

# HAVANA FIR

## Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

### Rules and Regulations

Version 2.1

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This document contains essential information regarding our operations and policies. Therefore, it is required reading for all Havana FIR controllers.

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*Virtual Havana FIR is governed by VATCAR,  
The VATNA Caribbean Division*



## Section – Rules and Regulations

### 1. Generalities

1.1. All personnel staffing a controller position within Havana FIR shall:

- (1) Be either a member of the FIR or an approved Visitor Controller, certified for the position. Certifications/authorizations are published on the Roster section of the Havana FIR's website. (<http://havana.vatcar.org>)
- (2) Do so with the implied understanding that they have read and comprehend all of the Standard Operating Procedures that apply to the position being staffed, and that they agree to provide ATC services in accordance with the procedures herein.
- (3) Do so with the implied understanding that they have read and comprehend all of the NOTAMs posted on the Havana FIR web site, and that those NOTAMs supersede any information contained within these Operating Procedures.
- (4) Abide by the VATSIM Code of Conduct.

### 2. Cause for Removal

2.1. Any controller, who is a member of Havana FIR and has failed to staff an eligible ATC position within the FIR for at least 10 hours during the preceding month, shall be considered inactive. The following provisions shall then apply:

- (a) An inactive controller may be removed from the roster of the FIR without further notice.
- (b) If within 6 months of removal for inactivity the controller requests a re-activation, it will be accepted and all certifications held by the controller prior to removal shall be restored.
- (c) If more than 6 months after removal for inactivity, but less than 1 year, the controller requests a re-activation, it will be accepted with the following conditions:
  - The controller must undergo an Over-The-Shoulder observation while staffing the highest previously certified position and satisfactorily answer all oral questions posed by the examining instructor.
  - The controller may be restricted to a position below any previously held certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.
  - The controller may be asked to retake any local position test prior to occupying any previously certified position upon the recommendation of an examining instructor.
- (d) If more than 1 year has passed since the controller has been removed for inactivity, the controller's re-activation request will be accepted with the following condition:
  - The controller will lose all previously earned position certifications until passing each local position exam and submitting to Over-The-Shoulder observations. All waiting periods between exams shall be waived.

2.2. Any controller who is a member of Havana FIR found staffing a position for which they have not been certified shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

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

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

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

### 3. Leave of Absence (LOA)

- 3.1. Any controller who is a member of Havana FIR may request a leave of absence in writing to the ATM, detailing estimated length of leave and a brief reason (need not be so specific that personal information is divulged).
- 3.2. Controllers on LOA must contact the ATM at the end of the requested leave period if an extension of the leave is required.

### 4. Rules of Conduct

#### 4.1. Politeness Online

Do not argue with pilots online. If a pilot refuses to comply with ATC instructions, notify a Senior Controller or FIR staff. If none is available, call for a VATSIM Supervisor (e.g. .wallop Need help in Cuba, pilot refuses to follow instructions).

- 4.2. If a controller staffing a position becomes involved in an incident with a pilot or another controller, the following steps shall be taken:

- (a) If the incident begins on a voice channel, immediately switch to text communications so a text record of the interaction can be preserved.
- (b) Gather information and evidence and submit it to the Air Traffic Manager (ATM):
  - The names and VATSIM Identification numbers of all parties
  - The date and time (in UTC) of the incident
  - An unedited text transcript of the incident when possible

- 4.3. If a pilot conducting IFR operations in controlled airspace does not make contact with ATC when entering the airspace, a controller shall either:

#### 4.3.1 Wait for the pilot to make the first contact and meanwhile:

- (a) Keep other traffic separated from the non-responsive aircraft.
- (b) Coordinate with other affected controllers.
- (c) Consider to initiate the contact if the aircraft:
  - Will be in conflict with other aircraft at some point.
  - Will need to be handed off to a neighbour controller.
  - Will be landing in the controller's airspace.

#### 4.3.2 Try to contact the pilot (use as last resort)

- (a) Make no more than 3 attempts initially to contact the pilot, via text chat or the "contactme" function, spaced 2 minutes between them.
- (b) Coordinate with other affected controllers with regard to the non-communicative pilot.
- (c) At your discretion seek assistance from a VATSIM Supervisor if:
  - The non-responsive aircraft is going to cause a conflict with other traffic.
  - At least 10 minutes have elapsed since the pilot first failed to respond.

- 4.4. All controllers must be observant of the Controller List in the Controller Client so that they are aware of which other controllers are available.

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

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

- 4.7. Controllers shall never insist that communications be conducted via voice.

- 4.8. When a controller must discontinue service for any reason and is able to communicate with pilots, he will provide notice before doing so. Pilots shall be informed of the facility/radio frequency they should switch to.

#### 4.9. Controller Client Software

Any Controller Client software may be used as long as it is approved by VATSIM. We recommended EuroScope by Xumepoc Studios.

## 5. Staffing ATC Positions

### 5.1. Logging in as an observer

If a controller logs on to observe, the following apply regarding the callsign:

- (a) The first three letters (prefix) shall be HAV.
- (b) Two letters representing the initials of the controller after the prefix, preceded and followed by an underscore (e.g. HAV\_XX\_, where XX represents the initials).
- (c) The last three letters (suffix) shall be OBS (e.g. HAV\_XX\_OBS).

5.1.1. Instructors and Mentors shall observe using the suffixes INS and MTR, respectively.

### 5.2. Approved ATC Positions

Official ATC positions, callsigns and frequencies within Havana FIR are published in the Havana FIR website; section "ATC Positions". Positions that are not listed may be exceptionally opened previous authorization from the FIR staff.

5.3. Positions must be manned by certified/authorized active controllers only. The Controller roster is accessible from the corresponding section in the Havana FIR website.

5.4. Normal occupancy rule is on a First-Come First-Served basis. It is recommended to always check facilities occupancy before going online.

5.5. Controllers authorized for positions as trainees must ONLY staff the position, while in training, under direct supervision of designated instructors or mentors.

5.5.1. Controllers providing ATC services under training must bear the letter "T" as part of the position callsign. (e.g. MUHA\_T\_GND, MUFH\_T\_CTR)

### 5.6. Events and Group Flights

- (a) Controllers will choose positions based on bidding according to the registered ATC hours in the last 30 days. Thus, the controller with the most hours in that period will be the first to choose a position. Controllers are only allowed to choose positions for which they are certified, and must make every effort to select one among those corresponding to their higher certification.
- (b) All controllers will require final approval from the ATM, DATM or the TA to staff a position for an event.