

# Tasks and areas of responsibility

Brief explanation of responsibilities of stations

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# Tasks of air traffic controllers

Air Traffic Controllers (ATCO) are responsible for providing the Air Traffic Control Service according to ICAO Document 4444 (Air Traffic Management - somewhat like the bible of air traffic control, which sets international standards) and ICAO Annex 11 (Air Navigation Service). Annex 11 defines this as follows:

“ Air traffic control service is a service provided for the purpose of:

- preventing collisions:
  - between aircraft, and
  - on the manoeuvring area between aircraft and obstructions; and
- expediting and maintaining a safe, orderly, and expeditious flow of air traffic.

The first bullet point can be summarized with the term "Safety." This point naturally has the highest priority. As you will learn in one of the following chapters, we prevent collisions between aircraft as part of the Air Traffic Control Service by establishing and ensuring separation. To prevent collisions on the ground, we issue safe taxi instructions.

The second bullet point can be summarized with the term "Efficiency." According to international standards, air traffic controllers are also required to manage traffic not only safely but also efficiently and orderly.

At the beginning of the training, the focus is, of course, primarily on Safety. However, we want to train you to become an efficient controller quite quickly. It will be very important for you to prioritize your many tasks correctly, plan well in advance, and use your frequency efficiently.

However, efficiency is extremely difficult to describe as a theoretical topic, which is why your mentors will primarily work with you on this during practical sessions.

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The Delivery position is often massively underestimated and dismissed as a mere communication station without the need for critical thinking. If you thought the same, we can assure you: Delivery is much more than that.

In reality, Delivery controllers are also called airport coordinators. This designation better reflects that Delivery not only communicates but is also responsible for the basic coordination of all departures and, therefore, capacity management.

## Tasks

### Checking Flight Plans

Before a pilot receives their route clearance, the flight plan should be checked for correctness. Particular attention should be paid to:

- Logical Callsign (e.g., DLH instead of LH)
- Correct Flight Rules
- Valid Flight Plan - Depending on SOPs, the first waypoints should be checked for restrictions. Add-ons like the Flightplan Checker, which are pre-installed in the FIRs' Euroscope packages, help with this.

### Issuing Route Clearances to IFR Departures According to Local Procedures

The most well-known task of the Delivery controller is issuing route clearances for IFR flights, where the pilot receives the transponder code, initial climb clearance, and clearance for the departure route and the flight route itself. This can be done via voice or DCL (Datalink Clearance). Generally, the departure route is a SID according to local procedures. Under certain circumstances (e.g., a local IFR flight or if the pilot's navigation database is outdated), a so-called Vectored Departure may be issued.

Details on route clearance can be found in this article.

#### **Issuing Startup Clearances**

A peculiarity in Germany is that Delivery, with the phrase "startup approved," also clears the start of the engines. However, the pilot must still coordinate the actual engine start with the ground crew. Therefore, engines often start, for example, with the pushback. For the controller, this does

not matter.

The startup clearance is only given if the flight can expect pushback soon. At non-ACDM airports, the startup clearance should not be given if the expected delay is more than 20 minutes. At ACDM airports (Airport Collaborative Decision Making), the startup clearance is given at TSAT (Target Startup Approval Time) +/- 5 minutes. At some airports, VFR traffic also requires explicit startup clearance from the Delivery controller.

Details can be found in the local procedures of the respective airport.

### **Monitoring Departure Capacities in Coordination with the Tower**

Especially during heavy traffic, the Delivery controller, even on Vatsim, is responsible for managing the departure capacities. They are the first link in the long chain of controllers that can manage traffic flow at an airport. By withholding startup clearances during high traffic volumes, they ensure that the airport's capacity is not exceeded by too many aircraft on the ground.

Details on capacity values and departure management can be found in the Delivery section of the respective Tower SOP. Additionally, close coordination between Delivery and Tower is helpful, as the Tower, as the "receiving unit," has the final say on how many departures it can handle.

During events, there may also be a Delivery Coordinator. Details on the tasks can be found in this article.