

## **Guidance for FIR Chiefs**

### **Conflict Resolution**

One of the many daunting tasks that face a FIR Chief is the settlement of disputes amongst the FIR Members. It is no secret, that these disputes do arise and if left unattended, they can escalate to such a point that the whole FIR structure can be damaged with the resultant departure of many good staff and controllers.

There are now in place, certain advisory procedures which help to prevent and minimize conflicts amongst FIR Members and also, structured formal procedures which Members have to follow failing settlement between themselves. These procedures are: -

#### **First Aid Conflict Resolution**

This procedure basically gives guidance to Members on how to recognize the onset of a dispute, how to minimize or prevent it escalating and how to manage and/or report such incidences to the FIR Chief.

#### **Special Conditions for Staff Members**

This procedure is generally delivered to each newly appointed VATCAN and/or FIR staff member. It enforces and enhances the VATSIM codes in respect of behaviour on the Network and in so doing, helps to protect the staff by reiterating what is not acceptable and how to deal with problems arising out of unacceptable behaviour.

#### **VATCAN DCRM Conflict Resolution Procedures**

This procedure generally reinforces the VATSIM procedures but with an emphasis on those areas of disputes/conflicts which do not – by their vary nature – fall into the pre-proposed conditional requirements of the VATSIM procedures. This procedure gives all members a clear indication, on how to proceed with the reporting of such incidences should it become obvious that they are unable to resolve such disputes amongst themselves.

### **Hints and Tips**

Should – in the unfortunate event – you be faced with the task of having to settle a dispute between your members, the following may be of help: -

- First, ensure that the VATCAN DCRM Conflict Resolution Procedure is still valid (version xyz) and that the member(s) have followed the requirements of such procedure.
- Ensure that the reported incident has relevant evidence and/or witnesses to back-up the allegations
- Check the severity of such allegation(s) ensuring that it does not fall into the proper authority of VATSIM (the requirement to call a Supervisor) due to unacceptable behaviour on the Network (as defined by the VATSIM Codes and Regulations)

- If the issue is one of an infraction with respect to procedures, are these procedures relevant, at an acceptable/tolerant level and do not go against other normal procedures when compared with your fellow FIRs within VATCAN division
- Is the issue centred around a policy which may be in conflict with the new VATSIM Global Ratings Policy
- Can the issue be addressed by the review and/or introduction of training materials
- Can the FIR Website be re-designed/enhanced in order to address future similar problems arising
- Are there any similar incidences report previously within your FIR and/or other FIRs within the Division, and of which have been settled amicably
- Do you need the support and advice from other persons (VATCAN DCRM, EC or other fellow Chiefs)
- Included within your options, you could remove a member from posting on the Forum (if that's where the infraction occurred), either temporarily or permanently, but are there any other disciplinary devices that you could use under other situations. Such as, re-training, adequate mentoring, appointing a different INS to a student, temporary diversion to a minor airfield, restrictions relating to on or off peak hours of controlling a certain position.

### **Summary**

The task of resolving disputes between your FIR Members is not easy, nor simple, but must be fair (a parking ticket might suffice instead of a custodial sentence) and your judgements must be consistent.

Remember, if in doubt, consult the VATSIM Codes and Regulations, seek advice from your peers, VATCAN EC and/or the DCRM. There is a support structure for all our divisional staff, do not feel isolated in any issue.