

FLYING WITH vZTL

INTRODUCTION

Fellow aviators, we at ZTL are undergoing a paradigm shift in the current months. We are implementing new procedures and policies to make your VATSIM experience more memorable. A lot of time, energy, and effort have been voluntarily spent to make vZTL a center of ATC excellence. The real ZTL is the world's busiest air traffic facility. More airplanes are pushed through their airspace than anywhere else in the world, by a large margin. We at vZTL have adopted many of the real procedures used by our real world counterpart to create an environment that is efficient, realistic, and a lot of fun to be in. Before we begin, make sure you have an updated KATL AFCAD file. This will allow the controllers to utilize runway 10/28, which had not been completed during the release of FS2004 or FSX. Please take a few minutes and read this guide for pilots...you'll be glad you did.

CLEARANCE AND RAMP CONTROL AT KATL

Once you're ready to begin your VATSIM experience, check the ATIS (preferably voice) to see what's going on at the airport. The controllers are going to want to know you have the current ATIS, so make sure you let them know when you have it. Call the clearance delivery controller and pick up your clearance. This will be no different from anywhere else in VATSIM, simple enough. Make sure if you plan on flying an RNAV departure procedure that you have a chart with ALL of the DP's fixes depicted on it. If your FMS doesn't have all the fixes in it for the appropriate departure, either add them manually or **DO NOT USE THE RNAV PROCEDURE**...simply re-file with the ATL5 departure with the appropriate transition. You may have to wait until you are assigned a runway to make sure you have all the appropriate fixes in your database. The ATL_DEL position will not give you a runway to expect, this will come from ground control, we'll get to that shortly. The delivery controller may or may not tell you to call ramp control for pushback. Ramp control is designated as ATL_R_GND. This person owns the entire terminal ramp at the airport. This does not include any cargo or general aviation ramps. Once you've completed your pre-flight duties, received your clearance, and you're ready to go, call the ramp control freq and let them know your call sign, gate, and departure transition. Ex: **"RAMP, DELTA NINE FIFTY, CHARLIE THRITY SIX, DAWGS."** or **"RAMP, DELTA NINE FIFTY, TANGO TEN, EAST TWO."**

The ramp controller will give you instructions and which way to pushback (this will be your first indication as to which runway you'll be using). The clearance might sound like this. Ex: **"DELTA NINE FIFTY, CLEARED TO PUSH TAIL NORTH, ADVISE READY TO TAXI."** or **"DELTA NINE FIFTY, CLEARED TO PUSH, TAIL NORTH INTO THE LEFT SIDE ALLEY-WAY, ADVISE READY TO**

TAXI.” or “DELTA NINE FIFTY, GIVE WAY TO THE COMPANY MD-88 TAXING LEFT SIDE TO FOUR SOUTH, CLEARED TO PUSH TAIL SOUTH.”

The ramps have two centerlines for taxiing within them. One is the left side; one is the right side...these are known as alleyways. The controller will call them left side or right side based on YOUR position to them. It will always be your left or your right once you've pushed back into the tail north/south position. Once you've pushed, started the engines and are ready to taxi, call the ramp back and let them know you're ready to go. They will tell you which alleyway to use to exit the ramp. Each ramp at ATL is numbered and each edge has a number with a cardinal direction identifier. Please refer to the ATL airport diagram for ramp numbers. The ramp controller will tell you to taxi to these identifiers. Ex:

“DELTA NINE FIFTY, TAXI STRAIGHT AHEAD TO FOUR SOUTH AND HOLD SHORT, CONTACT GROUND POINT SEVEN FIVE.” or “DELTA NINE FIFTY, TAXI TO FIVE NORTH VIA THE LEFT SIDE AND HOLD SHORT, GROUND POINT NINER.” or “DELTA NINE FIFTY, TRANSITION TO THE RIGHT SIDE AROUND THE CITRUS SEVEN SEVENTEEN AHEAD AND TAXI TO THREE SOUTH AND HOLD SHORT, GROUND POINT SEVEN FIVE.” It's very simple; they are going to taxi you around everybody who isn't moving just yet to get you to the edge of the ramp. Once you reach the edge of the ramp...STOP!!!

Ground control will take over now. Keep in mind; the ATL_R_GND position is not combined to any other position when it's closed. No other position will provide ramp control service. In the event that ATL_R_GND is closed, it is the pilot's responsibility to push back safely and taxi to the edge of the ramp to contact ground control.

OUTBOUND GROUND CONTROL

Once you are at the ramp's edge, contact ground control on the appropriate frequency and let them know you are ready. **ALWAYS HAVE A CURRENT AIRPORT DIAGRAM NEARBY!!** Asking for progressive taxi instructions during a busy event takes up a lot of time and slows the entire system down. The only thing you need to tell ground control on initial contact is your call sign, ramp edge identifier, and the current ATIS code. Ex: **“GROUND UNITED SIXTEEN TWENTY, FOUR SOUTH, TAXI WITH BRAVO.”** The above example is ALL you need to tell ground control. We at ZTL have internal coordination procedures amongst positions, so any further information given to ground control is considered excess verbiage. The ground controller will give you your departure runway and the taxi route to get there. Sometimes the ground controller will tell you to hold short of another taxiway or runway, it is IMPERITIVE that you read the hold short restrictions back EXACTLY as they were given to you. Occasionally you will be told to give way to another aircraft, that just means, “yield to” or “let that guy pass”. Occasionally the ground controller will tell you to follow another aircraft, just follow that aircraft's path to the runway or holding position cleared to. At any time, if a clearance isn't clear-cut, please question the ground controller. It's better to ask questions than to make an easily avoidable mistake by assuming. Always follow the exact taxi route given by the ground

controller. We use different routes to and from the runway, this increases the efficiency in ground movements, thereby getting you on your way without having to sit and wait. Once the ground controller is finished with you, they will tell you to contact or monitor the tower controller. Contact means switch frequencies and check on with the tower controller. Monitor means switch frequencies and wait for the tower controller to call you. During busy times, we will use monitor verses contact. Please do not contact the tower controller when you were told to monitor the tower. Using the above mentioned coordination procedures, the tower knows you're there and they will call you when they are ready for you. Ex: **“NORTHWEST TWO TEN, MONITOR TOWER, ONE ONE NINER POINT THREE.”** If you follow these simple procedures and do exactly as the controller tells you, your flight simming experience will be incredible...especially during busy periods.

DEPARTURE TOWER

If told to monitor the tower controller, the controller will call you and tell you what they need you to do. Ninety nine point nine percent of the time, the first clearance you receive will be a position and hold clearance. Pull onto the runway and hold your position until you receive a departure clearance. You may sit for a couple minutes while the tower controller crosses arrival traffic across your runway to get them back to their respective gates. You may also sit and absorb a wake turbulence delay period. No matter the reason, sit and enjoy the sights and sounds of VATSIM ATC while you wait. Once your runway is clear, the tower controller will issue a takeoff clearance to you. This clearance will consist of a departure heading to be flown at the middle marker. Please do not turn to this heading until you reach the middle marker or the end of the runway. When you fly this heading, disengage the LNAV feature of your auto-flight system and fly the heading by another means. This will ensure separation between you and aircraft departing from other runways. In the real world, this is used for noise abatement to keep aircraft from making low turns over the towns of Hapeville and Riverdale. The tower controller will remind you of your heading when switching you to departure. Ex: **“MERCURY SEVENTY FIVE TWENTY, HEADING TWO NINER ZERO, CONTACT DEPARTURE.”**

ATLANTA DEPARTURE CONTROL

When you check in with departure control, let them know your current altitude and your assigned altitude. You don't need to tell them anything else unless it is something out of the ordinary. Remember, at this point you are still flying your assigned heading. Ex: **“DEPARTURE, DELTA ONE SIXTY, TWO THOUSAND NINER HUNDRED FOR ONE ZERO THOUSAND.”** The departure controller will radar identify you at this point with a simple “radar contact”. Once you are a sufficient distance from the airport, the controller will either turn you to a new heading or clear you direct to an intermediate fix to join your filed RNAV procedure. If you are flying the ATL 5 departure, you won't be cleared on course until you talk to the center controller. The controller may clear you all the way to

the last fix on the departure procedure, this is all traffic dependant. Once you are clear of other traffic, the controller will issue you a climb to either 12 or 14 thousand...depending on your type aircraft. If the controller issues a speed restriction, fly that speed until told otherwise...you may be on that assigned speed until you talk to the center controller. Once the departure controller is finished setting you up on the appropriate departure, its time to talk to the center controller.

EN-ROUTE

The departure controller will hand you off to the center climbing to either 12 or 14 thousand feet. If you're on the ATL 5 SID, the center controller will clear you on course...remember to stay on the last assigned heading until cleared on course. Depending on how the center positions are configured, you may stopped at FL230 and handed off to a high altitude sector. If the positions are combined, you may be climbed to your requested cruising altitude on initial contact. The center controller may clear you to a downstream fix in your flight plan, something 2 or 3 fixes past what you were planning. This is done for traffic situations, or maybe just to give you a shortcut. If you are asked to report traffic in sight by the center controller, make sure you do-so as soon as you're sure you have the called traffic in sight. You may be asked to report passing traffic, please do so as soon as the traffic passes behind you. Depending on where you are going, you may be assigned a speed or a Mach number for in-trail spacing to an airport. Always maintain the assigned speed until further advised by ANY controller. You will eventually be handed off to an adjacent facility and on your way. If you are handed off from one center controller to another, you do not need to check on with your current position. The controller obviously took the handoff and already knows where you are. All you need to say is your call sign and your altitude or your assigned altitude. Now, lets do this all in reverse...

ARRIVAL EN-ROUTE

Contrary to popular belief, arrival en-route sectors are among the busiest in the world. They are responsible for delivering scads of airplanes joining a single arrival from numerous transitions to an approach control with minimum spacing. VATSIM is no different from the real world in this aspect. If there is an event in progress or an otherwise high level of traffic, the controllers will be very busy and will expect you to follow their commands quickly and precisely. You will enter ZTL airspace on a published STAR into Atlanta. **DO NOT DESCEND TO MEET THE PUBLISHED ALTITUDES ON THE STAR PLATE UNLESS ADVISED BY ATC.** The STAR plate will show altitudes, but the control instructions given by the controller supersedes anything depicted on the chart. The ZTL controller will descend you to the appropriate altitudes and possibly clear you to downstream fixes on the arrival. This is done to gain a controller advantage in separating all the arrivals from one another. You may be given assigned airspeeds to maintain or gain some sort of in-trail spacing to Atlanta. Remember; fly that assigned

speed until told otherwise by ATC. You will eventually be given a crossing restriction on the arrival. This is considered a pilot's discretion clearance. You can stay at your altitude until you need to depart that altitude to meet the restriction. You will probably be given a crossing speed as well...Ex: **"DELTA NINE, CROSS DIRTY AT AND MAINTAIN ONE THREE THOUSAND AND TWO FIVE ZERO KNOTS."** This means you can do whatever you need to do, JUST CROSS DIRTY AT 13 and 250 KNOTS. However, you are expected to maintain any assigned speed until you absolutely must begin reducing that speed to make the restriction. Maintain the crossing restriction speed until advised by approach control...by this point, you will more than likely be flying assigned speeds the rest of the way into ATL. If things reach a point where the airspace is saturated, you may be cleared into holding. You will be assigned a published hold, so make sure you have the appropriate STAR charts that depict the published holds. Please be familiar with holding manually or have a hold function in your FMS before flying a STAR on a busy event day. If you are absolutely unable to hold, you may request delay vectors. Please try and hold if able, delay vectors should be a last resort only, they are a heavy workload issue for the controller. You will be switched to approach control before reaching your crossing fix, make sure you have already picked up the ATIS by this point.

APPROACH CONTROL

When you check on with Atlanta Approach, say only your current altitude, your assigned altitude, and the ATIS code you have listened to. Ex: **"APPROACH, UNITED EIGHT TWENTY, SIXTEEN POINT EIGHT FOR ONE THREE THOUSAND, BRAVO."** Approach control is also busy and doesn't need the excess verbiage of position reports and other non-essential information. The controller will respond with your expected runway assignment. You should know what approach to expect by what is on the ATIS. If you will be getting a different type of approach than what is advertised on the ATIS, approach will advise you on initial contact. ALWAYS have the localizer tuned for the appropriate runway, even if you are to expect the visual approach...you may be told to join the localizer. Approach control will be making traffic advisories to you throughout your arrival into Atlanta. Make sure you report the traffic in sight when you actually see the called traffic. Always have the ILS approach plate out and ready to use, as the controllers use the outer marker names as contact points for the tower. After you have been cleared for the approach, the controller may tell you to maintain a speed until a fix and contact the tower at a fix. This simply means, don't reduce to your final approach speed until inside the fix and contact the tower at the fix. Ex: **"DELTA SEVEN SIXTY, CLEARED VISUAL APPROACH RUNWAY TWO SIX RIGHT, MAINTAIN ONE EIGHT ZERO KNOTS UNTIL AJAAY, CONTACT THE TOWER AT AJAAY, ONE ONE NINER POINT ONE."** This is a workload clearance for the approach controller, he knows you'll switch to the tower at a certain point and doesn't have to worry about whether he switched you or not. The tower doesn't need to talk to you until you're around 5

miles out anyway, so this ensures you aren't calling them before they can do anything. Once you've passed the contact fix, call the tower.

ARRIVAL TOWER

When you contact the tower all you need to tell them is your call sign, where you are and what you're doing. Ex: **"TOWER, DELTA TWO EIGHTY FIVE, VISUAL TWO SIX RIGHT."** or **"TOWER, AMERICAN TWENTY SIX TEN, INSIDE OF AJAAY FOR TWO SIX RIGHT."** The tower controller will advise you of any traffic you are following or that may be an issue for you. Ex: **"DELTA NINEY ONE HEAVY, ATLANTA TOWER, FIVE IN-TRAIL OF A BOEING SEVEN THIRTY SEVEN ON A TWO MILE FINAL, WINDS TWO SIX ZERO AT FIVE, RUNWAY TWO SIX RIGHT, CLEARED TO LAND."** or **"FEDEX TWO FORTY, TOWER, VFR TRAFFIC THREE NORTH OF ATLANTA AT THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED SOUTHWEST BOUND, HELICOPTER, WINDS TWO FIVE ZERO AT ONE ZERO, RUNWAY TWO SIX RIGHT, CLEARED TO LAND."** Inside of the fix you were given by approach you can begin slowing to your final approach airspeed. Once you land the tower will give you an assignment to leave the runway, it could be a left turn onto a certain taxiway or just your next left turn. You will be told to taxi to the parallel runway and hold short. **YOU MUST READ BACK THIS HOLD SHORT INSTRUCTION.** Depending on how the tower positions are configured, you may be told to monitor another tower frequency for a crossing clearance. Just as before, switch to the new frequency and wait for the controller to call you. They will call you and instruct you to cross the runway and contact ground control. They occasionally may ask you what ramp you are parking at, have this information in front of you.

INBOUND GROUND CONTROL

When you call the ground controller, tell them what ramp you are parking at. They will give you instructions to that ramp's entry point. You may be told to hold short of taxiways or to give way or follow other aircraft. If the ramp control position is open, you will be instructed to call the ramp tower by the ground controller.

INBOUND RAMP CONTROL

Call the ramp controller and let them know where you are entering the ramp and what gate you are going to. They will tell you which alleyways to take to your gate. Just like before, they may move you from alleyway to alleyway to get to your gate. Once you've pulled up to your gate...**YOU ARE FINISHED...**😊

These procedures will make your online flying experience much more realistic and keep the flow of traffic moving at all times. If at any time you have comments or questions regarding these new procedures...please let us know. We're here for both our enjoyment and yours. If you aren't having fun, we need

to know about it. Without your feedback, we won't know that some of these procedures need worked on. Keep updated on our progress by regularly checking our website at www.vztlartcc.org.

Thank for your support...and lets bring Atlanta the traffic and the popularity it deserves.