

the Winnipeg FIR

FIR GENERAL POLICY

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Revision Log

Revision Date	Revision	Notes	Initials
1 Mar 2024	1	Changes to comply with GCAP. Removal of section 2.0 related to training due to the creation of the FIR Training Policy.	TH
1 Oct 2024	2	Amendments of controller inactivity procedures. Implementation of TVCP policies.	DO
20 Dec 2025	3	Amendments of controller inactivity procedures. Updates to authorizations	KD
07 Jul 2026	4	Updates to activity policy in order to be GCAP compliant and standardized with division	NP

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Section I – Activity and FIR News

1.1 FIR Updates

As a controller in the Winnipeg Flight Information Region (FIR), each member is expected to remain current with any policies, procedures, and general updates regarding the FIR. Controllers are expected to use up-to-date sector files, updating as soon as practical following new releases from the FIR staff.

Any updates that are considered critical - meaning, knowledge of information that is immediately impacting the Winnipeg FIR and their operations, is to be published on the Official Winnipeg FIR's 'Policies and Procedures updates' discord channel, as well as in any voice and text chat rooms (Discord, TeamSpeak3, etc.) that are affected.

1.2 Controlling Time Commitment

While remaining up-to-date on all FIR policies and procedures, Winnipeg FIR controllers are also expected to commit a small portion of time to remain current within the FIR. These requirements only apply to hours controlled in the Winnipeg FIR, meaning any hours obtained in other FIRs/ARTCCs/vACCs do not apply to a controller's Winnipeg FIR hours.

All controllers, home and visiting, are expected to control a minimum of three (3) hours per standard quarterly period (i.e. Jan–Mar, Apr–Jun, Jul–Sep, Oct–Dec).

Activity checks are routinely conducted by FIR staff to ensure that both home and visiting controllers are meeting their quarterly commitment. For home controllers with visiting status in other facilities, the activity check also verifies that at least half of their hours are completed on Winnipeg FIR positions. Section 1.4 describes these visiting policies.

Controllers that do not meet activity requirements will be subject to removal from the FIR in accordance with section 1.3.

1.2.1 Leave of Absence (LOA)

Leave of Absences may be requested by controllers requiring extended periods of time away from the network. By default, LOAs have a maximum length of 6 months. In special circumstances, the duration of an LOA may be increased at the discretion of the FIR Chief.

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To request an LOA, controllers should email the FIR Chief directly. Once ready to return to activity, controllers shall contact the FIR Chief to terminate their LOA. By default, a reorientation is required for any members returning from LOA after 3 calendar months of inactivity. The scope and duration of the reorientation is at the discretion of the Chief Instructor upon evaluation of the controller's experience and period of inactivity.

Hourly requirements do not apply to controllers on an LOA. While on an LOA, controllers are not to control in the Winnipeg FIR until the LOA has been terminated.

1.3 Controller Inactivity

Any controller that is unable to reach and/or surpass the minimum hour requirement (listed in section 1.2) will be contacted by a member of the Winnipeg FIR Staff at the end of the quarter to inform them that they did not reach their activity requirement for the previous quarter.

If a controller has not met their 3-hour minimum by the end of that period, they will be sent a warning by Winnipeg FIR Staff, along with a 14-day window to regain the 3-hour minimum. If, at the end of that 14-day window, the controller is still under the 3-hour requirement, they will be removed from the FIR (VATCAN.ca and FIR website).

If a member is removed and re-joins the FIR, a re-certification, containing any updates missed, and confirming the controller is fit to control again, will be then completed by a Winnipeg FIR Instructor prior to the user's recertification.

1.4 Visiting Controllers

By default, any VATSIM controller with a rating of S3 or above is considered eligible to visit in the Winnipeg FIR. However, a visitor application may be rejected if the member:

- has not met Winnipeg FIR controller activity requirements (as described in section 1.2) in the previous 2 quarters;
- has not completed at least 50 hours on positions requiring their current rating within their current home allocation; or
- has a history of disciplinary issues in the previous year.

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Once an application to visit is accepted, it is the responsibility of the FIR staff to make contact with the controller, discuss their time constraints, and find a mutual time to begin indoctrination training. Any FIR instructor is eligible to complete visiting checkouts. Much like new home controllers, visiting controllers are subject to a waitlist.

S3 controllers are not permitted to conduct training for a new rating in a facility they are visiting. Additionally, if an S3 controller has a solo endorsement in their home facility, they cannot control the same level position in the facility they are visiting. For instance, if an S3 controller from the Toronto FIR has a solo endorsement for an enroute position, they may not control an enroute position in the Winnipeg FIR as a visitor with that endorsement.

A visiting controller that is awarded a new rating from their home facility may not control the positions that their new rating permits in the Winnipeg FIR until they have been cleared by the Chief Instructor following a review of policies and procedures and a familiarization with the airspace. For instance, an S3 controller from the Moncton FIR who visits the Winnipeg FIR and has been awarded the C1 rating may not control Winnipeg enroute control positions until cleared by the Chief Instructor.

1.4.1 Visiting Fast Tracking

Controllers applying for visiting status from within one of VATCAN's subdivisions may be eligible for a fast tracked visiting training process.

This process, which is to be agreed upon between instructor and student, will skip basic Canadian ATC training in favour of a shorter course on Winnipeg ACC airspace-specific information.

1.4.2 Visitor Inactivity

Visiting controllers in the Winnipeg FIR must abide by all Winnipeg FIR Standard Operating Procedures, as well as the FIR General Policy. Therefore, visiting controllers must meet activity requirements as described in section 1.2.

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1.4.3 Home Controllers Visiting other Facilities

Any controller who chooses to visit another facility must control at least half of their hours within their home facility. For example, a Winnipeg controller that controls 3 hours in Toronto and 4 hours in Edmonton must control at least 7 hours in Winnipeg.

If a home controller fails to meet this requirement, an email will be sent to controlling facilities they visit and, at the discretion of those facilities, the controller's visiting rights may be suspended until they return to good standing.

1.5 Transfers

Controllers wishing to transfer into or out of Winnipeg must have completed at least 50 hours on positions requiring their current rating in their home facility. They must also ensure that 90 days have passed since their last new rating, transfer, or return to their home facility after an unsuccessful transfer.

Additionally, controllers must have no disciplinary history in the past year and must have met the activity requirements of the facility they wish to transfer into for the previous two quarters.

1.5.1 Transfers into Winnipeg

Controllers transferring into Winnipeg are subject to a local induction plan, which is outlined in section 1.5 of the FIR Training Policy. Should a controller not complete the local induction plan within 90 days, the controller shall be transferred back to their previous facility and the transfer deemed unsuccessful. Controllers must then wait 90 days before requesting another transfer.

1.5.2 Transfers out of Winnipeg

If a controller transfers out of the Winnipeg FIR and wishes to visit and control Winnipeg FIR positions they were previously permitted to, they can do so without needing any training or assessment, as long as they submit their request within 3 months of requesting the transfer.

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Section II – FIR Staff

2.0 FIR Chain of Command

The Winnipeg FIR staff team is formed by the following different roles:

- FIR Chief, ZWG1
- Deputy FIR Chief, ZWG2
- Chief Instructor, ZWG3
- Events Coordinator, ZWG4
- Facility Engineer, ZWG5
- Webmaster, ZWG6

2.1 Hiring of Staff

When a staff position is either created, or a new position is created and therefore is vacant, a position can be filled by the incumbent Winnipeg FIR Staff.

When the FIR Chief is said vacant position, the applicant selected must also be approved by the VATCAN Division Director. Otherwise, any hiring decision is at the discretion of the FIR Chief, or can be voted upon by a panel of members of the FIR Staff if deemed necessary.

2.1.1 Removal of Staff

With the exception of the FIR Chief, in the event that the FIR requires the removal of a staff member for any reason, the FIR shall vote on the removal of the member. A majority (half of staff voting, plus one) is required to pass the motion, as with any other standard vote-requiring procedure. For example, when fully staffed, the FIR should have 5 voting parties on the removal of a staff member, making the majority 3.

The staff member in question shall be informed of the change via email and/or voice communication, and a posting for the position will be created as required.

The FIR Chief's removal is the responsibility of the Division Director - no voting is required.

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2.1.2 Resignation of Staff

If a member of the Winnipeg FIR wishes to resign from their position, the protocol for stepping down is as follows:

FIR Chief (ZWG1)	All Other FIR Staff (ZWG2+)
The FIR Chief shall submit their resignation directly to the VATCAN Division Director, VATCAN1. It is also suggested that they inform their FIR Staff about the resignation as soon as the message to VATCAN1 is sent. The resignation of this position should be given with a minimum of seven (7) days notice.	FIR Staff should inform the FIR Chief and Deputy Chief (if applicable) of their intent to resign from their position, preferably with as much notice as possible as to create more ability for controllers to apply to the vacancy.

Applications for the vacant position, as is with any other form of removal, will be posted as required.

2.2 Observing Callsigns

When observing, all Winnipeg controllers and/or students are required to logon using a list of options for callsigns. These are either WPG_*Initials*_OBS (eg. WPG_KD_OBS), WPG_OBS, or *Initials*_OBS (eg. DO_OBS.)

When staff are observing, they may use any of the above callsigns, as well as WPG *Staff Number* (eg. WPG1).

Controllers who are not certified to control may login as an observer, but may not login as any controller position.

2.3 Mentor Status Promotions

The Winnipeg FIR offers mentorship statuses to students who hold a minimum of a Student 3 (S3) rating, and have expressed interest in teaching other controllers.

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Mentors are certified to assist controllers with any rating lower than their current rating. They are able to oversee students on the network as *Airport_M_Position* (eg. CYWG_M_TWR.) Students are required to have at least one session with their assigned Instructor prior to a mentor beginning to monitor them on their position. Instructors must indicate that a student is permitted to be mentored on the network. This is generally done in the training team channel on the FIR Discord or as a comment in the student's training notes.

Mentors are not expected to teach new topics to students as that is the responsibility of the instructor. Instead, mentors should be course correcting students and ensuring that they are using proper phraseology and following applicable policies and procedures.

Mentors are typically selected based on the following credentials:

- Minimum of 15 controlling hours within the previous 90 days.
- Clear knowledge of their current rating and its included positions.
- Good standing within the VATSIM network and VATCAN.
- Recommendation from a staff member internally and/or externally from the FIR.
- Current training demands.

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2.4 Instructor Rating Promotions

Instructors are typically selected based on the following credentials:

- Must currently hold a C1 or C3 rating with 50 hours on said rating.
- Must currently hold mentor status for a minimum of 60 days.
- Minimum of 20 controlling hours within the previous 90 days.
- Must not be marked as inactive, and must have achieved the minimum hour requirement(s) within the previous quarter.
- Clear knowledge of their current rating and its included positions.
- Good standing within the VATSIM network and VATCAN.
- Current training demands.

Any members of the FIR who are interested in being promoted to I1 should contact the FIR Chief or the Chief Instructor.

While a mentor status can be approved by the FIR staff, an Instructor rating requires the approval from both the FIR and VATCAN executive staff, specifically the Division Training Director, VATCAN3.

Mentor and instructor appointments must always abide by VATCAN's Mentor and Instructor Guidelines. All applicants for mentor and instructor promotions are expected to complete a VATCAN training course for this promotion, as well as any required additional FIR-specific training deemed necessary by the Chief Instructor.

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Section III – Communication Platforms

3.1 Official FIR Communication Platforms

The Winnipeg FIR currently uses three platforms for FIR communications - meaning, an area for all controllers to chat, as well as for coordination during active controlling. The FIR currently uses both the Winnipeg Discord and VATCAN Discord servers, as well as the VATCAN TeamSpeak3 server and EuroScope's VCCS system.

The VATCAN TeamSpeak server and EuroScope's built-in VCCS are the only approved methods of communication for coordinating aircraft. Discord platforms shall only be used in cases of outages causing no other options for coordination.

The VATCAN TeamSpeak server, Winnipeg Discord, and the VATCAN Discord are all subject to the VATSIM Code of Conduct. All members are expected to maintain a professional demeanor at all times while using any official communication platforms.

3.2 Coordination Between Controllers

The Winnipeg FIR uses TeamSpeak for all coordination of aircraft, as mentioned above. Winnipeg controllers are required to be available on the VATCAN TeamSpeak server to coordinate when any other Winnipeg controllers, or adjoining controllers, are also controlling. The FIR retains the ability to, without any prior notification, revoke any user's access to the FIR's Discord for any reason within reason.

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Authorizations

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