



# MetroAir Virtual Airlines

## Pilot Handbook v4.0

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Photo by Craig Hobson

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**NOTE:** *MetroAir Virtual Airlines may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.*

## 1. Introduction

This document provides all pilots with a great deal of information about how MetroAir runs it's 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 as needed.

The Handbook should be read and followed by all MetroAir pilots. For new pilots recently hired by MetroAir, this Handbook provides a wealth of information that will help the new pilot acclimatise 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. If not, by all means contact your fellow pilots, Hub Manager, or post a question on the MetroAir Forum.

### 1.1 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 grows, calm and calculated. You can count in 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'll make your experience that much more enjoyable.

Welcome to MetroAir Virtual, your home away from home.

### 1.2 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.

## 2. MetroAir Virtual Airlines Career

### 2.1 Application Guidelines

Prospective members will be required to make their application for membership over the Internet at the MetroAir web site. Applications must be fully completed pursuant to the instructions and the rules and regulations located on the application web page(s).

As of April 2008, MetroAir requires that all new and returning pilots are at least sixteen (16) years of age. Under no circumstances will an applicant under this age be hired. Any pilot who is found falsifying their age will be *banned* from MetroAir indefinitely.

MetroAir does not charge any fees to apply or to retain membership in the organization. In addition, no member of MetroAir may request money or charge fees as a prerequisite to advancing an individual in rank and no member may offer to pay money or a fee to another in order to secure advancement in rank.

### 2.2 Transfer of 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. Virtual Airline transfer hours will be accepted at forty percent (40%) value, up to a maximum of 180 hours. VATSIM hours will be accepted at full (100%) value with no limit. 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 will not be honoured if the pilot requests the transfer more than 30 days from the initial date of their application.

Pilots who are rehired will automatically receive all previous hours that were credited when flying for MetroAir in the past.

### 2.3 Rehiring

Any member who wishes to return to MetroAir may do so by using the registration page. Previous pilot accounts will be restored.

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 MetroAir Miles earned and all achievements awarded based on pilot enlistment date.

All pilots rehired understand they may have to re-attain appropriate status before downloading specialized files. i.e. A rehired pilot must maintain membership for the minimum 45 days to download the Overland A330. A rehired pilot who spent MetroMiles for a specialized livery will have to attain enough MetroMiles to redeem for the special livery again.

## **2.4 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.

## **2.5 Leaves of Absence**

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is an option available to member's 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 45 days.

Pilots must have a minimum of one approved PIREP that was filed 45 days prior to a request for a leave of absence.

All members on LOA must remain active with the airline by logging in to either the website or the forums 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.

It is imperative that your email address on your forum profile match your email address in your pilot profile. If the two are not the same, we will be unable to verify that you have logged into the forums which could result in termination.

**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.**

## 2.6 Termination

Pilots can and will be terminated from MetroAir Virtual Airlines if they fail to comply with the LOA policy or if their behaviour 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.

### 3. MetroAir Virtual Operations

#### 3.1 Pilot Rankings & CAT Ratings

Rank	Insignia	Hours	CAT Rating	Aircraft Designation
Second Officer		0 – 24.9	CAT A	Bombardier Dash 8-Q200 Bombardier Dash 8-Q400 Embraer 145 Embraer 170
First Officer		25 – 89.9	CAT B	<i>All aircraft for CAT A</i> Airbus A319-131 Airbus A320-231 Boeing 737-800W
Senior First Officer		90 – 149.9	CAT C	<i>All aircraft for CAT B</i> Airbus A321-232 Boeing 757-200W Boeing 757-200
Captain		150 – 249.9	CAT D	<i>All aircraft for CAT C</i> Airbus A330-243 Boeing 787-8
Senior Captain		250 – 349.9	CAT E	<i>All aircraft for CAT D</i> Boeing 777-300ER
ATP Captain		350 +	CAT F	<i>All aircraft</i>

#### 3.2 Minimum Flight Requirements

All new hires must complete their first flight within fourteen (14) days of hire. Thereafter, each pilot must complete a minimum of one (1) flight every 30 days, and file a PIREP (Pilot Report) to receive the hourly credit for flight time. Flights completed as part of a PIREP that is denied do not count towards the minimum flight requirement.

The reason for a minimum flight per month rule is to assist with keeping a clean roster. However, the submission of fraudulent PIREP’s will result in the immediate termination of the user’s membership with MetroAir.

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.

#### 3.3 Flight Logs

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.

*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.

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.

### 3.4 Event Participation Bonus

All pilots who participate in any MetroAir sanctioned online events will qualify for Bonus Hours. The qualifying criteria for receiving this bonus are as follows:

1. Flight must be flown on the VATSIM network.
2. Flight must be found in the MetroAir schedules.
3. Bonus is equal to 40% of the actual flight time.

It is the responsibility of the pilot to declare on their PIREP that they qualify for this bonus. Failure to do so may result in the pilot losing the bonus. If a pilot fails to mark the PIREP properly for the bonus, the bonus hours are awarded at the discretion of the hub manager.

### 3.5 PIREP Departure/Arrival Times

Flights are allowed to depart no more than **5 minutes early** and should be completed within a reasonable time of 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. [See above] Finally, if a pilot realizes before submitting a PIREP, that his departure time is outside of what's approved, he 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 submitted to have it approved.

### 3.6 Diversions/Emergencies

Pilots are able to divert their aircraft if it is no longer 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 maybe terminated from our roster. You should refer to our Quick Reference Handbook for full details about MetroAir emergency procedures.

### 3.7 Rank Overrides

MetroAir requires all pilots to fly the aircraft they are certified on. Pilots CAT ratings are determined by the amount of hours they have with MetroAir or from the hours they transferred. However MetroAir does have the ability for pilots to bid on a flight they are not eligible to fly for a set amount of Metro Miles.

The Rank Override function is available to all pilots and enables you to fly a one off route on any aircraft they are not yet certified on. **The Rank Override will cost the pilot 75 Metro Miles per bid** and must be flown on the aircraft that is listed. Once a pilot has made a bid they will then have 7 days to complete the flight. If a pilot wishes to cancel this bid they will be reimbursed automatically the 75 Metro Miles used. *If you fail to complete the flight within 7 days you may NOT be reimbursed and we will not be able to manually return these lost Metro Miles.*

On completion of ANY Rank Override flight the pilot **MUST** make a note in the ACARS comment section to alert their hub manager to the reason why you are flying a flight outside of your CAT rating. The reason for this is because on some occasions the website may not register that it was a Rank Override and your Hub Manager may deny your PIREP.

### 3.8 Aircraft Substitutions

As with a Rank Override the Aircraft Substitution allows pilots the chance to switch to another approved flight for a one off amount of Metro Miles. *This function however must only be used to fly an 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 require a route to be only flown by the prescribed aircraft. If a flight is eligible for Substitution the pilots will see the following images when bidding:



If you see the dropdown arrow then it means this flight is available for Aircraft Substitution. Once you click on the arrow you will then see the aircraft types available for substitution. You can then select from the list and it will then process the bid. By doing this it will charge you 15 Metro Miles from your account. You must **ONLY** fly with the aircraft selected and you must not fly with any other non approved types. If you do then your Hub manager has the right to deny your PIREP. As with all bids you will have 7 days to fly, if you fail to complete a flight in that time your bid will be cancelled and you may not get your Metro Miles back. If you choose to cancel the bid at any stage then you will receive the 15 Metro Miles back.

There is NO limit to the amount of times you can use this feature it will however be based on the amount of Metro Miles available in your account.

## 4. Guidelines for 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.

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.

Pilots must set the time in the simulator to match the published **GMT** departure time in the bid. Failure to do so will eventually result in denied PIREPS.

Due to MetroAir's realistic financial operations, pilots must use somewhat precise fuel loads. 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. ACARS v1.2 and higher will automatically calculate and load required fuel and is considered an acceptable effort to properly load fuel.

## 5. Conduct and Terms of Usage

### 5.1 Resource Usage

As is the case with many flight simulation-related forums, freedom of speech rights are not valid here. MetroAir is privately owned and operated by Stratosphere Group, Inc. 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, or religious attacks);
- Contains profanity, vulgarity, or other obscenities;
- Contains pornography or pornographic language; OR
- Spams or otherwise has the effect of a mass advertisement or mailing.

This service is free to you, and is completely revocable at any time at the sole discretion of the owner. Any abuse, including but not limited to the primary bullets above, will be subject to immediate termination of the user's current and any future accounts with websites affiliated with or owned by principles of Stratosphere Group, Inc. Membership at MetroAir is a privilege, not a right. Please treat it as such.

Lastly, please remember that while this service is provided to you free of charge, the service you are using is not free to the owner. Abuses of bandwidth will be dealt with on a case by case basis (you may not know you are actually abusing bandwidth, and we will keep this in mind if a situation arises). As a rule of thumb please respect the owner's wishes to keep the forum a fun and enjoyable environment for virtual aviation.

### 5.3 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 behaviour 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.

### 5.3 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 the forums and on TeamSpeak. 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 re-seller.

### 5.4 Conduct on VATSIM

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 Virtual Airlines 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.

## 6. Social Media & Socialising

At MetroAir we provide our members with several platforms to socialise with fellow pilots. It is encouraged that pilots use as many of these platforms as possible as it will enhance your experience at MetroAir and enable you to keep up to date with all the latest news. They also provide a platform for assistance should you have any questions or encounter any problems. Usually the fastest way to get a response is by asking your fellow members in one of the many platforms offered. We have recently begun using Discord which is a fantastic tool for sharing stories, top tips, photos and hanging out with your fellow pilots.

We provide the following: Facebook, Forums, Twitter, Instagram, Discord and Teamspeak.