

NOTICE

ZTL AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER

ZTL 1030.1A

ZTL: ATLANTA DIVISION VATUSA

Air Traffic Organization Directive

Effective Date:
September 17, 2012

Cancellation Date:
September 16, 2013

SUBJ: Initial Event Response vZTL Minor Trifecta

1. **Purpose of This Notice.** This directive transmits areas of concerns noticed during vZTLs Minor Trifecta Event that took place on September 16, 2012.
2. **Audience.** vZTL Administrative and Training Staff and Controllers partaking in the vZTL Minor Trifecta event on September, 16th 2012 except for center certified members holding a C1 or higher.
3. **Action.** For controllers to recognize these areas of concerns and take proper actions on correcting these concerns.
4. **Background.** During the vZTL Minor Trifecta Event many errors regarding controlling and facility procedures as well as areas of professionalism were noticed. This document has been created to notify the vZTL facility members so they may recognize and identify these concerns and work towards correcting these mistakes.
5. **Content**

After last night there are a few areas of concerns I wish to address. Last night many of the staff and other senior level controllers including myself noticed way to many errors that we need to improve on. The goal here is not to bash or call out anyone, but we all need some constructive criticism to help us improve.

1. Muted on Teamspeak

- a. If you are muted on Teamspeak than no one can coordinate with you an there is no point of being on TS. Take the time to set up a teamspeak profile that you can turn on while controller that causes Teamspeak to use a lower volume than your controlling software. This way the pilots will always be louder on frequency than those of us in teamspeak and you will have no trouble hearing either one. There were multiple occasions where someone attempted to coordinate only to be followed by, "he is muted." Looking at Teamspeak myself there were multiple occasions where 3, 4, 5, even up to 6 active controllers were muted on Teamspeak.
- b. In regards to this we do also need to keep the amount of chatter down in the controlling channels of teamspeak, but we also need to be in those channels while controlling. Here is something new that we can try to see how it works. Teamspeak has the ability to open multiple tabs. While controlling, connect to teamspeak in one tab and remain in the controlling channel. Then if you wish to join and partake in chatter, connect in a second

tab and move to a lobby room while keeping your other tab located in the controlling channel. Again take the time to set this up and have it working properly before any further busy events. This is not something to try the day of an event when you get busy and are left not prepared and mute yourself.

- c. Unrelated to being muted on teamspeak but related to appropriate teamspeak behavior, two controllers were bickering regarding a procedure. Moved to a channel with many other controllers to question such procedure, then resumed their bickering in the channel with all of the other controllers.
 - i. First the bickering was childish and not necessary
 - ii. Even though it was not necessary if it does happen take yourself to a channel with no one else in it so other do not have to witness you bickering and cause negative reflections on yourself or the membership you represent.
 - 1. These two had to be moved to a separate channel by staff.
 - a. (Keep in mind this was not fighting and no harsh feelings were displayed, just childish bickering which did not reflect the professionalism we wish to display.)

2. Logging in and out of Positions

- a. I counted 4 controllers that signed onto a position while a controller was already covering such position and not only did they not get a briefing, they did not even tell the other controller he was coming online.
 - i. That airspace belongs to the controller already providing services until it is stated by such controller that it is your control. If I was the controller covering such positions I would have continued to control any traffic I had coming in and out of that particular area.
 - ii. Steps to take when logging onto a position.
 - 1. Inform the controller covering the position you are coming online before you even connect to the network
 - 2. Set up your controlling software
 - 3. Monitor the position of which you are taking over and insure you and your software is ready to control and working properly
 - 4. Self-review the position you are taking over. Review weather, check IDS, setup ATIS (if necessary), review inbound and outbound flights and flight strips
 - 5. Receive briefing
 - 6. Prime your frequency and begin controlling while continuing to monitor the other controller for at least 2 minutes to ensure a smooth transfer
 - iii. Last night, One controller asked for a briefing on a position that not only did not sign in to or review the information they were still controlling another position!? Then when they did make the switch they had aircraft on their frequency and did not have time to properly set up their controlling software and was trying to control when they could not even see any aircraft. Not acceptable. Again you should have everything set up before you begin to control. Failure to do so reflects negatively not only on you but also on the entire facility when the pilots are affected by such mistakes.

- b. Controllers were also logging off without notifying those working above them or the CIC.
 - i. Prior to leaving a position you must abide by vZTL Policy E. 4.
 - 1. “Controllers shall give no less than a five (5) minute warning to all pilots and surrounding controllers online that the position will be closing (unless being relieved).”
 - ii. This is not acceptable

3. Controller Callsigns

- a. There were some cases where controller callsigns were not used properly.
 - i. Some of this blame partially lies with your staff as it may not have been textually outlined and has recently just been spread word of mouth.
- b. Operational position call signs
 - i. Controllers shall use the following format: XXX_YY_ZZZ
 - 1. XXX = Facility ID (ie. CLT,ATL,AVL,BHM etc).
 - 2. YY= Sequence Number, always starting with 1. (ie. ATL_1_APP, ATL_1_CTR, PDK_1_TWR etc).
 - 3. ZZZ = Your Facility. (ie. DEL,GND,TWR,DEP,APP, or CTR).

4. Improper Controlling procedures and techniques

- a. Tower Cab noticed errors
 - i. Loose phraseology.
 - 1. It was noticed that phraseology needs to be practiced. There were a few times I noticed by some controller that stated “umm” between every statement.
 - a. ...cleared to xxx airport, umm, maintain, umm, four thousand, umm, departure frequency, umm, etc
 - ii. Incorrect information given
 - 1. As a controller it is your duty to know your airport and the surrounding airspace. Multiple people were confused about what radar facilities covered their airport, what the departure frequency was, etc.
 - a. Someone assigned the center frequency to a pilot as the departure frequency when there was a TRACON providing radar services in the surrounding area
 - b. Someone wanted to log in as LZU_APP and JQF_APP, facilities that do not exist. I hope we quickly realize that not every tower has its own TRACON.
 - i. The facilities that provided radar services to any tower cab can be found in the AFD or Airport Facility Directory. These are available online at such places as airnav.com and skyvector.com

- iii. Lack of coordination with radar facilities
 - 1. At airports not covered by SOP and LOAs with the radar facility shall receive a departure release prior to departing an IFR aircraft, unless you are an S1 of which you need to receive a departure release regardless of SOP or LOA.
 - 2. Lack of coordination regarding the runways in use and the type of approaches in use between Tower and Radar
- b. TRACON Noticed errors
 - i. Improper techniques of automated handoffs
 - 1. Departures that were climbing and will enter center airspace where consistently flashed to such center controllers an radio communications switched too late causing the aircraft to stop his/her climb before getting in contact with such center controller.
 - a. There is no set altitude that this shall happen, but simply that once you are finished reviewing and or changing any information in the aircrafts datablock, flight strip or flight plan; transfer the radar ID to center to allow plenty of time for coordination and transfer of radio communications before the aircraft reaches the top altitudes of your airspace.
 - 2. Violations of the Class B airspace
 - a. Was noticed that a VFR aircraft in communications with ATC climbed through the ATL class B without a clearance and the controller in communication with such pilot did not notice the violation nor instruct the aircraft to remain clear of the Class B when it was observed that they were going to penetrate the class B without a clearance.
 - 3. Violations of the MVA and MEA
 - a. The Minimum Vectoring Altitude(MVA) is just that the minimum altitude you may vector an aircraft and an Minimum Enroute Altitude (MEA) is the minimum altitude a pilot is able to fly on a published route or procedure. A pilot navigating on an airway with a published MEA of 3700 was instructed to descend to 2000 feet. The pilot was later given a vector eliminating the MEA and activating the MVA, however the MVA was 3000 and directly in front of the pilot was an antenna field with a published MVA of 3400. The 2000 foot altitude assigned endangered the aircraft by becoming too close to the ground and other surface based obstacles.

After the Atlanta Live event I was extremely impressed by how smooth of an event it was from all controlling facilities and members. Last night showed that we still have a lot of work to do both staff and membership. The blame for each of these does not fall on any one person or facility but on the overall membership. This was an event which hosted all S1 training fields and therefore should have been very basic and simple. However, it seems as if we still struggle with doing just the basics.

For those of us in training, I think we all need to take a step back from always trying to get that next certification and find where we still need to improve on our current ones. There was only one member last night that was controlling a position of which he had just received certification for. Most others have been rated and certified to provide services as such positions for quite some time and yet all of these mistakes were noticed. Again there is no intent to point out or assign blame to any member, but please find the areas that directly affected you and think about how you and the rest of the membership can improve to correct everything above. I place a lot of the blame not only for these items above but also for a not so well choreographed and organized event on myself. I attempted to sit back and watch to see if a leader would step up and control their facility and hold each other accountable for their mistakes. I see we still have a lot of work to do in these areas but it will only be a team effort for us to improve in these areas. In less than 2 months, which is not far away, is our Friday Night Ops of which we all will have to display a much more professional environment. Feel free to post any comments and questions you may have.



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