



MetroAir Virtual Airlines

Pilot Handbook v5.02

Effective July 1, 2024



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Welcome

MetroAir is something entirely different from the rest of the virtual airline community. Where other VA's simply "start operations" with 10+ aircraft and half a dozen international routes, MetroAir has been designed to emulate a real airline from the bottom up. Like the real business world, money matters! We'll grow like an airline does, calm and calculated. You can count on it. To read more about the MetroAir VA concept, visit the About Us page.

The staff members at MetroAir Virtual are committed to your enjoyment of the airline flying experience, and we will strive to provide you with the type of environment you expect. The following is a very simple credo that we management hold very close to our hearts: **Fun, Realism, Integrity & Professionalism**

Virtual Airlines may feel very real, but they are **FUN** first and foremost! Nobody likes to "work" as a hobby. Respect your fellow members, and they'll respect you. The basic rules and guidelines for being a member at MetroAir are explained in great detail below. Read them. Remember them. It will make your experience that much more enjoyable.

Welcome to MetroAir Virtual, your home away from home.



Section One

Purpose

This manual provides guidance to all MetroAir Virtual Airlines employees, both staff and pilots. It details how MetroAir Virtual operates in all matters.

Scope

This handbook is approved by the Metroair Virtual Executive Staff. All MetroAir Virtual employees, both staff and pilots, are required to carry out the directives contained herein. Failure to comply may result in penalties and administrative action or dismissal from the airline.

This document provides all pilots with a great deal of information regarding how MetroAir operates its day to day operations as well as procedures and terms of service for pilots in all circumstances with MetroAir where specific rules or guidelines must be followed. This document is revised regularly as new developments, changes, additions, or removals arise and as directed by the executive staff.

The Handbook should be read and followed by all MetroAir pilots. For those recently hired by MetroAir, this Handbook provides a wealth of information that will help the new pilot acclimatize quickly to their stay with MetroAir. Refer to this document if you have any questions about how MetroAir runs the airline, as in most cases the answers can be found here.

Changes in Policy and Procedures

This manual supersedes all previous pilot handbooks. While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, MetroAir Virtual Airlines reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures, and/or benefits described in the manual with or without prior notice to pilots.

Change Summary

- 5.02 - Updated pilot transfer hour policy. Updated pilot CAT restrictions.
- 5.01 - Addition & Deletion of certain aircraft. Introduced pilot CAT restrictions. Addition of Organizational Structure. Added new ACARS instructions. Minor wording changes
- 5.0 - New Handbook released June 2020



Section 2

Membership Requirements

- You must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- You must have a licensed copy of Flight Simulator software: FS9, FSX, P3D, Xplane, or MSFS 2020
- You must have an active email address.
- You will be required to maintain flight currency to remain a member.
- You must not have had more than two prior dismissals for currency inactivity.
- You will be bound by the regulations in this Handbook and any other directive released by the Executive Staff.

Recruitment Process

Prospective pilots are required to apply by visiting the MetroAir Virtual Airlines website and following the links to the online application. Prospective pilots will be asked to complete an online application with the following information:

- Your actual first and last name, handles, nicknames, or pseudonyms are not allowed.
- A valid email address.
- Your Vatsim Pilot ID number if applicable.

Once the application has been submitted, MetroAir's Human Resources (HR) department will review the application. Processing will include verification to ensure the VATSIM PID number is valid and in good standing. Submission of an application containing false information is grounds for rejection. Once the application has been processed, accepted applicants will receive an email informing them of their status and providing Login Credentials.

All new hires must complete their first flight within fourteen (14) days of hire.

Transfer Hours

MetroAir will accept transfer hours from a previous virtual airline or hours logged on the VATSIM network.

New members may transfer hours from one (1) Virtual Airline of their choice or their total VATSIM hours, but not both. These hours will be verified before acceptance. Applicants requesting a transfer from another virtual airline must provide an active URL to verify hours. If the virtual airline is no longer in operation, hours will be unable to be transferred.

Applicants requesting a credit for VATSIM hours must write "VATSIM" in the Transfer Hour Verification Link entry and provide a valid VATSIM ID. Transferred hours count towards your MetroAir total hours, and as such counts towards your CAT ratings for aircraft availability. However transfer hours do not count towards MetroAir achievement badges.

Transfer hours should be declared on the application to join MetroAir, however, new members will have thirty (30) days from the date of hire to request a transfer of hours. Transfer hours may not be honored



if the pilot requests the transfer more than 30 days from the initial date of their application. MetroAir will accept 40% of the requested transfer hours up to a maximum of 100 hours.

Rehiring

Members who wish to return to MetroAir may do so by using the registration page. Previous accounts will be restored, however we cannot guarantee that the account will contain all previous awards.

Any member wishing to be re-hired after being removed for inactivity will re-apply on the registration page. Pilots terminated for failure to maintain minimum flight activity and/or comply with Leave of Absence procedures may be interviewed by the HR Manager to inquire regarding the member's commitment to fulfilling the minimum flight requirements and understanding of the Leave of Absence policies.

The decision to re-hire inactive members is made at the discretion of the HR Manager. All pilots rehired will forfeit all previous awards based on pilot enlistment date.

Hub Assignments

All pilots will be assigned to the hub of their choice or, in rare cases, to a hub based on operational needs. Pilots are welcome to transfer to any hub they choose (as hubs are developed), provided that they remain at each hub for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days.

Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is an option available to members who do not believe they will be able to meet the minimum flight requirements. An LOA allows a member to remain on our roster and remove them from the restrictions of flying that may result in their removal for inactivity until they feel able to return to active status.

Leave of Absence requests will only be considered for pilots who have been employed for a minimum of 30 days. Pilots must have a minimum of one approved PIREP that was filed prior to a request for a leave of absence.

All members on LOA must remain active with the airline by logging in to the website once every forty-five (45) days. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the member's account becoming inactive and subject to termination.

An LOA is considered temporary. You should plan on resuming your minimum flight requirements within a reasonable time. If you feel you are unable to resume flight activity within six months of your leave request (A long term volunteering mission or military deployment) you should alert the HR Manager at your earliest convenience. You will not be penalized for this action and may return without penalty when you are able. Pilots who are on LOA who have not submitted an approved PIREP within six months will be removed from the roster and subject to termination.

Pilots abusing LOAs will be removed from the roster. This is considered a disciplinary termination. Any rehires will require CEO approval. One common abuse is a repetitive cycle of 1 or 2 PIREPS and then an LOA to avoid flight requirements



If you need to be placed on a leave of absence, simply request a leave of absence or contact your Hub Manager or the Human Resources Manager and they'll make the necessary arrangements.

Termination

Pilots can and will be terminated from MetroAir Virtual Airlines if they fail to comply with the LOA policy or if their behavior is called into question by another member or staff member. Pilots should respect each other at all times.

Anyone wishing to appeal their termination from MetroAir Virtual should contact the Chief Personnel Officer directly.



Section 3

Standards of Conduct

As is the case with many flight simulation-related discord/websites, freedom of speech rights are not valid here. MetroAir is privately owned and operated by Stratosphere Group, Inc. Members' use of these services is provided solely at the discretion of MetroAir Virtual Airlines and may be modified or revoked at any time. Further, MetroAir Virtual reserves the right to edit or delete offending forum posts without notification. Users shall not post or transmit material through MetroAir that:

- Violates or infringes the rights of another (such as the unauthorized posting of trademarks, Copyrighted material, and the like)
- Threatens, abuses, defames, or otherwise attacks another (such as through sociological, geographical, Political, financial, sexual or religious attacks)
- Contains profanity, vulgarity, or other obscenities
- Contains pornography or pornographic language
- Spams or otherwise has the effect of a mass advertisement or mailing.

Any reported occurrence of inappropriate behavior by our pilots (either online, in the forums, or in interchanges between members) may result in suspension, loss of seniority (to include all logged hours), and/or dismissal from MetroAir Virtual Airlines.

Whether called manners, standards of conduct, or forum etiquette, a certain level of decorum is expected at MetroAir Virtual. The membership is comprised of a large group of pilots who came to MetroAir with varied backgrounds and perspectives. It encompasses literally everything from teenagers to seventy-year-old retirees, across the U.S. and from around the world. Also, while the majority of our members are native English speakers and writers, English is a second or third language with varying levels of fluency for a significant percentage of the membership. All are welcome at MetroAir Virtual.

Discord Messaging & Support

MetroAir is pleased to offer its pilots a combined messaging, support and voice platform for all active members and selected special guests. To access this platform please click the link on the top right hand side of the website homepage.

We recommend that you download the app for discord to your computer so that you can make the best of all of its functions. It also has the option of having it available on your personal devices such as ipad or smartphone.

Please join and follow the instructions which are laid out in the 'metroair-welcome' channel.

Discord is a great platform for sharing photos, tips, tricks and suggestions to your fellow pilots. It is also the place to go for support. We also regularly meet in the voice channels for general discussions or event flights.



Any behavior that infringes upon the use or enjoyment of any other member will be considered to be unacceptable behavior. Users will refrain from attacking one another or otherwise posting in a manner so as to incite anger, discontent or other behaviors that are not considered by the moderators to be acceptable.

Members may use discord to discuss matters related to flight simulation or aviation in general. Off-topic posts are permitted only in the designated section.

Piracy

MetroAir Virtual Airlines does not condone the use of pirated software or material of any kind and takes seriously the use or transfer of pirated software and/or information, including serial numbers/passwords, through any channels presented by MetroAir, including on discord. If a member is found to be in breach of this policy the member will be terminated and the details of the piracy transaction communicated to the developer and/or reseller.

Terrorism and Misuse

Since the tragic events of the September 11th attacks in 2001, our world has become much more sensitive to commercial aircraft and aviation. Flying is a safe and enjoyable experience, one that terrorists cannot take away from us. By joining MetroAir, you understand that our website and organization is for HOBBYIST PURPOSES ONLY. Any suspicious behavior will be considered a real threat to the safety of our members, and will be reported directly and without hesitation to the Federal Government of the United States of America – no exceptions.



Section 4

Organization

The MetroAir Virtual Airlines Executive Staff serves the general membership and is the senior decision-making body at MetroAir Virtual Airlines. The Executive Staff includes:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Technology Officer
- Chief Personnel Officer
- Vice President of Scheduled Operations
- Human Resources Manager
- Director of Media & Marketing

Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is responsible for coordinating support and liaison within the organization. The CEO is also the senior member of the Board of Directors, provides guidance to the divisions at MetroAir Virtual and exercises ultimate decision-making authority for the day-to-day operations of MetroAir Virtual.

Chief Technology Officer

The Chief Technology Officer sets strategic direction and recommends policy for airline technology. The CTO will manage development of ACARS & Website and all installers for airline aircraft. The CTO reports directly to the CEO.

Chief Personnel Officer

The Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) is responsible for managing all staff and the associated policies and practices that relate to MetroAir pilots. The CPO reports directly to the CEO. The Chief Personnel Officer is assisted by two Hub Managers.

Vice President of Scheduled Operations

The Vice President of Scheduled Operations is responsible for all flight operations. This position coordinates all routes and the aircraft that are assigned to those routes.

Human Resources Manager

The Human Resources Manager is responsible for processing pilot applications and promotions, filling MetroAir staff positions, and maintaining pilots' database records.



Director of Media & Marketing

The Director of Media & Marketing is responsible for internal and external communications, to include information announcements, press releases, publicity for MetroAir Virtual activities, and enhancing MetroAir's image in the virtual airline world.

Supporting Staff

There are several staff positions at MetroAir Virtual Airlines that are vital to the daily operation of the airline. These positions include:

- Boston and Los Angeles Hub Mangers
- Regional Hub Manager
- Operations Analyst
- Media & Marketing Team Member
- Financial Analyst
- Fleet Director

Section 5

Pilot Ranks

All new pilots start out with an empty Logbook. Credit is given for verified hours, on a 1:1 basis, up to a maximum of one thousand (1000) hours. This is a one-time credit, available only at the time of initial application. Otherwise, there is no credit available for flight hours transfer from virtual airlines, or other organizations. All pilots are authorized to fly aircraft types based on the hours they have earned or have been credited. Flying an aircraft, the pilot is not authorized to fly is expressly prohibited when earning hours for MetroAir Virtual and our automated system prevents pilots from flying aircraft not eligible for their rank. The rank of Line Training Captain is not automatically awarded like other ranks. This rank is assigned to experts by management for exemplary flight demonstration.

Rank	Hours	Hourly Rate	CAT Rating	Aircraft Designation
Second Officer 	0-19.9	Acars 50 USD Manual 25 USD	CAT A	Dash-Q400, CRJ-700, A319, B737-600, E175
First Officer 	20-59.9	Acars 75 USD Manual 50 USD	CAT B	All CAT A Aircraft A320, A321, B737-800, B737-900
Senior First Officer 	60-99.9	Acars 95 USD Manual 75 USD	CAT C	All CAT A & B Aircraft B787-8, B757-200W
Captain 	100-149.9	Acars 110 USD Manual 95 USD	CAT D	All CAT A, B & C Aircraft B787-9, B777-200
Senior Captain 	150-299.9	Acars 130 USD Manual 110 USD	CAT E	All CAT A ,B,C & D Aircraft B747-800, B777-300ER
ATP Captain 	300+	Acars 250 USD Manual 175 USD	CAT F	No Restrictions
Line Training Captain 	400+	Acars 300 USD Manual 300 USD	CAT F	No Restrictions

Currency – Minimum Hours

To remain "current" a pilot must fly and file a Flight Report (FlightRep) at least once every thirty (30) days. New pilots are no exception; they must fly and file a FlightRep within fourteen (14) days of joining MetroAir Virtual. Pilots not respecting currency rules will be subject to removal from the roster, with loss of status and hours. All pilots receive timely notices of their currency obligation.

Our rosters are periodically purged of inactive accounts. If your account becomes inactive, you will be contacted by e-mail by our HR manager for an explanation. If you fail to respond to this e-mail within 5 days, your account will be revoked and your membership with MetroAir will be terminated with immediate effect. Should a member wish to return, they will be subject to the re-hire policies previously stated.

Section 6

Flying

Pilots are only permitted to receive logged flight time if the flight took place using a flight posted in the MetroAir flight schedules and was flown using the proper MetroAir aircraft that are available for Download or you have received permission from a member of the executive team.

The submission of fraudulent PIREPS will result in the immediate termination of the user's membership with MetroAir Virtual.

Pilots are **not** required to depart from their previous arrival location, however where possible this only enhances realism. Pilots are free to select any flight from the schedules for use of logged flight time, permitting they hold the appropriate CAT rating to fly the aircraft listed.

Flight bids will remain active on a pilot's control panel for a period of seven (7) days. If no PIREP has been filed within that time, the bid will automatically be rejected. Pilots are encouraged to bid only on flights that they believe can be completed within this timescale.

On-line vs. Off-line Flying

We do not require that flights are flown online with the VATSIM network; however, we HIGHLY encourage our pilots to use this free service providing access to a world of live ATC and other real traffic, enhancing your piloting experience. Those Pilots that wish to fly online using VATSIM agree to abide by the rules set out in this document. When flying online using a MetroAir callsign you are representing MetroAir and as such you must behave in a professional, mature, and appropriate manner. Any disruption or abuse reported by VATSIM will be dealt with accordingly.

For those pilots who do fly on VATSIM we have a few helpful tips to get you going. As listed above if you are flying for metro then you are representing us - so please be courteous to fellow users. Your flight number must be: **METxxxx** and your callsign is: **METRO.** If multiple people are flying the same metro flight on VATSIM then your callsign should be your pilot code. We also know that flying in real time sometimes requires you to give position reports. For this reason, pilots flying on VATSIM can fly their flights in real time and not as listed by the Bid. This should be noted on your Pirep to alert your hub manager. **PLEASE NOTE FLYING IN REAL TIME IS ONLY ALLOWED WHEN FLYING ON VATSIM.**

Guidelines for Flying

Pilots must set the time in the simulator to match the published **GMT/Zulu** departure time in the bid. Failure to do so will eventually result in denied PIREPS. **YOU CAN FLY ANY OF OUR SCHEDULES AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY - YOU DON'T HAVE TO FLY REAL TIME. YOU JUST NEED TO SET YOUR SIM TIME TO THE PUBLISHED BID TIME.**

Pilots may fly up to 4x simulation speed though there are some restrictions.

- Pilots must fly at 1x (one-time) simulation speed whenever flying below FL180 (18,000ft).
- While connected to a VATSIM server and in controlled airspace, you must receive ATC approval to fly more than 1x speed.



Due to MetroAir's realistic financial operations, pilots must use a realistic fuel load. Pilots who use an improper fuel load for the first time will be warned via PIREP comments. Pilots who, after a warning, continue to use improper fuel loads will have their PIREP denied. Warnings and denied PIREPS will be at the discretion of the hub manager.

Example: On a flight from DCA to BOS, hub managers do not expect to see a fuel load of 100% to start the flight. Pilots must plan their fuel load according to the flight they are flying. Hub Managers do not expect pilots to calculate reserves, account for winds, etc., but they do expect some effort to be made to be more accurate.

We highly recommend using simbrief, which will provide you with a full flight plan and more accurate fuel planning. For certain payware aircraft it also enables you to download the flightplan to input directly into your FMC/FMS Co Route section. Go to www.simbrief.com.

PIREP Departure / Arrival Times

Flights are allowed to depart no more than 10 minutes early and should be completed within a reasonable time of the published arrival time. In the unlikely event that a pilot experiences an extended delay due to a VATSIM online ATC situation, or weather then sufficient notes should be included on the comments section of the PIREP to ensure there will be no delays in processing/approval.

The primary responsibility for ensuring correct departure and en-route times rests with the pilot. Hub Managers are not obligated to fix incorrect times.

While it is not our desire to do so, PIREPS CAN be denied for out-of-limit departure times. Finally, if a pilot realizes before submitting a PIREP, that his/her departure time is outside of what's approved, they should work out the correct times and include these in his or her PIREP note. Otherwise, the Hub Manager may respond with an initial denial of the PIREP and ask that the correct times be provided to have it approved.

Diversion / Emergencies

Pilots are able to divert their aircraft if it is no longer safe or feasible to continue to your published destination. This could include a problem with your aircraft, insufficient fuel, weather disruption or airport closure. In any event Pilots must make a full declaration about their diversion in the comment section of their PIREP. Failure to do so will result in the PIREP being denied. This policy should not be abused and if it is found to be then you may be terminated from our roster.

Aircraft Substitution

Aircraft Substitution allows pilots the chance to switch to another approved aircraft within your CAT rating. If you fly a flight with an Aircraft Substitution that is not part of your CAT rating then your Hub Manager will have the ability to deny your PIREP. Aircraft Substitutions are available on certain flights and will be determined by the Operations staff. Some routes are not eligible due to special circumstances such as Range, Airport capabilities, Runway lengths or if the Operations Team requires a



route to be only flown by the prescribed aircraft. It is also the pilot's responsibility to ensure that the plane they are substituting is capable of flying the route.

The executive staff realizes that as flight simulator platforms develop, certain aircraft normally flown by MetroAir may not exist in certain simulators. The executive staff may allow for similar aircraft to be used to accommodate pilots on those platforms. These decisions will be reviewed on an "as needed basis."

Monthly Flight Assignments

Pilots receive ten (10) flight assignments per month. These assignments are randomly generated by the website. Pilots can find their monthly flight assignments on the Dashboard page. These flights are optional; however, pilots will receive extra pay for completing these assignments.

Free Flight

MetroVirtual offers pilots a different experience called *Free Flight*. This allows a pilot to generate their own flight that is not a standard MetroVirtual route. For free flight instructions pilots should navigate here <https://crew.metroairvirtual.com/dfreeflight>

VMSACARS Software

MetroAir Virtual employs software called "VMSACARS" to simulate the ACARS units installed on real MetroAir aircraft. The software download, installation instructions, and an operations guide is available here <https://crew.metroairvirtual.com/downloads> . (Click the airline tab)

To properly install the ACARS system please follow these instructions:

- Locate your API key, Look at your profile on <https://crew.metroairvirtual.com/>
- In the field that asks for "phpVMS URL" please enter the following:
<https://crew.metroairvirtual.com/>
- Select the simulator you fly with in a drop-down menu titled "Active Simulator"
- Then find the path to your sim.
- If on P3D you need to use MakeRwys prior to the Re-Sync Scenery step. Use this link to download said application. <http://fsuipc.simflight.com/beta/MakeRwys.zip> (Follow the Read Me in said download to install the program.)
- If on XPlane Copy the AcarsConnect folder, located under Xplane, into your Resources\plugins folder.
- Once you have done that, make sure to Re-Sync Scenery by clicking the button that says "Re-Sync Scenery"

Using VMSACARS

VMSACARS is used as the primary method of reporting flights. For a detailed description on how to bid on a flight and use ACARS please download the PIREP Guide located at https://www.metroairvirtual.com/img/Flight_Bid_PIREP_Guide.pdf

Flight Planning

All pilots must perform preflight planning before each flight, consisting of at least:



- Weather review. A thorough review of the departure, enroute, and destination weather is essential to the safe completion of a flight. Pilots are encouraged to use real-world weather through Flight Simulator weather controls or add-on software such as ActiveSky. While modern airliners are capable of flying above most weather, during departure and arrival they cannot avoid it. Particular attention should be paid to current and predicted weather at the destination airport. The MetroAir Virtual Website Weather Center provides real-world aviation weather reports for every airport MetroAir flies to.
- Navigation. Calculating the route of flight is key. This process can be completed manually or through the assistance of numerous websites and programs such as Flightaware, Simbrief, or PFPX.