Denver ARTCC

ORDER 7210.1F CHG 1

Effective Date:
March 23, 2025

SUBJ: Facility Standard Operating Procedures

This document establishes the formal rules, regulations, procedures and guidelines which govern all controllers and members operating within the Denver ARTCC on VATSIM (vZDV). This document establishes the validity of any additional vZDV controlled documentation.

The information contained herein is to be used for flight simulation purposes only on the VATSIM network. It is not intended, nor should it be used for, real-world navigation. The Virtual Denver ARTCC is not affiliated with the FAA, the actual Denver ARTCC, or any governing aviation body.

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Record of Changes

Version	Description	Effective Date	Issued By
1.0 (A)	Initial Release	08/01/2021	XD
1.1 (A)	Addition of 5-1-2.b and 4-5-1.f.ii	09/04/2021	XD
2.0 (B)	Multiple Revisions, new release. Full changelog available in discord.	06/27/2022	XD
2.0 (B) Chg. 1	Updates to 7-2.e.	08/21/2022	XD
2.1 (C)	Removal of 6-5 ATIS Usage	11/26/2022	XD
7210.1D	Update VATUSA positions, Discord and Website related links, and overall cleanup	02/20/2023	RP
7210.1E	Updated denartcc.org -> zdvartcc.org	09/13/2023	RP
7210.1F	Multiple revisions for upcoming GCAP compliance.	12/01/2023	HL
7210.1F CHG 1	Removed EGE FCT Tier 2 designation + minor ARTCC staff responsibilities updates	03/23/2025	HL

Explanation of Changes
Change 1

2-1-1. Air Traffic Manager
Rewrote subparagraph a. to better align ATM responsibilities with VATUSA General Policy (DP001).

2-1-2. Deputy Air Traffic Manager
Rewrote subparagraph a. to better align DATM responsibilities with VATUSA General Policy (DP001).

2-1-3. Training Administrator
Rewrote subparagraph a. to better align TA responsibilities with VATUSA General Policy (DP001).

2-1-4. Events Coordinator
Added language to subparagraph a., clause (7) to mandate event planning be in accordance with VATUSA Events Policy (DP003).

2-5-3. Facility Designations
Removed subparagraph c., clause (1). EGE FCT no longer holds a Tier 2 designation and is now considered an Unrestricted facility in accordance with GCAP and paragraph 2-5-2 of this document.

Not for real world use.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Section 1. General

1-1-1. Purpose
This document establishes the formal rules, regulations, procedures and guidelines which govern all controllers and members operating within the Denver ARTCC on VATSIM (vZDV).

1-1-2. Audience
All vZDV controllers and visitors contained within the vZDV and VATUSA roster.

1-1-3. Distribution
This document is authorized for unrestricted use and release and is available in the Resources Section of the vZDV Website.

1-1-4. Cancellation
This document cancels vZDV JO 7210.1E, effective September 13, 2023.

Section 2. Acronyms

1-2-1. List of Acronyms

a. ARTCC: Air Route Traffic Control Center
b. ATM: Air Traffic Manager
c. DATM: Deputy Air Traffic Manager
d. TA: Training Administrator
e. EC: Events Coordinator
f. FE: Facilities Engineer
g. WM: Webmaster
h. CIC: Controller in Charge
i. VATUSA: VATSIM United States Division
j. VATUSA2: Deputy Director Air Traffic Services
k. VATUSA3: Deputy Director Training Services
l. VATUSA5: Events Manager
m. VATUSA8: Training Services Manager
n. SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
o. LOA: Letter of Agreement
p. GCAP: Global Controller Administration Policy

Chapter 2. ARTCC Operations

Section 1. Staff

2-1-1. Air Traffic Manager

a. Responsibilities:
   (1) Reports to VATUSA2.
   (2) Oversees all operations and management of vZDV ARTCC.
   (3) Executes VATUSA objectives within vZDV ARTCC.
   (4) Ensures vZDV ARTCC culture is aligned with the VATSIM Code of Conduct and VATUSA standards.
   (5) Directly manages and oversees the DATM and TA positions.
   (6) Interviews and hires junior staff members, as necessary.
   (7) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
   (8) Maintains ARTCC communication channels.
   (9) Functions as a VATUSA staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
   (10) Oversees and administers the day-to-day operations of the facility.
   (11) Develops and maintains facility SOPs, LOAs, policies, and other documentation, ensuring this documentation is accessible by all VATSIM members upon login.
   (12) Interviews and hires the DATM and TA positions. Submits selection of the DATM to VATUSA2 for approval. Submits selection of the TA to VATUSA3 for approval.
   (13) Establishes and defines the duties of other ARTCC staff positions.
   (14) Manages and oversees vZDV ARTCC junior staff members and their departments.
   (15) Maintains the vZDV ARTCC roster as well as handles visiting and transfer requests in accordance with VATUSA DP001.
   (16) Addresses disciplinary issues with VATUSA2, when appropriate.
   (17) Conducts vZDV ARTCC staff meetings, as necessary.
   (18) Assumes the responsibilities of senior staff positions in the event of a vacancy.
   (19) Provides guidance and assistance to vZDV ARTCC members and visitors.
   (20) Collaborates with the division on events.
   (21) Delegates responsibilities to vZDV ARTCC staff, as appropriate.

b. Requirements:
   (1) Must hold at least an Enroute Controller (C1) rating.
   (2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
   (3) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
   (4) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team of at least 5.

2-1-2. Deputy Air Traffic Manager

a. Responsibilities:
   (1) Reports to, and serves at the pleasure of, the ATM.
   (2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
   (3) Functions as a vZDV ARTCC senior staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
   (4) Acts as the acting ATM at the request of, or in the absence of, the ATM.
   (5) Assumes responsibility for junior staff positions in the event of a vacancy.
   (6) Develops and maintains facility SOPs, LOAs, policies, and other documentation, ensuring this documentation is accessible by all VATSIM members upon login.
   (7) Assists in maintaining the vZDV ARTCC roster as well as handling visiting and transfer requests in accordance with VATUSA DP001.
   (8) Oversees and administers the Events, Facilities, and Web Departments.
   (9) Assists in the day-to-day operation of the facility.
   (10) Ensures vZDV ARTCC culture is aligned with the VATSIM Code of Conduct and VATUSA standards.
   (11) Addresses disciplinary issues with VATUSA2, when appropriate.
   (12) Provides guidance and assistance to vZDV ARTCC members and visitors.
   (13) Collaborates with the division on events.
   (14) Other duties as assigned or delegated by the ATM.

b. Requirements:
   (1) Must hold at least an Enroute Controller (C1) rating.
   (2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
   (3) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
   (4) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team of at least 3.

2-1-3. Training Administrator

a. Responsibilities:
   (1) Reports to, and serves at the pleasure of, the ATM and VATUSA3.
   (2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
   (3) Functions as a vZDV ARTCC senior staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
   (4) Creates and maintains the vZDV ARTCC Training Policy.
   (5) Creates, develops, and maintains the vZDV ARTCC training program.
   (6) Maintains a staff of instructors and mentors.
   (7) Nominates instructor candidates to the VATUSA training department, in accordance with VATUSA DP002.
   (8) Provides guidance and assistance to vZDV ARTCC members and visitors.
   (9) Manages and creates training materials for student use to provide a strong and habitual learning experience.
   (10) Oversees the day-to-day operation of the training department.
   (11) Ensures high-quality training operations in furtherance of VATUSA training objectives and requirements, as outlined in VATUSA DP002.

(12) Creates and maintains an enjoyable and comfortable learning environment to ensure student success.
(13) Other duties as assigned or delegated by the ATM.

b. Requirements:
(1) Must hold at least an Enroute Controller (C1) rating.
(2) Must be eligible to hold the Senior Instructor (I3) rating.
(3) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
(4) Must have a strong knowledge of the United States National Airspace System and Air Traffic Control systems.
(5) Must have real-world and/or VATSIM instruction experience.
(6) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
(7) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team of at least 3.

2-1-4. Events Coordinator

a. Responsibilities:
(1) Reports to, and serves at the pleasure of, the ATM and DATM.
(2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
(3) Manages a team of highly qualified individuals as part of the Events Team.
(4) Functions as a vZDV ARTCC junior staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
(5) Identifies and develops events to generate traffic and promote vZDV ARTCC.
(6) Develops and distributes marketing materials to promote vZDV events.
(7) Implements and oversees approved events in accordance with VATUSA DP003.
(8) Acts as CIC during vZDV events when able, or designates a replacement on their behalf.
(9) Coordinates with neighboring ARTCCs to arrange support for vZDV events.
(10) Coordinates with neighboring ARTCCs to provide vZDV support.
(11) Maintains relationships with VAs and coordinates support for VA events.

b. Requirements:
(1) Must hold at least a Terminal Controller (S3) rating.
(a) An Enroute Controller (C1) rating is preferred.
(2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
(3) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
(4) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team.

2-1-5. Facilities Engineer

a. Responsibilities:
(1) Reports to and serves at the pleasure of the ATM and DATM.
(2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
(3) Manages a team of highly qualified individuals as part of the Facilities Team.
(4) Functions as a vZDV ARTCC junior staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
(5) Maintains and updates the vZDV Virtual NAS data.
(6) Maintains and updates vATIS facilities files.

(7) Assists the TA in the creation of Sweatbox or other files as directed by the TA.

b. Requirements:
    (1) Must hold at least a Terminal Controller (S3) rating.
        (a) An Enroute Controller (C1) rating is preferred.
    (2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
    (3) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
    (4) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team.
    (5) Must possess sufficient technical knowledge to execute the responsibilities of the position.

2-1-6. Webmaster

a. Responsibilities:
    (1) Reports to and serves at the pleasure of the ATM and DATM.
    (2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
    (3) Manages a team of qualified individuals as part of the Web Team.
    (4) Functions as a vZDV ARTCC junior staff member and attends meetings as necessary.
    (5) Responsible for the development, maintenance, and upkeep of the website.
    (6) Manages the website and related applications.
    (7) Oversees the Web Team and delegates projects as necessary.
    (8) Ensures compliance with VATSIM, VATUSA, and vZDV rules and policies regarding ARTCC websites, data, and software.

b. Requirements:
    (1) Must hold at least a Developing Controller (S1) rating.
    (2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
    (3) Must have excellent written and oral communication skills.
    (4) Must be able to work in a team environment and manage a team.
    (5) Must possess sufficient technical knowledge to execute the responsibilities of the position.

2-1-7. Junior Staff Teams

a. Responsibilities:
    (1) Reports to and serves at the pleasure of the appointing junior staff member, DATM, and ATM.
    (2) Maintains an online presence within the facility and on the VATSIM network.
    (3) Team members are not officially recognized as a VATUSA staff position.
    (4) Team members may be removed from the team at any time by their appointing junior staff member, the DATM, or the ATM, with or without justification.
    (5) Events Team members have the following additional responsibilities:
        (a) Assists in developing events for vZDV ARTCC.
        (b) When appointed by the EC, acts as CIC during vZDV events.
        (c) Assists in coordination with neighboring ARTCCs and VAs for support.
        (d) Other event-related tasks as assigned by the EC.
    (6) Facilities Team members have the following additional responsibilities:

(a) Assists in the maintenance of vZDV Virtual NAS data, vATIS facility files, and creation of sweatbox files.
(b) Other facilities-related tasks as assigned by the FE.

(7) Web Team members have the following additional responsibilities:
(a) Assists in the development, maintenance, and upkeep of the website.
(b) Actively works on projects as assigned by the WM.
(c) Other web-related tasks as assigned by the WM.

b. Requirements:
(1) Must hold at least a Developing Controller (S1) rating.
(2) Must be an active member of the VATSIM network in good standing.
(3) Must be able to work in a team environment.
(4) Facilities Team and Web Team members must possess sufficient technical knowledge to execute the responsibilities of the position.

Section 2. Activity Requirements

2-2-1. General

a. Any students, controllers, or staff members who fail to meet the minimum requirements as outlined in this policy shall be removed from the facility's active roster.
b. The ATM and DATM shall maintain records of all controllers removed from the roster and their activity leading to their removal.

2-2-2. Staff

a. Unless otherwise approved by the ATM, any staff member (or staff team member) must complete at least 4 hours of controlling, instruction, or staff duties per calendar month.
b. Staff members must maintain an active presence on Discord.
c. Staff members who will be temporarily unavailable (vacations, personal obligations, etc.) shall notify the ATM ahead of the absence.
    (1) Absences must be noted in the Discord staff channels and pinned for reference.

2-2-3. Home Controllers

a. Any home controller who holds a rating higher than Observer (OBS) must complete at least three hours of controlling time on a vZDV controlling position per quarter.
    (1) Any home controller with a Tier 1 endorsement must complete at least three hours of controlling time per quarter on the highest Tier 1 facility that they hold an endorsement for. Failure to do so may result in the removal of a Tier 1 endorsement.
a. Any home controller who holds the rating of Observer (OBS) must complete at least one hour of training time with a mentor or instructor per month.

2-2-4. Visiting Controllers

a. Any visiting controller must complete at least three hours of controlling time on a vZDV controlling position per quarter.
    (1) Any home controller with a Tier 1 endorsement must complete at least three hours of controlling time per quarter on the highest Tier 1 facility that they hold an endorsement for. Failure to do so may result in the removal of a Tier 1 endorsement.

2-2-5. Leave of Absences

a. Any controller who cannot, or knows that they will not, meet the activity requirements defined in section 2-2 may request a Leave of Absence.
b. The member requesting a Leave of Absence must email the ATM and CC the DATM. This email request must include the estimated length of absence and a generic reason for the absence. Personal information need not be discussed unless otherwise requested at the discretion of the ATM or DATM.
c. A Leave of Absence no longer than ninety days shall be permitted. If a longer absence is required, special consideration may be granted at the discretion of the ATM and DATM.

Section 3. Visiting and Transferring Controller Policy

2-3-1. General

a. Controllers wishing to visit the vZDV ARTCC shall fill out the appropriate application on the vZDV website. Upon approval, the controller's VATUSA profile shall be updated to reflect the visiting status.
b. Controllers wishing to transfer to the vZDV ARTCC from another ARTCC shall request a transfer through the VATUSA website. Members who are not eligible for transfer may request a once-in-a-lifetime transfer waiver from VATUSA2.
c. The ATM reserves the right to deny and/or refuse any transfer or visiting controller request pursuant to the VATUSA General Policy (DP001). All transfer and visiting requests are also subject to the VATSIM Transfer and Visiting Controllers policy. All previous disciplinary action shall be factored in to the final decision pursuant to the aforementioned policies.
d. Upon acceptance of a visiting application, visiting controllers may control any Unrestricted position without further training or endorsement.
e. Visiting controllers shall not log in with any rating they have not earned.

2-3-2. Membership Reinstatement

a. Any controller who is removed from the vZDV roster and returns to active status within three months may return with all privileges and endorsements reinstated without any requirement to recertify.
b. Controllers returning after three months may be required to recertify all endorsements at the discretion of the TA on a case-by-case basis.

Section 4. Department Structure

2-4-1. Training Department

a. The TA shall be the primary manager of the training department. The TA shall be overseen by the ATM and by VATUSA3, as required.
b. The primary responsibility of the TA shall be to facilitate an open, effective, and streamlined training environment.
c. The TA shall administer the creation and upkeep of vZDV 3120.4x (Facility Training Policy).
d. The TA must staff the training department sufficiently to provide for the demands of vZDV membership.
    (1) The TA shall be responsible for a hiring strategy for new training staff.
    (2) The TA shall ensure new training staff are adequately prepared prior to training students.
e. The TA shall nominate Instructors in accordance with VATUSA DP002.
f. The training department must provide a mechanism for members and instructors to coordinate and schedule lessons.
g. The training department must provide a mechanism for members to provide and receive feedback on each training session. Written feedback to the student is required following every training session.
h. The training department must provide training materials for vZDV members for ratings and position training, supplemental to all VATUSA and/or VATSIM materials.

2-4-2. Events Department

a. The EC shall be the primary manager of the events department. The EC shall be overseen by the DATM, ATM, and VATUSA5, as required.
b. The EC shall plan and submit events in accordance with VATUSA DP003.
c. The events department shall coordinate events hosted by or including vZDV.
d. The events department has full authority over position assignments during a vZDV sponsored or supported event.
e. Controllers who are signed up for an event but do not show up on time may have their position given away by the ATM, DATM, EC, or designated CIC.
f. Controllers who continually show up late for or no-show events may have their privileges to control during events revoked by the ATM and DATM.
    (1) The EC shall be responsible for maintaining a list of tardy and no-show controllers.
        (a) General Criteria for removal of event privileges is as follows:
            (i) Three unexcused tardies or;
            (ii) Two no-shows.
    (2) Controllers must notify the Events Team at least twenty-four hours prior to the event if they need to cancel their position assignment via email. Any cancellations within twenty-four hours may be counted as a no-show.

Section 5. Ratings and Endorsements

2-5-1. Global Controller Administration Policy

a. vZDV adopts the VATSIM GCAP as its governing ratings policy.
b. vZDV policy must not conflict with any policy or procedure outlined by the VATSIM GCAP.

2-5-2. Tier Designations

a. Unrestricted positions require no additional certification or endorsement. Controllers may control any Unrestricted position pursuant to their rating.
b. Unless otherwise stated in paragraph 2-5-3, all vZDV positions shall be considered Unrestricted.
c. Tier 2 facilities require supplemental training and endorsement for the category of complexion that the facility has been designated. Once a controller earns a Tier 2 endorsement for a category and rating, they may control any position associated with any facility designated under that particular category pursuant to their rating.
d. Tier 1 facilities require supplemental training and endorsement for each position associated with a facility that is designated as such.
e. Issuance of Tier 1 and Tier 2 endorsements shall be pursuant to vZDV 3120.4x (Facility Training Policy).
f. The vZDV Roster shall be kept up-to-date with all controller ratings and endorsements.

2-5-3. Facility Designations

a. The following facilities shall be considered Tier 1:
    (1) DEN ATCT
    (2) D01 TRACON (except Junction Radar and Pueblo Radar positions)
b. The following facilities shall be considered Tier 2 under the Complex Procedures category:
    (1) ASE ATCT/TRACAB
c. The following facilities shall be considered Tier 2 under the Complex Terrain category:
    (1) D01 TRACON (Junction Radar position)
d. The following facilities shall be considered Tier 2 under the Enroute Specialty category:
    (1) ZDV ARTCC

NOTE-
ZDV ARTCC applies only to Denver Center positions.

Chapter 3. Conduct

Section 1. General Expectations

3-1-1. Member Conduct Expectations

a. vZDV shall maintain a high level of professionalism.
b. vZDV members must be respectful and courteous to all other members.
c. vZDV holds a zero-tolerance policy for any hate speech.
    (1) Any incidents shall result in revocation of controlling privileges and Discord permissions.
    (2) Any offense of this nature may result in immediate termination from the vZDV roster in conjunction with VATUSA DP001.
d. vZDV members must ensure they are supporting the ARTCC vision of an open and welcoming environment, while maintaining a high level of respect for all other members.
e. All VATSIM CoC, CoR, User Agreement, and VATUSA policies must be enforced. All violations must be reported to the ATM.
f. The ATM shall determine the proper course of action for any behavioral violation.
g. The VATSIM Supervisors team shall be utilized as appropriate for violations.
h. Failure to comply with **any** of the above or policy contained herein can result in removal from vZDV, VATUSA, or the VATSIM Network.

Section 2. Network Expectations

3-2-1. General

a. Controllers must comply with all facility orders and procedures.
b. Controllers may elect to honor pilot requests contrary to flow or standard procedures so long as the safe working environment is not compromised.
c. Real-world facility hours may be observed at the top-down controller's discretion.
d. Controllers are required to be present in Discord while controlling. If a controller absolutely cannot be available via Discord voice, VATSIM landline features or chat features contained within controlling clients are permissible.

3-2-2. Opening Position

a. Controllers should not sign on unless they are planning to control for at least 30 minutes.
b. Controllers should not log on to an event position within one hour of event start time. If a controller wishes to control within this window, they must acquire permission from the ATM, DATM, or EC.
c. Controllers must view the vZDV document center prior to opening a position to verify they are up-to-date on all vZDV policies and procedures.
d. Controllers must receive a brief from the top-down or lower controller prior to opening position, if applicable.

3-2-3. Observing

a. All controllers observing must log-in with the following format:
    (1) ZDV_XX_OBS

    NOTE-
    XX must be replaced by the observer's operating initials.

b. Staff members are authorized to use callsigns as outlined in VATUSA DP001.

3-2-4. Position Restrictions

a. Controllers must not work positions they are not certified or endorsed to work.
b. The senior staff must ensure the roster is up-to-date with all applicable endorsements.

3-2-5. Position Splits

a. Position splits must occur in accordance with facility-specific procedures and LOAs.
b. The ATM or DATM may authorize additional splits as required.

3-2-6. Closing Position

a. Controllers are encouraged to provide at least five minutes notice of position closure via voice (frequency and Discord) and chat (frequency, ATC chat, and Discord).

Chapter 4. Official Services

Section 1. Communications

4-1-1. Website

a. The vZDV website shall be considered a primary communications mechanism.
b. The website and zdvartcc.org domain are property of vZDV.

4-1-2. Discord

a. vZDV utilizes a private Discord server for all internal voice communications and announcements.
b. Discord shall be considered a primary communications mechanism.
c. Removal from the vZDV Discord for compliance with vZDV, VATUSA, or VATSIM policy shall also result in removal from the facility.
d. All VATSIM CoC, CoR, User Agreement, and VATUSA policies shall be enforced. All violations shall be reported to the ATM.
    (1) Exceptions may be made for messages posted in channels marked as “NSFW.”
e. Members must link their Discord account on the vZDV website upon joining the Discord server via the Discord Dashboard (or by visiting https://discord.zdvartcc.org).
f. Controllers are encouraged to maintain a social presence on the Discord server.
g. Members must not stream or record any Discord audio without prior authorization given by the senior staff or all parties involved.

4-1-3. Email

a. Email shall be considered a primary communications mechanism.
b. All staff shall be given a zdvartcc.org email for staff communications purposes.
c. vZDV members shall keep their VATSIM registered email address current. Failure to do so may result in delays in communications. vZDV is not responsible for missed communications as a result of a member’s failure to maintain their account.
d. Upon termination or resignation from a staff position where a vZDV email has been issued, the resigning member’s email address shall be deactivated 24 hours after official resignation. If requested by the member, staff emails may remain active for no longer than seven days after official resignation.