Memphis
Air Route Traffic
Control Center

ZME Standard Operating Procedures
Version 1.1
Effective 15 April 2021

Table of Revisions

Date	Revision	Editor/Revision
01 April 2021	Initial Release	Corey Burt/1.0
15 April 2021	Add sub-sections 5 and 6 to Section 8 under TeamSpeak	Corey Burt/1.1

Introduction

This document is a combined SOP for the vZME ARTCC (hereafter referred to as ZME). It supersedes all previous SOP documents. These policies set forth guidelines that protect the commitment and participation of all ZME Controllers as well as the dedication, time and effort made by our Instructors and Mentors. Every Controller, regardless of rating, provides time freely to enhance the virtual air traffic controlling experience. We strive to provide the best possible experience for Controllers and Pilots alike and believe that these policies will help us to achieve these goals.

The controlling authority of this SOP is the Memphis Air Traffic Manager. The Air Traffic Manager may consult other staff members or delegate the writing of sections of this manual to other personnel but all additions, revisions or bulletins to this manual must be approved by the Air Traffic Manager prior to becoming effective. The Air Traffic Manager must also receive approval from VATSIM or VATUSA as required for certain for this SOP and all revisions.

Revisions

Revisions are defined as any update made to this document from a formatting change to a full rewrite. Revisions to the document will be sent out via email discord or a combination of both to all members. It will also be listed on the "News" section of the website and be available for download under the "Downloads" section.

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Section 1: Home Controller Activity Requirements

Purpose: This policy establishes procedures and requirements for vZME Home controllers

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding controller activity dated before this policy's effective date.

Requirements
1. Controllers holding an OBS rating (those who have not attained a S1 rating) must contact a ZME Instructor/Mentor for induction within one calendar month of joining. This can be accomplished by emailing instructors@vzmeartcc.org. Students failing to meet this requirement may be removed for inactivity.
2. The following is required of all students holding the rating of OBS
    A. A minimum of one training session per calendar month that is no less than one hour in length. Students failing to meet this requirement may be removed for inactivity.
3. The following is required of all controllers holding an S1 rating or higher.
    A. A minimum of 1 hour in any calendar month must be spent actively controlling a facility located within vZME. Observing under an OBS call sign does not qualify as a valid control position.
    B. More than 50 % percent of a members total active controlling time must be spent in their home ARTCC. Students failing to meet this requirement may be removed for inactivity.

4. The above requirements may be waived by the Air Traffic Manager or Deputy Air Traffic Manager, at their sole discretion for any controller making other substantial contributions to the ARTCC or VATSIM.

5. Any controller on a leave of absence (LOA) will be relieved of the above requirements for the duration of their LOA. Request for LOA are subject to the following:
    a. Any ZME Controller may request a Leave of Absence in writing to either the ZME ATM or DATM. The request should state an estimated length of leave up to a maximum of 180 days, and a brief reason for the absence. The reason does **NOT** need to be so specific that personal information is revealed.
    b. During a Leave of Absence, a controller is relieved of all responsibilities of their position and must not exercise the privileges of their rating.
    c. The Controller must contact the ATM or DATM if the Leave of Absence needs to be extended, up to a maximum of 180 days from the date of the original request.
    d. The Controller must contact the ATM or DATM upon return and must not resume controlling at ZME until approved by the ATM, DATM or TA.

e. Senior Staff (ATM, DATM, TA) and the EC automatically forfeit their staff position for any Leave of Absence exceeding 60 days unless otherwise approved by the ATM.

Section 2: Visiting Controller Requirements

Purpose: This policy establishes procedures and requirements for vZME Visiting controllers

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding controller activity dated before this policy's effective date.

Requirements

Requests for Transfers or Visiting Controller status will be evaluated for compliance with VATSIM's and VATUSA's Visiting/Transferring Controller policy. Additionally, a review of the controller's disciplinary and training history will also be considered.

Visiting Controllers

1. All prospective visiting controllers must submit visiting controller applications via the ZME website.

A. Visiting Controllers from VATUSA must be signed off by a ZME Instructor to control any major facility in ZME airspace (MEM_E_TWR, MEM_E_APP, and MEM_05_CTR). They are automatically certified to work minor facilities up to and including those positions where they are certified to control at their home ARTCC. Observing under an OBS callsign does not qualify as a valid control position. More than 50 % percent of a visitor's total active controlling time must be spent in their home ARTCC/FIR.

B. Visiting controllers from outside of VATUSA may be subject to a GRP competency checkout on minor facilities. This will be at the sole discretion of the TA.

C. Visitors must control for at least one hour per calendar month on a valid control position at ZME. Observing under an OBS callsign does not qualify as a valid control position.

D. Visitors must familiarize themselves with the ZME website, procedures, frequencies, facilities, LOAs and policies.

E. Visitors represent ZME when controlling a ZME position. Any actions which present ZME in a negative manner will not be tolerated.

Section 3: Transfers/Removal/Suspensions

Purpose: This policy establishes procedures and requirements for vZME Transfer controllers as well as removal for all controllers

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding controller transfers and removal dated before this policy's effective date.

Transfers

1. Controllers wishing to transfer to the ZME ARTCC are invited to do so through the VATUSA website.
2. The VATUSA policy for transferring and visiting controllers is included in DP001 VATUSA General Division Policy.

Removal for Home/Visiting/Transfer Controllers

1. Removal from the ZME roster on the ZME website will follow process outlined below:

    A. Removal from the ZME roster on VATUSA

    B. For a transfer, the controller will be automatically removed by VATUSA from the ZME roster on VATUSA.
        The controller will also be removed from the ZME roster on the ZME website.

    C. When the ZME server marks a controller as inactive, the ATM or DATM will confirm this manually. Once confirmed the controller will receive warning email giving 14 days to achieve the activity requirement. Students failing to meet this requirement may be removed for inactivity.

    D. Special circumstances shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. These cases must be communicated to the ATM or DATM.

Suspension

1. For a VATSIM suspension, the controller will remain on the ZME roster until a decision is given from the Region Manager to the ATM/DATM.

Section 4: CONTROLLER POSITION SIGNOFFS AND TRAINING

Purpose: This policy establishes procedures and requirements for all controllers regarding training and position signoff.

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding controller transfers and removal dated before this policy's effective date.

Requirements

1. To control a position (DEL, GND, TWR, APP or CTR) without being monitored by an Instructor or Mentor, Controllers must have a valid signoff for the position that they intend to control.

2. Position signoffs may be granted by Instructors and mentors for all positions (Returning Home Controllers and Visiting Controllers). This excludes new controllers pursuing all ratings which must have an instructor led OTS or certification statement.

3. For a signoff to be approved, Controllers must be proficient in the area they are working given at Instructor/Mentor discretion.

4. Training to obtain a position signoff will be conducted in accordance with the VATUSA 3120.4A — Division Training Policy.

5. Promotions and Testing will be conducted in accordance with the ZME 3120.4A Training Procedures and Guidelines.

6. If deemed necessary, the following actions may occur as governed by DP001:
    A. Additional training may be required of the controller.
    B. An events restriction may be placed.
    C. The controller may be removed from their position and certification pending additional training.
    D. Solo Certification removed pending additional training on the position in question.
    E. Visiting Controllers may have their privileges revoked. Visitors' home ARTCC/FIR leadership will be contacted and given discretion on how they want to resolve the issue.
    F. ZME Instructors, Mentors, ATM, DATM, TA, and TS may monitor controllers manning ZME positions and refer any action they deem necessary to the Air Traffic Manager, Deputy Air Traffic Manager, Training Administrator and Training Specialist.

Section 5: AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PROCEDURES

Purpose: This policy establishes procedures and requirements for all controllers regarding controlling at ZME.

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding controller procedures dated before this policy's effective date.

Sign on Procedures

A. Prior to connecting to VATSIM and logging in, Controller shall make themselves familiar with all pertinent information relating to the facility they will be manning.

B. A proper briefing **MUST** be received prior to assuming control and priming up. This can be accomplished by following the ZME Briefing guide located on the website.

C. Controllers should not connect with the intention of providing ATC service for less than:
   1. 30 minutes for DEL, GND and TWR positions
   2. 45 minutes for APP and DEP positions
   3. 60 minutes for CTR positions

D. Real world NOTAMs should be implemented reasonably and with common sense but should include only information that is applicable in the VATSIM environment. Real-world operational information that cannot be effectively implemented on VATSIM (e.g. equipment outages) should not be considered.

E. Controllers shall connect using only VATSIM and ZME approved callsigns. Please reference the ZME frequency list located on the website.

Coordination

A. Coordination shall take place between two ZME Controllers using the ZME TeamSpeak channel.

B. Coordination shall take place among ZME Controllers and Controllers in an adjacent ARTCCs using either the controller client Intercom facility or private messaging function.

C. ZME Controllers must be aware of how to use all Coordination methods prior to controlling a position.

Visibility Range and Center

    A. The visibility range set on the radar client at ZME shall be set in accordance with the following. It is recognized that this is less than the permitted maximum in the VATSIM Code of Conduct. The below are recommend vis ranges for various positions in ZME.
        1. CTR   300nm
        2. APP/DEP   100nm
        3. TWR   30nm
        4. DEL/GND   10nm

Signoff Procedures

    A. Controllers shall issue a ".break'" command at least 10 minutes prior to closing a facility. This allows other Controllers to see your intentions of leaving and, if they wish to take over the position, to relieve you.

    B. On closing a position, a voice transmission must be made advising all pilots that the position is closing. A ".close'" command must also be issued.

Relieving a Controller

    A. The method used for handing over a sector should be either using ZME TeamSpeak and following the ZME Briefing Guide. Voice communication shall always be used for this purpose.

ATIS/vATIS

A. The ATIS shall be formatted in accordance with the ATC Frequency Management and Information Policy (https://www.vatsim.net/air-traffic-control-frequency-and-information-management-policy).

B. ATIS shall only be provided where real-world ATIS facilities exist, as shown in the ZME Frequency List Table.

C. In accordance with the VATSIM Code of Conduct, only one ATIS connection may be made by a Controller. This must be in addition to the connection to the ZME position, and no more than these two connections may be made at any time.

D. ATIS should be connected wherever possible and practical.

Section 6: Staff Positions and Responsibilities

Purpose: This policy establishes Staff Positions and responsibilities for all staff members.

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding Staff Positions and policies before this policy's effective date.

Senior Staff (ATM, DATM, and TA)

Air Traffic Manager (ATM): Responsible for the management and overall operations of the Memphis Air Route Traffic Control Center. Primary Liaison between VATUSA and the ARTCC

Deputy Air Traffic Manager (DATM): Assists the ATM with general operations and management, proactively manages the ARTCC Roster, monitors the day-to-day activities of the ARTCC. In conjunction with the ATM updates SOPs and LOA's both Internal and External.

Training Administrator (TA): Provides leadership of all aspects of training, and manages training programs, policies, and procedures, including development of training materials, selection and oversight of instructional staff, and monitoring currency and capabilities of controllers.

Junior Staff (EC, FE, and WM)

Events Coordinator (EC): Creates plans, manages, and executes events to generate pilot and controller participation in ZME airspace.

Facility Engineer (FE): Maintains and updates sector files for all approved ATC client software and related files and applications.

Webmaster (WM): Responsible for creation, upkeep, and maintenance of the ZME website, manages all web-based applications including website and TeamSpeak ensure compliance with all VATSIM, VATNA, and VATUSA rules and policies regarding ARTCC websites, including security protocols.

Specialists (TS and ES used for internal management not official VATUSA positions)

Training Specialist (TS): Assists with training management of all students within the ARTCC. Completes any other duties assigned at the discretion of TA, ATM, and DATM.

Event Specialist (ES): Assists with event planning and management of events. Completes any other duties assigned at the discretion of the EC, ATM, and DATM.

All staff members are held to a higher standard and must control for at least *two* hours per calendar month. If a staff member is unable to control for two hours in any given month they must reach out to the ATM or DATM with a short email explanation.

Section 7: Instructor and Mentor Policy

Purpose: This policy establishes various standards and procedures regarding mentors and instructors within ZME

Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding Mentors and Instructors within ZME

1.The Mentor program is established to involve Controllers in the training of ZME students. It allows the student to work with established Controllers while gaining experience on the network. In addition, it permits the TA and Instructors to be more effective. The Mentor program also allows for training to take place when there is no Instructor available.

To be approved as a Mentor, a Controller must:
A. Be recommended by the TA, TS or an Instructor and be approved by the TA, DATM and ATM.
B. Be in good standing with ZME and VATUSA with no disciplinary record. Exceptions may be made by ZME Staff.
C. Adhere to ZME policies and training procedures and use appropriate training materials.
D. Log each session on the ZME website and VATUSA.

2.The TA, DATM or ATM may remove a Controller from the Mentor program at any time.

3.Mentors must be available to provide 2 sessions per month. A session must be in the TeamSpeak or Discord classroom.

4.Mentors will help with the assessment of a student's abilities and will make recommendations for promotions to the Instructors.

5.Any ad-hoc or non-official training provided by a ZME Controller other than a duly appointed Mentor or Instructor will not count as official training towards the student's training requirements.

Hiring Process

1. At the sole discretion of the above members of staff listed under 7.1 A controller may be contacted to enter the hiring process to join the Training Team as a mentor at ZME. The process will be as follows:

    i. After being contacted via email you will be requested to setup an interview.

    ii. Interview will be conducted by the TA at minimum. Additional staff members that our directly involved in training may be at the interview as well.

    iii. After the interview is conducted the prospective mentor can expect a response within 5 calendar days regarding a decision.

    iv. The TA will reach out to a mentor that has served for at least one calendar year and performed well in the role of being a mentor.

    v. An interview will be conducted with the TA, TS, ATM, DATM discussing the role of Instructor and if that is something the mentor is interested in.

    vi. After the interview is conducted the prospective mentor can expect a response within 5 calendar days regarding a decision.

Section 8: TeamSpeak and Discord Policy

Purpose: This policy establishes various standards and procedures regarding the proper usage of TeamSpeak and Discord.
Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding TeamSpeak and Discord

TeamSpeak

1. ZME utilizes a TeamSpeak 3 server for inter-facility coordination as well as for controller training purposes. The ZME TeamSpeak Server is operated solely on behalf of VATUSA and VATSIM. The VATSIM Code of Conduct applies to all users of this server.
2. Controllers must connect to the TeamSpeak server with their full name as it appears on their VATSIM account.
3. TeamSpeak server usage is a privilege, and any controller may be removed from the server, temporarily or permanently at the ATM/DATM discretion.
4. Controllers should keep non-essential chat to a minimum when others are controlling. If you want to have a conversation non-controlling related, please move to a separate channel other than ones focused on controlling.
5. If you are streaming and in TeamSpeak you must indicate, you are streaming eg. Corey Burt (Streaming) this must remain in your nickname. Also, if any member does not want to be included in the stream you must move to a separate channel while streaming.
6. In regard to streaming the TeamSpeak and Discord must ***NOT*** be shown on screen as these are private to ZME members and visitors and should not be shown to the public.

Discord

1. Discord is used as our primary communication for "ad-hoc" staff-ups and general chatting. Discord is **NOT** to be used for active coordination and controlling unless TeamSpeak is down.

2. Controllers can connect to the Discord by clicking on the invite link located under their profile on the ZME Website after they join the server it will instruct them to put their name and rating in Role Request. A staff member or bot will then assign them a role and they will have full access.

3. Discord server usage is a privilege, and any controller may be removed from the server, temporarily or permanently for breaking any of the rules listed under the #rules channel.
4. The ZME Discord falls under this SOP and the VATSIM CoC.

Section 9: Events Policy

Purpose: This policy establishes various standards and procedures
regarding Events.
Cancellation: This cancels all previous policies regarding Events within ZME

Events

1) An organized ZME event shall be advertised on the ZME website.
2) Controllers wishing to control during an event shall sign up for
   event positions on the ZME website.
3) Controllers signing up for an event position must be certified to control
   at that position. ACE Team are excluded in this requirement.
4) Final position assignments for events are at the sole discretion of the
   CIC for the event. Consideration for position assignments will include:
   A. Controllers past online activity
   B. Controller's rank
   C. Controller's experience and ability to control in high
      workload situations.
5) Controllers signing up for an event are expected to remain available for
   the entire event unless prior agreement with the CIC has been obtained.
6) The event CIC may assign, reassign, or remove any Controller from a
   position as they deem necessary. Controllers may also be cycled into and
   out of positions during events.
7) Any ZME position being manned during a ZME hosted event must be
   approved by the CIC, even if not directly related to the event.

Information contained within this document is designed and intended specifically for use in a virtual air traffic control environment. It is not applicable to, nor should it be referenced for, live operations in the National Airspace System (NAS).

This information is for use on the VATSIM Network ONLY. vZME ARTCC, VATUSA, VATNA or VATSIM ARE NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) OR ANY REAL-WORLD AVIATION OR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL ENTITY. This is NOT the FAA or the REAL-WORLD Memphis Air Route Traffic Control Center.

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