Tasks Delivery

The Delivery position is often massively underestimated and dismissed as a mere talking station without the need for critical thinking. If you've thought this way, we can tell you: Delivery is much more than that. In reality, Delivery controllers are also called ground coordinators. This designation indicates more accurately that delivery is not just about speaking, but is responsible for the fundamental coordination of all departures and thus also capacity management.

Tasks

Checking Flight Plans

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

- Correct callsign (e.g., DLH instead of LH)
- Correct flight rule
- Valid flight plan - depending on SOPs, the first waypoints must be checked for restrictions. Add-ons like the Flight Plan Checker, which are pre-installed in the Euroscope packages of the FIRs, help with this.

Issuing Enroute Clearances to IFR Departures According to Local Procedures

Perhaps the most well-known task of the delivery controller is issuing enroute clearances for IFR, where the pilot, in addition to being assigned a transponder code and initial climb, also receives their 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 Under certain circumstances (e.g., for a local IFR flight or if the pilot's navigation database is outdated), a so-called vectored departure may also be assigned.

Details on enroute clearance can be found in this article.

Issuing Startup Clearances

A peculiarity in Germany is that the delivery controller also issues the startup clearance with the phrase "startup approved," which permits engine start. However, the pilot must still coordinate the actual starting of the engines with the ground crew. Therefore, engines often only start during pushback. For the controller, this makes no difference.

Startup clearance is only issued if the flight can expect pushback soon. At non-ACDM airports, startup clearance should not be given if the expected delay exceeds 20 minutes. At ACDM airports (Airport Collaborative Decision Making), 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 departure capacities. They are the first link in the long chain of controllers who can manage traffic flow at an airport. By withholding startup clearances during high traffic volumes, they ensure that airport capacity is not exceeded by too many planes on the ground.

Details on capacity values and departure management can be found in the delivery section of the respective tower SOP. Furthermore, 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.

For events, there may also be a delivery coordinator. Details on the tasks can be found in this article.

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