



Virtual Royal Air Force
Standing Orders
Version 3



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1.0 Membership

1.1. All applicants must be at least 16 years old on date of application.

1.2. All applicants must provide a valid email address and VATSIM CID in their application.

1.3. All applicants must provide valid information in their application including their real full name. Provision of false or ambiguous information at any time may result in disciplinary procedures.

1.4. All members must undertake training as per section 3 of vRAF standing orders.

1.5 The forums and Teamspeak are the primary methods of communication. It is up to all pilots to keep themselves updated with current rules and regulations.

- Teamspeak nickname is to be in the format of [Rank][First Name][Surname][vRAF] e.g. Wg Cdr Fred Bloggs vRAF. Shortening of names or omission of the first name is permitted if the entire name is too long for the data entry box.

1.6. Acceptance into vRAF is at the discretion of COS Personnel, who reserves the right to reject an application without stating a reason.

1.7. Applying for membership indicates that you have read the rules, regulations and codes of conduct as set out by vRAF. Acceptance of membership constitutes an agreement that you will comply and follow the rules, regulations and codes of conduct, including but not limited to;

- vRAF Standing Orders
- vRAF NOTAMs
- Operations manuals and training syllabi
- Forum announcements, stickies and threads
- Temporary amendments to the standing orders.

Notes:

- If there is a conflict of orders between the forum and the standing orders, it is the forums that take priority.

1.8 Members will not use any vRAF material information, names, images or logos for any reason without permission from Air Command.

1.9 The use of vRAF 'tags' on VATSIM by filing a flight plan with 'OPR/VRAF.NET' or 'OPR/VRAF' is restricted to members of vRAF with a valid rating for the aircraft type flown.

- Members are only authorised to file vRAF tags once they have completed a training sortie with a QFI and have specifically been cleared to fly solo on VATSIM.

1.10 New members are required to request training within 14 days of their application being accepted. Failure to comply with this will result in disciplinary procedures for inactivity.

1.11 "Posts" are any messages transmitted through communications provided by vRAF, including but not limited to Teamspeak, Discord and the forum.

- Posts (including private messages) are not to be used to post offensive, vulgar or obscene material.
- No posts shall include any material or links to materials which are unlawful. This includes, but is not limited to, software, material not suitable for minors and links to sites distributing payware illegally.
- Posts encouraging the breaking of any rules, regulations or codes of conduct be it VATSIM, VATSIM-UK, vRAF or any other relevant codes of practice will be removed. The author of the post will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- Posts shall not be used for advertisements nor promote other organisations, products or any items for sale or purchase.

1.12 vRAF has a strict non-discrimination policy.

- vRAF prohibits discrimination or harassment by or against any member because of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age or any other similarly protected characteristic. This policy applies to all forms of communication with all parties both internal and external to vRAF.
- Any member found to have breached this shall be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- vRAF members are expected to uphold this policy at all times even when not directly representing vRAF.
- Any member who feels that they have discriminated against, harassed or otherwise made to feel unwelcome as a result of a breach of this policy should report it as soon as possible to COS Personnel or another member of Air Command who will take appropriate action.

1.13 All vRAF material including scenery and aircraft available on VAPTAMs is available as a privilege. These files must not be uploaded anywhere, nor distributed outside of the vRAF. Anybody found uploading or distributing them will be immediately court-martialled and dishonourably discharged. If a pilot leaves vRAF, all downloaded sceneries and aircraft must be removed from the system.

1.14 The notice period between posting new standing orders and the orders becoming effective will be no less than 1 week.

2.0 Organisational Structure

2.1 The current vRAF structure and assignment of roles can be found [here](#).

2.2 vRAF is governed by 'Air Command' which is a group of the most senior vRAF officers, and consists of:

- **Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)** - holds the rank of Air Chief Marshal (ACM). CAS is the most senior officer in vRAF, responsible for liaising with other VSOAs, VATUK and other third parties.
- **Chief of Staff (COS) Operations** - holds the rank of Air Marshal (AM). COS Ops is deputy to CAS and is responsible for the day-to-day running of vRAF, including all operations and assists the CAS with external communications.
- **Chief of Staff (COS) Personnel and Air Secretary** - holds the rank of Air Vice Marshal (AVM). COS Pers/Air Sec is responsible for all recruitment, manning including organising senior appointments.
- **AOC 1 Group** - holds the rank of Air Vice Marshal (AVM). AOC 1 Grp is responsible for the management of all 1 Group activities and squadrons, including the BBMF.
- **AOC 2 Group** - holds the rank of Air Vice Marshal (AVM). AOC 2 Grp is responsible for the management of all 2 Group activities and squadrons.
- **AOC 22 Group** - holds the rank of Air Vice Marshal (AVM). AOC 22 Grp is responsible for the all training activities, management of all 22 Group activities and squadrons.

2.3 Squadron Commanders report to their respective Group Commander. They are responsible for all squadron activities including organising continuation training to achieve/maintain combat readiness. Squadron commanders may plan overseas exercises and operations with the approval of their relevant group commander.

2.4 Members of Air Command can be identified on TeamSpeak by a fin flash denoting the Air Command server group.

2.5 Air Command normally govern by consensus and where an agreement on an issue cannot be reached then a vote of Air Command staff will be used to settle debates. Where a tie of votes occurs, CAS shall have the deciding vote.

3.0 Training

3.1 vRAF requires all new pilots to undergo training prior to commencing operational flying in order to comply with VSOA standards. This requirement is fulfilled by 22 Group which comprises squadrons which conduct basic, advanced and operational conversion training units.

3.2 22 Group aircraft may not be operated outside UK airspace without prior permission from AOC 22 Group. The only exception to this rule is for aircraft required at short notice for a Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) in order to support 1 or 2 Group aircraft as a last resort. 1 and 2 Group aircraft should be utilised in the first instance in any case.

3.3 Maintenance of 22 Group aircraft is the responsibility of squadron commanders.

3.4. Initial Flying Training

All new members are required to undertake training before being allowed to operate for vRAF. The stages of training are laid out in this section. Utilisation of the progressive stages of training is at the discretion of AOC 22 Group and may be suspended at any time to cope with reduced training capacity. The current training process can be found [here](#). Each module of training must be completed in its entirety before the next may be commenced.

- For all new pilots Elementary Flying Training (EFT) must be successfully completed prior to streaming to the preferred type.
- Fast jet students are then streamed to Basic Fast Jet Training (BFJT) and Advanced Fast Jet Training (AFJT).
- Multi-engine students are then streamed to Multi-Engine Flight Training (MEFT)
- Rotary students are then streamed to Defense Helicopter Flying School (DHFS)
- After AFJT, MEFT or DHFS students are posted to an Operational Conversion Unit (OCU). OCU must be completed successfully prior to commencing operational flying for vRAF. OCU training finalises the mandatory VATSIM Special Operations Administration (VSOA) training. It is the only stage of training that may not be suspended.

After completion of OCU, pilots may request training on another aircraft type. The training required will be proportionate to the differences and experience will be taken into account. The training required will be at the discretion of the squadron OC responsible for the new aircraft type. Significant reductions in OCU training for the new type may be permissible in coordination with AOC 22 Group.

- For an otherwise inexperienced pilot, transfer from Typhoon to Lightning would probably consist of Lightning OCU training. Transfer from Typhoon to Voyager may involve a transfer to MEFT for advanced multi engine training.
- No time limit exists for any stage of training, however a student must demonstrate regular commitment to completing the training process. Training will take as long as necessary for the student to reach the required standard.
- New pilots who have real world experience may be allowed to fast track or skip certain stages of training. Evidence to support this must be submitted in writing to

AOC 22 Group who will assess the student's training requirements on a case by case basis. Care must be taken to ensure mandatory VSOA training is completed.

3.5 Continuation Training

Upon successful completion of OCU, pilots will be posted to an appropriate squadron, if more than one squadron for that aircraft exists then pilots may be offered a choice of squadrons subject to operational requirements.

- Further training on squadron (e.g. to achieve combat readiness) will be at the discretion of the squadron OC.
- Recurrent training and check flights are at the discretion of the squadron OC. Squadron OCs should schedule recurrent training and checking to ensure standards maintained.
- AOC 22 Group may direct squadron OCs to conduct recurrent training or check flights in order to establish or improve the standard of pilots who are suspected to have fallen below the standard required for vRAF/VSOA operations.

3.6 Remedial Training

AOC 22 Group and Squadron Commanders retain the right to assign pilots remedial training as required at any stage if it becomes appropriate. This may involve re-assigning pilots to any stage of the flying training system or assigning a bespoke package as required.

- Pilots returning from long periods of absence or retirement may be required to complete a currency check. This decision will be taken by the responsible squadron OC in consultation with AOC 22 Group.
- Pilots may request remedial training at any time.
- Pilots who repeatedly fall below the standard required for vRAF/VSOA operations due to negligence, wilful neglect or lack of engagement with training shall be referred for disciplinary procedures.
- No appeal to this process is normally available, however exceptionally, decisions made by AOC 22 Group may be overridden by Air Command vote.

3.7 Air-to-Air Refuelling Training (AAR)

AAR training is mandatory for all pilots before being authorised to conduct AAR operationally.

- AAR shall be conducted in accordance with the [vRAF Air-to-Air Refuelling Guide](#).
- The issue of AAR qualifications is governed by the [vRAF Air-to-Air Refuelling Qualification Policy](#).
- Air-to-Air Refuelling Instructors (AARI) are responsible for AAR training. OC 10 Sqn is responsible for training, assessing and checking AARIs.
- New AARIs must already be a QFI
- Pilots must have completed the type conversion phase of OCU prior to AAR training.

3.8 Quick Reaction Alert Training (QRA)

QRA training is mandatory for all pilots before being authorised to conduct QRA sorties

operationally. Training may take place on a 'live' QRA sortie as the discretion of the attending QFI.

- QRAs shall be conducted in accordance with the [vRAF Interceptions Standard Operating Procedure](#).
- QRA training shall be conducted in accordance with the [Typhoon FGR.4 Operations Manual](#).

3.9 Qualified Flight Instructor Training (QFI)

Pilots applying for the role of QFI must meet the following minimum requirements.

- A minimum rank of Flt Lt.
- A minimum of 50 hours flying post OCU on type for 1 Group aircraft.
- A minimum of 100 hours flying post OCU on type for 2 Group aircraft.
- A good training record.
- A clean disciplinary record.
- Successfully completed all training available on the aircraft type.

Pilots meeting the minimum requirements may apply to AOC 22 Group by emailing AOC22@vraf.net including a short explanation of why they want to become a QFI. Applications will be reviewed by AOC 22 Group and will consult with the pilot's current squadron OC and relevant training squadron OC before coming to a decision. Applicants will be informed of the decision preferably via Teamspeak but via email if necessary. If the application is unsuccessful, feedback will be provided. If successful, training required to achieve qualification as a QFI will be in accordance with the relevant operations manual for the aircraft type.

4.0 Flight Operations

4.1 All flights are to be conducted on the VATSIM Network and pilots must abide by the VATSIM Code of Conduct.

- Exceptionally, flights may be conducted without connecting to the VATSIM network with the approval of the appropriate squadron OC. ATAMS must be utilised for these flights and manual flight reports are not acceptable.

4.2. Pilots are required operate in accordance with the relevant aircraft operations manual at all times.

4.3. Appropriate separation shall be applied and maintained at all times. Exceptions;

- Formation flying – All parties involved must agree before the formation begins and, where necessary, ATC must be informed that MARSA (Military Accepts Responsibility for Separation of Aircraft) rules apply.
- Operational Exercises – Predetermined operations
- Air-to-Air Refuelling – Permission must be sought from the tanking aircraft to reduce separation.
- Interception and escort duties.
- Pilots are required operate in accordance with the relevant aircraft operations manual at all times.

4.4. vRAF members are forbidden to simulate any operation which portrays a past or ongoing real world operation whereby loss of life or property has resulted to further political, social or religious objectives e.g. WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia etc.

- Exceptionally and only with the express permission of Air Command, members may be permitted to simulate real world conflicts. In this case, members shall not connect to the VATSIM network .

4.5 The carriage of weapons of mass destruction in any form is prohibited.

4.6 Members are required to file flight plans on the VATSIM network. Every effort should be made to ensure they are accurate and professional in their appearance.

- Routings should be as detailed as possible.
- The remarks section of the flight plan should be as per this [guidance](#).

4.7 The opening of Fighter Control, Range Control, Forward Air Control and providing an AWACS service is only permissible if the member has approval from the Air Command and VATSIM-UK.

4.8. Pilots will be issued with aircraft ratings in accordance with section 3 of the standing orders.

- Pilots may only log flight time for aircraft they have a rating for.

4.9 Multi crew operations via a shared cockpit function are permitted, and both pilots are allowed to log the hours for a flight undertaken. One pilot must be designated as the pilot-in-command and should login to VATSIM normally. The second pilot should login in observer mode. The pilot in command is ultimately responsible for the aircraft.

4.10 Pilots wishing to operate more than one type of aircraft may do so, as long as they have undertaken appropriate training. The use of secondary aircraft is limited to two additional aircraft types. Note:

- Members of Air Command are not subject to this limitation.
- Specific requested / authorised sorties in support of training and exercises are not subject to this limitation.

4.11 Aircraft shall maintain a listening watch on the relevant ATC frequency whilst receiving a service.

- Whilst in receipt of an ATC service, aircraft shall comply with any reasonable ATC instructions or requests.
- Whilst in receipt of an ATC service, aircraft shall maintain a listening watch on Guard (121.500), in addition to the relevant ATC frequency, equipment permitting.

4.12 Whilst not in receipt of an ATC service, aircraft shall maintain a listening watch on UNICOM (122.800) and Guard (121.500), equipment permitting.

4.13 Aircraft shall proactively contact ATC prior to entering controlled airspace.

4.14 Pilots must use an appropriate callsign in accordance with the callsign guidance available in the squadron forums.

4.15 Pilots must use the vRAF ATAMS flight tracking software for all flights. Any issues encountered whilst using ATAMS must be reported via the forums.

4.16 Pilots must record all flights using a form 414 (F414).

- Normally a F414 is generated using ATAMS, but may exceptionally be generated manually.

4.17 Safety incidents shall be reported using the DASOR system in VAPTAMS.

- Safety incidents will be reviewed by a member of Air Command when accepting the F414. If an incident warrants further investigation then a member of Air Command will be assigned to manage the investigation. They shall be responsible for liaising with any external agencies.
- Serious incidents requiring immediate intervention shall be reported by the most expeditious means possible to COS Operations or another member of Air Command.
- vRAF operates a “just culture” safety reporting system.
 - No punitive action shall be taken as a result of any incident reported via F414 that was not the result of a wilful violation of vRAF standing orders.

- Delayed, unreported occurrences or incidents that occurred as a result of a wilful violation of vRAF standing orders shall attract punitive measures as appropriate.

5.0 Activity Requirements

5.1 All members are required to meet currency requirements. Pilots must fly a minimum of 1 flight and 45 minutes in each calendar month and a minimum of 12 hours in a calendar year.

- Failure to meet the currency requirements will result in automatic referral to Court Martial.
- Pilots may apply to their squadron OC for a 'leave of absence' (LOA) if they are aware they will not be able to meet the currency requirements.

5.2 Any LOA that exceeds 2 months or is extended beyond 2 months must be approved by COS Personnel.

6.0 Ranks and Promotion

6.1 The following ranks are available:

Off Cdt - Officer Cadet

Plt Off - Pilot Officer

Fg Off - Flying Officer

Flt Lt - Flight Lieutenant

Sqn Ldr - Squadron Leader

Wg Cdr - Wing Commander

Gp Capt - Group Captain

Air Cdre - Air Commodore

AVM - Air Vice Marshal

Air Mshl - Air Marshal

ACM - Air Chief Marshal

6.2 Promotions are carried out at the following stages;

Off Cdt - Initial flying training.

Plt Off - Completion of type conversion phase on OCU.

Fg Off - Completion of OCU.

Flt Lt - 50 Hours logged post OCU and a clean disciplinary record.

Sqn Ldr - Sqn 2 IC and members retiring from more senior ranks.

Wg Cdr - Sqn OC

Gp Capt - Station Commander.

Air Cdre - Not in use.

AVM - OC Group and COS Personnel

Air Mshl - COS Operations

ACM - Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)

6.3 Promotions to Sqn Ldr and above are at the discretion of Air Command. Where more than one suitable candidate exists Air Command may invite applications for a vacant role.

7.0 Disciplinary Procedures

7.1 Breach of these standing orders or rules and regulations laid out in the forum or teamspeak will result in disciplinary procedures being applied.

7.2 When a breach or infraction is identified the pilot concerned will be informed and may have restrictions temporarily imposed on their duties. An investigation will be carried out by the attending squadron OC in the first instance who may escalate the issue using the framework laid out below. Air Command may escalate issues as appropriate at any time.

7.3 Squadron OCs are responsible for discipline within their Squadron. Squadron OCs can issue the following directives:

- Verbal Warning: A verbal warning will be issued and a record kept.
- Written Warning: A written warning will be issued to the pilot and a record kept.
- Squadron Commanders Report (Up to and including 7 days). All flying operations will need Squadron OC's approval or flown alongside the Squadron OC.
- Suspension from Flying Duties (Up to and including 14 Days) The pilot is suspended from flying duties and is grounded. Flight during this suspension will automatically be referred for Court Martial.
- Referral to Court Martial.

7.4 Court Martial is conducted by the appropriate Group OC. Court Martial is via Teamspeak and those required to attend should present themselves to the Group OC who will conduct proceedings in a closed room. Group OC can issue the following sentences:

- Squadron OC Sentences (Ref 7.3)
- Demotion of Rank (Associated Post may also be lost)
- Suspension (Up to and including 30 Days)
- Referral to Air Command Disciplinary

7.5 Air Command Disciplinary shall preferably be conducted by COS Personnel, but may be conducted CAS or COS Operations in his absence/on request. Air Command can issue sentences as they see fit and can include, but is not limited to:

- Any of the Squadron (Ref 7.3) or OC Group (Ref 7.4) sentences.
- Suspension (Up to and including 90 Days)
- Dishonourable Discharge (Details will be forwarded to VATSIM-UK DCRM at Air Command's discretion).
- Applications to appeal any stage of the disciplinary procedure should be made to the appropriate authority

7.6 Appeals

- Appeal for sentences issued by a Squadron OC is to Group OC
- Appeal for sentences issued by Group OC is to Air Command

- Air Command decisions are final and cannot be appealed against unless significant and new information or evidence is presented to Air Command. In this instance a new Air Command disciplinary will be convened to assess the new evidence.

8.0 Standing Down and Retirement

8.1 Line pilots may stand down from a post assigned to them by Air Command. A 'Post' is any position assigned to a line pilot over and above their normal duties including Events Officer, Squadron 2IC, Squadron Commander, Station Commander, Group OC or Air Command position.

- Pilots who wish to stand down from a post should contact their Group OC stating their intention to step down from the post giving a minimum of 2 calendar months notice.
- Pilots standing down from a post that confers a rank more senior to Sqn Ldr shall be reduced in rank to Sqn Ldr. This is to keep the chain-of-command unambiguous.

8.2 Pilots who wish to retire from vRAF should contact COS Personnel. When an individual retires from vRAF they are no longer permitted to partake in vRAF operations.

- To acknowledge members who have significantly contributed to the organisation, retiring pilots who have previously been reduced in rank after leaving a post may have their original (most senior) rank reinstated for retirement upon request.
- Retired pilots may continue to use the forum and associated privileges provided their rank is annotated "retd."
- If a retired pilot re-applies for vRAF, their service history will be taken into account.
 - Returning pilots may have to undertake refresher training in accordance with section 3 of the vRAF Standing Orders.
 - Returning Pilots shall be assigned their rank on retirement up to a maximum of Sqn Ldr.

8.3 Pilots dishonourably discharged in accordance with section 7 of the vRAF Standing Orders shall have their account terminated immediately. They are prohibited from partaking in any vRAF operations, using teamspeak, forum, VAPTAMs, website or any other related vRAF material.

- Pilots dishonourably discharged may not reapply to the organisation, unless significant and new information or evidence is presented to Air Command that would commute their discharge to a retirement.