

## FSBREAK \$100 Hamburger Fly in to KSAN

### 1. Position your aircraft off the runway.

It is important to always move your aircraft to an appropriate position before connecting to VATSIM. Many simulators start on the runway. Imagine the shock of a pilot just about to land when your aircraft pops up right in front of them!

### 2. Connect to VATSIM.

We always recommend you turn your crash detection setting in your realism to off while flying on VATSIM. There are various skill and experience levels on the network, and sometimes people mistakenly run into each other while at a busy airport.

### 3. File a VFR Flight plan to KSAN.

There are many realistic compromises we must make from time to time on VATSIM. While you normally would not be required to file a VFR flight plan from Van Nuys/Burbank to San Diego, it will help our virtual Air Traffic Controllers out immensely if you would file one. Please use the following:

- From Burbank (KBUR)  
Origin: KBUR  
Destination: KSAN  
Type: VFR  
Altitude: 3500  
Route: [Shoreline]
- From Van Nuys (KVNY)  
Origin: KVNY  
Destination: KSAN  
Type: VFR  
Altitude: 3500  
Route: [Shoreline]

### 4. Startup and get the ATIS.

VATSIM controllers are now able to record a voice ATIS, much like in the real world. While we do try and keep it "as real as it gets" on the ATIS, please remember that the people who are recording the ATIS have not had any actual FAA training, and in fact may be 15 or 60 years old! We use the "real" ATIS frequencies as published on the Airport/Facility diagrams.

Tune your COM1 radio to get the ATIS - KBUR 134.50 or KVNY 118.45. Just like in the real world, it is extremely important that you have a pencil and paper ready to write down any important information. The ATIS generally lists weather and departure information such as the winds, altimeter, ceiling, and departure runways. The ATIS is generally updated every hour and to identify one version from another it contains an ATIS Code such as "Information Kilo" or "Information Golf". Write down the code so that you can relay you have the correct information to the controller.

## 5. Request your Clearance.

You would usually get this from the ground controller. We anticipate having a ground and tower controller at KBUR and a tower controller at KVMY. Once you tune to the correct frequency, make sure you listen for a few seconds to make sure there is a break where you can start your transmission. Most transmissions generally contain two parts – an instruction and an acknowledgement. When you identify yourself for the first time you would normally state your aircraft model and full registration number. So let's say you were in a C172 with the registration number N301TL – you would identify your self as

*"Skyhawk November three zero one tango lima".*

Your initial request for clearance would go something like this:

*"Van Nuys Ground, Skyhawk Three Zero One Tango Lima, with information Kilo, request VFR departure to the south".*

The controller will issue you a clearance and possibly a squawk code for your transponder. Something like this:

*"Skyhawk Three Zero One Tango Lima, Van Nuys Ground, Cleared for a south bound departure, maintain runway heading at or below two thousand, departure frequency one two four point five, squawk three zero two one"*

You should respond immediately to the controller to acknowledge that you received, understand, and accept the transmission. A good response would be:

*"Cleared for the south bound departure, runway heading at or below two thousand, departure one two four point five, squawk three zero two one, for Skyhawk three zero one tango lima".*

The controller might respond with some other information such as:

*"One Tango Lima, read back correct, expect runway one six right for departure, advise ready to taxi".*

## 6. Request permission to taxi.

Whenever you are ready to go give them a call for taxi.

*"Tower, 301 Tango Lima is ready for taxi"*

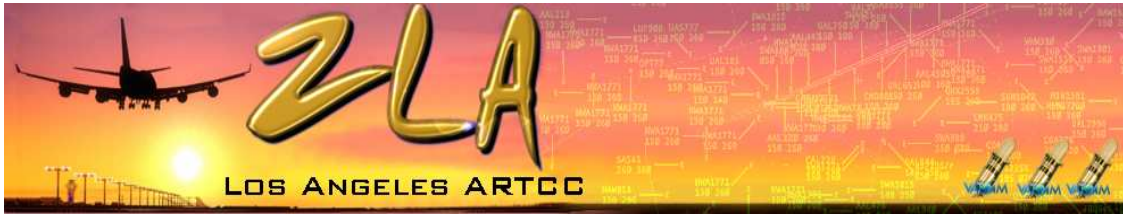
*"Skyhawk 301 Tango Lima, Taxi to runway 16 Right via bravo, Charlie"*

*"Taxi to runway one six right via bravo, Charlie, Skyhawk 301 tango lima"*

## 7. Taxi to the runway.

An instruction to *"Taxi to runway 16R"* gives you permission to taxi to that runway, and if a route is specified you must follow that route. It does allow you to cross any runways EXCEPT for the runway that was assigned. You may not cross or enter any part of that runway without explicit clearance by the tower.

You might also be told to follow another aircraft. Make sure you know what aircraft they want you to follow and try to give them enough room so that you don't hit them. Standard taxi speeds in a General Aviation aircraft is less than 15 knots.



## 8. Takeoff.

If you are with a ground controller, they will tell you to contact the tower. Please try and listen to the FREQUENCY you are asked to change to. The exchange will go something like this:

*"Skyhawk 301TL, contact Van Nuys Tower on 123.45"*

*"Tower on 123.45, Skyhawk 301TL".*

At that point you swap to the frequency assigned. If you are in line behind other aircraft, there is no point in transmitting to the tower. Wait until you are the NEXT aircraft in line and then you can say:

*"Tower, 301TL holding short runway one six right, ready for takeoff"*

Tower might not respond to that, but rest assured he heard you and knows you are there. The tower may clear you for takeoff or may ask you to taxi into position. If you are asked to taxi into position you should acknowledge it, taxi onto the runway, line up with the centerline and wait for further instructions.

*"301TL, Van Nuys Tower, runway 16R taxi into position"*

*"Taxi into position 16R, 301TL"*

When you get your takeoff clearance it might include some other instructions such as an altitude or heading to fly. Write it down, respond, and takeoff.

*"301TL, wind one five zero at eight, runway 16R cleared for takeoff"*

*"Cleared for takeoff, 301TL"*

Once you have been cleared for takeoff the expectation is that you will not delay and will immediately start your takeoff roll. Once you get into the air follow any special instructions they may have given you.

## 9. Speak with SoCal Approach.

Tower will at this point hand you off to SoCal approach. SoCal approach covers an extremely large airspace and is responsible for aircraft at 13,000 feet and below flying in and out of Burbank, Van Nuys, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Long Beach, Ontario, Riverside, John Wayne, San Diego, ok I think you get the picture! Luckily the sector is split amongst multiple controllers during busy events.

The frequency is going to be busy. You are going to hear the controller speaking with many aircraft, it is important that you listen for your call sign and note any instructions you have been given. Radio etiquette for some reason intimidates many people but it shouldn't, in fact most of it is common sense manners that we all learned back in Kindergarten. Don't interrupt other people, wait your turn, and try to be as brief as possible.

Once you get on the SoCal frequency you should let them know who you are and your current altitude. Here is an example after you takeoff:

*"N301TL, contact SoCal approach on 124.50, good day"*

*"Changing to SoCal on 124.5, 301TL. Thanks"*

Change your COM1 radio to the frequency they told you.

*"SoCal approach, N301TL passing one thousand four hundred"*

*"N301TL, SoCal approach good afternoon, radar contact, fly heading one six zero – direct Santa Monica when able, maintain VFR at or below two thousand five hundred"*

*"Heading 160 direct Santa Monica at or below two point five, 301TL"*

#### **10. Follow your vectors to Santa Monica.**

While enroute to the Santa Monica VOR (conveniently located on the field at the Santa Monica airport) make sure you continue to listen for your call sign. You might be told about other aircraft in your proximity, you might be told certain altitudes or other heading to fly, and you will certainly be given instructions to contact another controller. Just listen for your call sign while flying your plane and write down anything that is communicated to you. Eventually you will be sent to Santa Monica Tower.

*"N301TL Contact Santa Monica Tower on 120.1"*

*"Santa Monica on 120.1, 301TL – thanks"*

#### **11. Get your Bravo clearance via the Mini Route.**

Now the real fun starts. All this time and we haven't got to the really busy airspace yet. We are about to transition the Los Angeles Class Bravo airspace. If you need to get to the other side of KLAX there are a few options for transitioning the LAX Class B – you can go over it, you can go around it, or you can go through it (Transition). There are many published routes to go through it and today we are going to use a variant of "The Mini Route". First you need to tell SMO Tower what you want:

*"Tower, N301TL requesting the Mini Route to the south"*

The tower will provide you with explicit instructions for the Class B transition such as:

*"N301TL, cleared into the Los Angeles Class Bravo airspace via the mini route, fly heading 160, maintain two thousand five hundred"*

*"Cleared for the mini route, heading 160 and 2500, 301TL"*

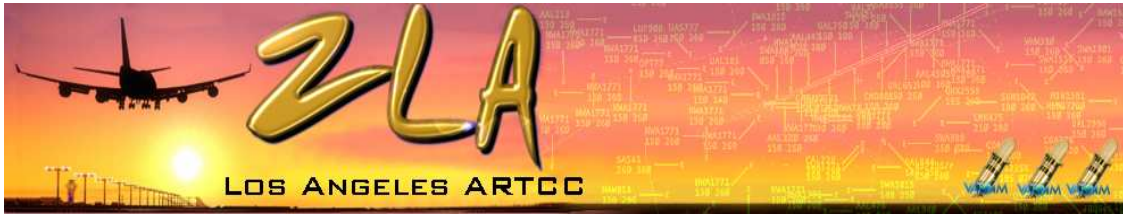
#### **12. speak with Los Angeles Tower**

Santa Monica will probably send you over to Los Angeles Tower.

*"301TL contact Los Angeles Tower on 120.95"*

*"Tower on 120.95, 301TL"*

It will probably be quite busy there. Just remember to stay on your assigned heading and listen for your call sign. This is a GREAT time to look out the window as you fly over KLAX. I'd anticipate there being DOZENS of other aircraft in the area, landing, taking off, taxiing, or on approach.



**13. Speak with Hawthorne/SoCal Approach.**

The tower will hand you over to either Hawthorne Tower or SoCal Approach (a different one). Either way you will eventually make it to SoCal approach. The controller again will be extremely busy so radio etiquette is important here.

SoCal will most likely provide you with an altitude restriction, and vectors for the shoreline. Once you reach the shoreline you will be told to continue on course, resume own navigation, or to maintain VFR. All of these essentially mean that you are free to navigate along the shoreline to San Diego.

**14. Follow the Shoreline and maintain VFR.**

It is important to remember all of the altitude restrictions you might be given. Maintain VFR at or below 3500 means you can fly whatever altitude you want (appropriate for VFR and direction of flight) as long as you stay below that altitude. The controllers don't do this because they are on a power trip; they do this to keep everyone safe and to ensure the expeditious flow of traffic.

This will be the most relaxing portion of the trip to San Diego. You can wipe the sweat off your brow and take in the scenery.

**15. Speak with SoCal Approach.**

You may be passed to other controllers and eventually you be asked to contact SoCal on 119.60. This is the controller that handles the San Diego sector. Things are about to get busy again.

**16. Follow SoCal's Vectors.**

San Diego lies in Class B airspace. The controller already knows that you are headed to KSAN so this time you won't have to ask for clearance to enter it. They will issue some altitudes and vectors to get you safely set up for KSAN. Remember to read back all of the instructions given to you.

**17. Speak with Lindbergh Tower.**

Once you are set up SoCal will ship you over to the tower controller at San Diego Lindbergh. The tower controller will give you instructions on how he wants you to enter the traffic pattern. You can most likely expect to be issue a right downwind for runway 27. Do your best to fly the downwind at 1000' above ground as usual. Once you are asked to turn base (or cleared to land) you can start the normal descent down to the runway.

## 18. Land.

In a perfect world the controllers and pilots all do an amazing job of sequencing and following instructions. This isn't how things actually go in the real world so why would we expect it to go that way on VATSIM? Things happen and we all need to take a breath sometimes and remind ourselves that this isn't real, and we are all trying to have as much fun as possible.

Hopefully you won't be asked to "Go Around" or experience any runway incursions with others. One you have landed make sure you exit to your right (this is where GA traffic parks) as soon as able. The tower will ask you to contact the ground controller.

## 19. Taxi to the ramp.

When leaving the runway you are authorized to move past the hold short lines, but should not enter the taxiways until you have been given permission. Give the ground controller a call and let them know where you are and where you want to park. If you aren't sure what taxiway you are on and don't really know/care where you want to park, that's OK – 75% of the VATSIM folk don't either ;)

## 20. Say thanks and leave some feedback.

Shut down your aircraft and feel free to listen in on the frequency and watch others as they come in to land. Hopefully you will be treated to some larger "commercial" aircraft coming and going. San Diego can be a busy place sometimes.

Give yourself a pat on the back! You not only just transitioned two Class B's in one of the busiest airspaces on VATSIM; you also did it in the middle of a large event. If you made it this far, you should have no problem coming onto VATSIM and flying anywhere. While the majority of the traffic at virtual ZLA is in fact "heavy iron" flying IFR, we do have a large emphasis on general aviation and VFR traffic. Our Pilot Certification program was put together specifically to help people ease in to VATSIM while learning about the ZLA airspace at the same time. As of the end of 2008, over 250 pilots had earned certifications via this program. We'd love to have you in our airspace again soon.

Many of the VATSIM controllers are extremely dedicated to learning and "perfecting" their skills. Sometimes it's easy to forget that they too are trying to enjoy the simulation as much as you are. They enjoy feedback and praise as much as anyone else, so don't be shy to say "Thanks for the ATC" to any of the controllers, we all really appreciate it. If you want to leave some feedback for a specific controller – please click on the "Submit Feedback" link on our website. We always respond to any feedback left if requested.

## A few other important notes:

- If you are given an instruction that you don't understand – please let us know. We don't bite.
- You should always Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate in that order. When given an instruction such as "Fly heading 160" the expectation is that you will immediately turn to that heading and respond as soon as you are able.
- Flying online in an environment such as VATSIM is a dynamic experience. Even with a "cheat sheet" such as this in hand, you could fly this same route 20 times and have a different experience each time. Things might not go as expected and might change due to "real" factors. You just need to roll with the punches!