.

# Chapter 5. Training and Checking Events

## Section 1. Training Sessions

### 5-1-1. TYPES OF TRAINING SESSIONS

Regular training sessions are categorized into two formats of training:

- a. “Live Sessions” are those training sessions where a trainee is logged in on the VATSIM network and provides real time air traffic service to other users connected to the network.
- b. “Sweatbox Sessions” or “Sim Sessions” are training sessions where the trainee is logged in on a Sweatbox server and controls simulated traffic that is controlled by a trainer.

### 5-1-2. REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN ON THE LIVE NETWORK

a. Trainees that have earned the S1 rating, or higher, may be monitored by a trainer on the network. Trainees will only be monitored on live traffic in positions they are actively in training for. Trainees may work combined airspace if all combined airspace is collectively either certified or in training.

**EXAMPLE-**

*Trainee is certified in CHP and in training for SHD, the trainee could be monitored working CHP and SHD combined but not CHP, SHD, and MTV since MTV has not been trained.*

or

*Trainee is certified in CHP and SHD and in training for MTV, the trainee may be monitored in PCT combined as the trainee is either certified in or in training for all airspace to be controlled.*

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 1-5, Monitoring.*

b. Trainers monitoring trainees must be able to assume control of the position from the trainee if traffic or complexity becomes beyond the ability of the trainee. Normally, trainers will login with the same callsign as the trainee but include “M” in the callsign and *not* select a prime frequency.

### 5-1-3. CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON LIVE NETWORK

While being monitored during training on the live network, trainees will use an “T” in the sector field of their call sign to identify they are a trainee. The trainer monitoring the trainee will use an “M” in the sector field of their callsign to identify they are the monitor.

**EXAMPLE –**

*Washington Tower callsign “DCA\_TWR” would be modified when monitored by the trainee to “DCA\_T\_TWR” and the trainer would use the callsign “DCA\_M\_TWR.”*

### 5-1-4. CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON SWEATBOX

The standard callsign for the position being trained will be used when logging on the Sweatbox servers. The trainee designation is not required.

**5-1-5. CALLSIGN WITH SOLO CERTIFICATION**

Controller exercising a solo certification will connect with an “S” in the sector field of the callsign. If the callsign used has an “S” then an additional “S” will be included.

***EXAMPLE –***

*IAD\_TWR with a solo certification exercised would use IAD\_S\_TWR.*

*or*

*BWI\_S\_APP with a solo certification exercised would use BWI\_SS\_APP.*

## Section 2. Knowledge Validations

### 5–2–1. OVERVIEW

Knowledge validations (KV) are those training events that validate the trainee’s knowledge level is satisfactory for continued progression in the training program. An unsatisfactory result from a knowledge validation provides areas to focus training on so the trainee can reattempt the KV with a successful outcome. KVs are categorized as either “written” or “oral.”

a. *Written Exam* requires the trainee to answer questions from a test bank and receive a passing score.

b. *Oral Exam* requires the trainee to answer questions given from the trainer and the trainer determines whether the provided explanation is satisfactory or unsatisfactory based on the context of the question.

### 5–2–2. MINIMUM PASSING SCORE AND REATTEMPTS

All written exams require a minimum grade of 80% to receive a satisfactory result. An unsatisfactory attempt will automatically be reassigned after a seventy-two (72) hour wait. If an exam is graded unsatisfactory three times, the trainee must meet with the Training Administrator before further exam attempts will be granted.

#### **REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 1-3, Examinations.*

### 5–2–3. WRITTEN QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION

The VATUSA Academy learning management system is the primary platform for written testing in vZDC. The Master Question File (MQF) will be maintained in the Academy LMS.

### 5–2–4. ORAL QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION

The oral question bank is a question bank of standardized and validated oral questions with associated references for evaluating an accurate and correct answer. This question bank should be used by trainers to ensure relevant and technically correct questions are being presented to the trainee during knowledge evaluations.

### 5–2–5. WRITTEN EXAM SYSTEM ACCESS AND ASSIGNMENT

VATUSA has transitioned all written examination to the VATUSA Academy. Exams are administered in conjunction with and as a part of the rating course the trainee is actively enrolled in. Instructors will enroll trainees in their rating course when training begins.

### 5–2–6. BASIC KNOWLEDGE EXAM

All controllers must complete this exam before working live traffic in vZDC. OBS rated controllers will complete this exam prior to being awarded their S1 rating. Transferring and visiting controllers will complete this exam before continuing with their respective certification paths.

**5-2-7. ZDC S2 KNOWLEDGE EXAM**

This local area knowledge exam is completed prior to beginning training for S2. This exam evaluates knowledge of local facility procedures and airspace necessary to be successful in training for the S2 rating.

**5-2-8. VATUSA S2 RATING COURSE**

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy S2 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the S2 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam system.

**5-2-9. ZDC S3 KNOWLEDGE EXAM**

This local area knowledge exam is completed prior to beginning training for S3. This exam evaluates knowledge of local facility procedures, letters of agreement, airspace, and other necessary knowledge items need to successfully train and certify as an approach controller.

**5-2-10. VATUSA S3 RATING COURSE**

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy S3 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the S3 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam system.

**5-2-11. ZDC C1 KNOWLEDGE EXAM**

This exam is completed prior to beginning training for Washington Center. This test evaluates the trainee's ability to find information across the library of publications maintained for managing vZDC airspace, vZDC airspace knowledge, and ensures the trainee is ready to begin training for the C1 rating.

**5-2-12. VATUSA C1 RATING COURSE**

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy C1 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the C1 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam system.

**5-2-13. VISITOR AND TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE EXAM**

This exam validates controller knowledge in air traffic operations specific to vZDC to ensure appropriate review of facility publications has been completed before continuing in the respective certification path.

## Section 3. Skills Validations

### 5-3-1. OVERVIEW

Skills Validations (SV) are those training events that validate the trainee's technical and practical proficiency level is satisfactory for continued progression in the training program. An unsatisfactory result from a skills validation provides areas to focus training on so the trainee can reattempt the SV with a successful outcome. There are two forms of skill validations:

a. *Over-the-Shoulder* (OTS) validations are used to validate the trainee's ability to meet vZDC, VATUSA, and VATSIM standards. A satisfactory OTS results in advancement in rating or additional certification within vZDC. OTS must be conducted by an instructor.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 1-3, Examinations.*

b. *Stage Checks* are skills validations within the vZDC curriculum to verify the trainee's progression matches the expected performance level for the current stage of training. A satisfactory stage check results in continued progression in the trainee's current curriculum. An unsatisfactory result provides the trainee and the training team focus areas to improve so the trainee can reattempt the stage check with a satisfactory result.

### 5-3-2. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The grading standard for validation events is established by VATUSA and based on VATSIM's Global Rating Policy (GRP) Appendix A. The competencies and criteria for satisfactory or unsatisfactory grading are defined in the VATUSA Division Training Policy and are the primary source for referencing performance standards for each rating.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-1, Training Standards.*

## Section 4. VATSIM Rating Changes

### 5-4-1. PROMOTION TO S1

Instructors will promote OBS rated controllers to S1 upon successfully completing initial S1 training. No additional written examination or formal OTS is completed for this rating. Guidelines for S1 proficiency standards are published in the VATUSA Training Policy.

**REFERENCE –**

*VATUSA Policy 3120.1A, Para 5, Awarding of the S1.*

*VATUSA Order 3120.4A, Para 2-2, Delivery/Ground Competencies.*

### 5-4-2. PROMOTIONS OTHER THAN TO S1

Upon completion of the written exam and a satisfactory OTS evaluation, instructors will process the VATSIM rating promotion.

## Chapter 6. Records and Documentation

### Section 1. Routine Training Feedback

#### 6-1-1. PURPOSE

Training feedback is formally provided to the trainee through submission of a training ticket on the vZDC website. The training ticket collects important information about the session and provides a way to record for the trainee and subsequent trainers progress and notes about a completed session.

#### 6-1-2. BEST PRACTICES

The following are considered best practices and should be considered when completing the training ticket:

- a. If the session included a sweatbox scenario, include the scenario file that was ran, and any additional details about the scenario (weather, complexity, traffic volume, airport configuration, etc.).
- b. Briefly summarize any topics that were discussed or that additional focus was given during the session.
- c. Include references to the appropriate publication (i.e. .65 para 2-3-4) to help focus the trainee's study following a session.
- d. Recognize performance areas that were demonstrated as meeting the standard for the rating or certification in training for.
- e. Include in the trainer comments field recommend next steps or focus areas for the next training session.



## Section 2. Dossier Entries

### 6-2-1. SYSTEM SUMMARY

Dossier entries on the vZDC website controller profile provide a written log of administrative actions associated with the controller. These entries are not exclusive to training program milestones. Entries in the Member Dossier provide a log for referencing which staff or training team member made a change in a controller's status.

### 6-2-2. REQUIRED ENTRIES

The following actions requiring the trainer to make an entry in the controller's dossier:

- a. Any change in a controller's VATSIM rating.
- b. Any change made to a controller's certifications.
- c. Solo Certifications, including those recorded in the VATUSA system.
- d. Appointments to training team roles.
- e. Training or other accomplishments not recorded in another system.

## **Section 3. Master Training Record**

### **6-3-1. RESERVED**

The Master Training Record will be incorporated with the new curriculum refresh. The training record for all active trainees is the collection of training tickets and dossier entries.

# Chapter 7. Scenario Development and Software

## Section 1. Scenario Design Standards

### 7-1-1. PRINCIPLES

For sim scenario development, three areas of consideration must be applied:

**a. *Lesson Plan Objectives*** are the core driver for what is programmed in any sim. Understanding the objectives and the specific “take-aways” the trainee should have following the sim are critical while designing a scenario. The events that will be programmed to teach the specific lesson objectives must be considered and implemented in the problem first.

**b. *Traffic Volume and Sector Saturation*** is determined based on the stage in training. Over saturating airspace defeats the purpose of the scenario and results in the trainee not benefiting from the session. When developing scenarios, care should be given to ensure that the active traffic count (aircraft under the control of the trainee) does not exceed a defined traffic standard for the position and phase of training.

**c. *Factors Impacting Complexity*** are added to scenarios for trainees who’ve mastered the fundamental elements and are ready to apply their knowledge and experience to nonstandard or undefined areas of operations. Simulated runway closures, changing of airport configuration (changing from landing west to landing east during a scenario), holding, emergencies, and special use airspace activation are examples of events that can increase complexity. As a general rule, assume any single complexity factor introduced should count as three active aircraft when factoring sector saturation.

## Section 2. Tower Trainer

### 7-2-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Tower Trainer utilizes an airport file and a scenario file to create aircraft on the Sweatbox server. The application is launched, an airport file selected, scenario loaded, and then all subsequent actions are accomplished through the controller client the trainer is utilizing. Tower Training is used for training clearance delivery, ground, and local control.

### 7-2-2. CONFIGURATION

- a. Launch the application using the “Run as Administrator” option.
- b. Define a “command frequency.” This is the frequency that text commands will be “transmitted” on while running the scenario. Select a frequency that is not used.

**EXAMPLE –**

*Select 119.997 as a TWRTrainer command frequency then select (add) 119.997 as a position frequency in the client used for running the scenario.*

- c. When beginning a scenario, after opening TWRTrainer select the airport file for the airport the scenario will be ran and then select the scenario file to be ran. Both of these files are selected via automatic prompting after starting TWRTrainer.
- d. After opening the ATC Client that will be used to run the scenario, ensure the command frequency entered in TWRTrainer is selected for TX/RX. Select and prime an additional frequency appropriate for the position the trainer is connected as.

## Section 3. EuroScope

### 7-3-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

EuroScope has a built-in simulation tool that runs scenario files. EuroScope scenarios have more options and capability in programming and are therefore better suited for the more complex radar scenarios. EuroScope is used to execute the scenario file and may be used to pseudo pilot the scenario. Alternatively, EsKey may be ran in conjunction with a EuroScope scenario where all sim commands are entered in EsKey instead of using the built in EuroScope tools. EuroScope is the primary tool for running all approach and en route scenarios.

## **Section 4. Aircraft Situation Editor**

### **7-4-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

The Aircraft Situation Editor is a tool that provides a graphic user interface for scenario design. It is capable of creating and modifying scenarios for both Tower Training and EuroScope. ASE utilizes a sector file for airspace definition and waypoint data. The user creates aircraft and enters data in a flight plan window. Predefined aircraft performance profiles may be utilized or added.

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## **APPENDIX A. TRAINING FLOWS**

The Legacy Training Flow Charts have been rescinded. New charts are under development and will be published in future publications of this order. Due to significant changes both in VATUSA and vZDC training progressions, the previous charts create conflicting guidance and are not valid.