

PILOT'S HANDBOOK

Member's Guide and Procedures Manual

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"LONE STAR SERVICE TO THE WORLD"

**AeroTexas, AeroTexas Aviation International, Mango Air Cargo,
aerotexas.com, ATX, ATX-INTL™**

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WELCOME!

Welcome to AeroTexas Aviation International (ATX). This handbook provides new members with source of information about what we think is one of the most unique and innovative virtual airlines. We hope this will enhance your enjoyment, and help you in your career at AeroTexas. In this handbook you'll find a full company profile, lots of membership information, our services, descriptions and requirements for ratings and certifications, schedules, and frequently asked questions.

COMPANY PROFILE

Our headquarters are in Austin, Texas and our primary hub is located at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (KAUS), smack dab in the middle of of the Lone Star State. AeroTexas was chartered in September 2000 when the aerotexas.com domain was registered. We recognized the need for a VA located in, and serving the Lone Star State.

We do so much more, though! We have regional and national scheduled service flights, charter flights, cargo, and international flights too. We also participate in, and contribute to the flightsim community, and are active in online events (membership does not require VATSIM affiliation). Our 20-level advancement system is sensible and fun. We are established in the virtual aviation community as innovative organization dedicated to flight simulation.

AEROTEXAS

Our pilots are some of the best in the business, and our staff is ambitious and creative. Not anyone can be an AeroTexas member. A self-administered new hire checkride using ATAVS is requisite, as is an annual flight review. Our administrative structure is that of a partnership led by a Chief Senior Partner, and assisted by other Partners and staff.

Our roster page is automatically updated. Pilots progress upward through the ranks with flying tenure, and have lots of opportunities to earn awards and endorsements along the way.

Every hour is real! The roster displays accurate flight logs with actual hours, and no one cheats, because it's just not possible. This is because every member uses the Alpha Tango Airline Validation System (ATAVS), a freeware Windows application developed at AeroTexas. It is a flight recorder and ACARS-like position reporting system and realism flight validation and automatic flight logging through our website. *Are we a better airline? Are AeroTexas pilots the best? You bet!*

ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

We require no previous virtual airline experience to join. We do assume that you understand the basics. You can take off and land, you can navigate across country, you have experience flying on instruments. New hires should be familiar with IFR procedures, and feel comfortable with high performance multi-engine aircraft. Let me be honest - if you're new to aviation then we're not the virtual airline for you. As a rule of thumb, if you have logged less than 40 or so hours with Microsoft Flight Simulator, then you are probably not ready for us.

AeroTexas does not accept transfer of hours from other virtual airlines. As a new member, you can be confident that you will work your way up through the ranks just as every member has done before.

Lone Star Service (LStar) represents your first step as a pilot for AeroTexas. As an LStar pilot you will fly passengers on short flights to airfields in and around Texas using turboprops. LStar pilots can also fly in our vintage division, Trans-Texas Airways, and they can fly charter and cargo routes.

As you progress through the ranks you can still fly routes in lower service levels. Occasionally charter services, or temporary seasonal transport flights are offered, usually in the form of an event.

Membership at AeroTexas requires a valid e-mail address.

AeroTexas supports only Microsoft Flight Simulator 2004 (FS9) and to a limited extent, FSX.

Active membership requires at least one or flight reports per month (using ATAVS, the flight reporting is easy!)

Occasionally members will be asked to complete an annual flight review – it's actually a lot of fun.

AeroTexas members are of the highest caliber. Improper conduct, including failure to comply with the details of this document, can result in immediate termination of membership. Pilots should always demonstrate the most courteous and civil behavior when representing AeroTexas in any fly-in, or multi-player event, and when communicating with any other member of AeroTexas.

ATAVS FLIGHT REPORTING SYSTEM

Flight reporting is easy with the Alpha Tango Airline Validation System (ATAVS). This free Windows software was developed at AeroTexas as a proprietary ACARS program.

ATAVS does three things:

1. Flight validation – by periodically checking data from the simulator during flight, each flight report is guaranteed to be valid – no slewing, no pausing, only real-time simulation rates
2. Flight reporting – ATAVS makes flight reporting very easy for the pilot and facilitates efficient management of your online data at AeroTexas.
3. Position reporting – ATAVS is essentially a superset of ACARS (Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System) that periodically sends position reports to AeroTexas for tracking and display.

ATAVS has a built-in logbook that allows you to fly several flights before filing your report online, but please file your flight report on the same day that you complete your flight.

There is no limit to the number of flights you can report in a single day - fly as often as you like – just be sure to file those reports!

THE ROSTER

The main roster page is sorted by most recent activity. We think this is the fairest method of presenting pilot rosters. Everyone wants to be at the top of the list, and this way everyone has a chance. The more you fly, the more visible you will be to everyone else on the roster. The roster is updated automatically.

AIRCRAFT

Our aircraft program focuses on quality freeware aircraft, panels, sounds and documentation. We have five primary aircraft divisions: turboprops, regional jets, large jets, heavies, and vintage aircraft. In each division we offer two complete aircraft packages that you can download from our site. Aircraft that are no longer in primary active service can still be used – it's just that we may no longer offer the download or the same level of support as aircraft in our primary service divisions.

Although all of our aircraft are freeware, it is AeroTexas policy that members are not allowed to upload our planes to any website, place the aircraft on a CD for commercial use or distribute them in any way other than for personal use. Issues concerning use of aircraft that are not obtained from the AeroTexas livery is covered in the FAQ. Additional aircraft are continuously being tested.

RATING SYSTEM

The ratings system used at AeroTexas is based on number of hours flown. As you report flights the hours will add up, and your rating will improve. Your rating determines what kind of flights you can make, so the more you fly, the more options you have. Pilots with less than 20 hours are expected to fly LStar scheduled service flights using turboprops (see the table below). Pilots with 40+ hours are eligible for the CAT II and CAT III endorsements.

Hours	Rating	Turbo Props	Jets			Charter & Cargo	CAT II	CAT III
			Regional	Large	Heavies			
0	New Hire	x				x		
1	Navigator	x				x		
10	<u>LStar</u> FO	x				x		
15	<u>LStar</u> CPT	x				x		
20	RJ FO	x	x			x		
40	RJ CPT	x	x			x	x	x
50	RJ CPT II	x	x			x	x	x
60	NATL FO	x	x	x		x	x	x
80	NATL CPT	x	x	x		x	x	x
90	NATL CPT II	x	x	x		x	x	x
100	INTL FO I	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
120	INTL FO II	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
200	INTL CPT	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
500	INTL CPT II	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
750	INTL CPT III	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1000	Senior Captain	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2000	Fleet Captain	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3000	Master Captain	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5000	Commodore	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10000	Senior Commodore	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
25000	Master Commodore	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

CARGO AND CHARTER FLIGHTS

All pilots are authorized to fly cargo and charter flights. However, our signature "All Weather Air Cargo Service" (also known as Mango Air Cargo or "MAC") typically operates to airports where the destination weather is reported as below standard minimums. For MAC therefore we highly recommend that you work toward a CAT II endorsement – it will authorize you to make low IFR approaches with a decision height of 100 feet! We have more about this later – keep reading.

YOUR FIRST FLIGHTS – LSTAR TURBOS

Your first flights are particularly remarkable. Why? All of your first flights will be in and around Texas. In fact you'll likely log 25+ flights in turboprops flying around Texas before moving up to regional jets. That's really great because as a new LStar pilot you represent the best of AeroTexas, and these flights, which define our airline, represent the best of our heritage and make up most of our core business operations.

If you're new to AeroTexas, and more especially if you're new to virtual airline operations in general, let me make a suggestion. For your first flight, fly from Austin Bergstrom Airport (KAUS) to Houston Hobby Airport (KHOU). This is a true heritage route – Austin is our modern base of operations and the headquarters of the greatest airline on the planet, AeroTexas Aviation International.

Houston Hobby was where we started, it was actually the first international airport in Houston (in fact it was originally called Houston International Airport). Houston is also the home base for Trans-Texas Airways, our sister airline and vintage codeshare. The flight is about an hour, and can be as complicated as you like with departure and arrival procedures in Bravo airspace, or simplified with a direct VFR routing that will get you there lickety-split. After this flight head on back to Austin, or tour the state with flights to Galveston, Corpus, Texarkana, Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso,....well you get the picture.

CAT II/III ENDORSEMENTS

Starting this year, pilots with at least a Regional Jet Captain rating (40+ hours) can work on special low IFR endorsements: CAT II, CAT IIIa, CAT IIIb, and CAT IIIc. These endorsements no longer require a checkride, however they do require a good bit of flying in the low stuff, and they automatically expire after a period of time unless you remain current.

Qualified pilots (Regional Jet Captain or higher) who have logged at least one IFR flight in the past 45 days are automatically granted a *provisional* CAT II certification. The certification is not an official endorsement, but rather an implied certificate to motivate you to work toward getting, and keeping that CAT II/III endorsement.

There are two groups of flight rule designations that will explain how the endorsements are granted.

GROUP ALPHA: includes LIFR, CAT II and CAT III flights.
GROUP BRAVO: includes CAT II and CAT III flights.

- **CAT II** Qualified pilots who have logged at least one GROUP ALPHA flight in the previous 45 days will receive a CAT II endorsement. The CAT II endorsement authorizes you to fly CAT II approaches down to a DH of 100 feet (Radar Altimeter 100 feet or RA100).
- **CAT IIIa** Qualified pilots who have logged at least two (2) GROUP ALPHA flights, of which one (or more) was a flight from GROUP BRAVO in the past 45 days will receive a CAT IIIa endorsement. The CAT IIIa endorsement authorizes approaches down to RA75.
- **CAT IIIb** Qualified pilots who have logged at least three (3) GROUP ALPHA flights, of which one (or more) was a CAT III flight, will receive a CAT IIIb endorsement. The CAT IIIb endorsement authorizes you to fly approaches down to RA50.
- **CAT IIIc** Qualified pilots who have logged at least five (5) GROUP ALPHA flights, of which three (3) or more were CAT III flights, will receive a CAT IIIc endorsement. The CAT IIIc endorsement is the pinnacle of low IFR – this endorsement authorizes you to fly zero-visibility approaches.

AWARDS

We now offer more than two dozen awards for reaching specific milestones. For example, members receive an award after making their 100th flight, 200th flight, and so on. There are also awards for operating experience by equipment type, and the exclusive Million Miler award.

PARTNERS & STAFF

Partnership is offered to members who have made, or have proven potential to make significant contributions to AeroTexas. Partnership is a privilege and is held as a concurrent rating; and Partners progress through the rating schedule just like every other member. Each partner typically specializes in some way – for example fleet development, human resources, event planning, public relations, etc. If you have a question please let us know – our e-mail addresses are available to you in the Members Only area.

(4) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - FAQs

Can I use FSMetar and other add-ons?

Yes! Any add-on that enhances your flying experience is encouraged. We especially encourage FSMetar (which is free), and other weather updating add-ons. These programs make the flight more realistic, and that's what it is all about.

How About Squawkbox?

Absolutely! The use of Squawkbox is encouraged. We support VATSIM and IVAO.

Does AeroTexas.Com make real money?

AeroTexas.com is strictly a form of entertainment and its founder, partners, and staff receive no monetary compensation of any kind. We just have fun!

Can I quit?

Sure. We know you're busy and we provide you plenty of flexibility to schedule your flights with AeroTexas, however we also understand that you may find something that makes you happier. Just send e-mail to AeroTexas and ask to be removed from the roster. Note that all of your information will be deleted, including your e-mail address, certificates awarded, flight identifications. Your flight reports will be transferred to the boneyard however, and will remain the property of AeroTexas.

Can I take a leave of absence?

Send e-mail to AeroTexas with the amount of time needed. Be sure to keep your e-mail address current during the period – if we can't contact you then you might get dropped. Leave is limited to six months.

Can I transfer my hours to another VA?

The Partners at AeroTexas will be happy to communicate any of your information with another organization, but ONLY with your permission. Send an e-mail to AeroTexas and explain the nature of the transfer, the VA, the VA's administrator's e-mail address and website. We will query the VA and ask them what they need, and will get your permission before proceeding.

I'd like to help manage - do you have any openings?

If you are interested in contributing to the success of AeroTexas, then tell us what *you're* interested in doing, and we'll start you out on a simple project. Our staff members have found that with each success comes gratification of a job well done more exciting and challenging projects. You need no experience - just the desire to help and learn, and the will to work with a creative team in an environment open to new ideas and change.

Does ATAVS score my flight? Will I be penalized if I use my own flight plan?

ATAVS does not score you on your flights, but it does monitor flight simulation parameters, such as speed, rate of descent, position, and so forth.

Can I use aircraft that are not from the AeroTexas livery?

While we prefer that our members use aircraft in the AeroTexas livery, we recognize that some pilots have favorite aircraft that they have either purchased or downloaded from freeware sources. Although not all of these aircraft are compatible with ATAVS, many can be adapted for use with ATAVS. This section describes how you can determine if your aircraft can be adapted to work properly with ATAVS and how to adapt them so you can successfully report your flights.

If you look in your ATAVS folder on your computer, you will see the atavs_eqpt.txt file. If you open this file using Notepad, you will see entries such as:

B739,16,0,156,0,680.5,
B73Q,0,0,111,0,1066.1,
B744,0,42,379,0,2319.0,
B752,0,22,166,0,1195.7,
B763,0,30,175,0,1669.7,

The first four digits in each line represent the ICAO aircraft codes that ATAVS uses to determine the aircraft you are flying and whether it is a supported type.

Suppose, for example, you have a Boeing 747-400 aircraft that you want to adapt to use ATAVS. The ICAO code for this aircraft is B744, so the aircraft can be adapted to use ATAVS. Remember this code because you will need it later in the aircraft modification process.

On the other hand, if you have a Concorde whose ICAO code is CONC, you would not be able to adapt it to use ATAVS since the CONC code is not in the `atavs_eqpt.txt` file.

Once you have determined that your aircraft can be modified to use ATAVS, you will have to make changes to its `aircraft.cfg` file.

When you install an aircraft in FS2004, a subfolder for the aircraft is created in the "Aircraft" folder. For example, the `b747_400` folder was created as part of the FS2004 package for the Boeing 747-400 aircraft. If you locate this folder using Windows Explorer, you will notice a file in this folder called "aircraft.cfg". You need to edit the corresponding file for your aircraft.

The following instructions serve as an example of how to modify this file to use the MSFS default Boeing 747-400 aircraft with ATAVS:

1. Close MSFS if it is running
2. Make a backup copy of the "aircraft.cfg" file in the `b747_400` folder
3. Open the "aircraft.cfg" file in the `b747_400` folder using Notepad.
4. Locate the `[fltsim.0]` section
5. Edit the title line so that the first four digits after the = sign are "B747", the ICAO code for the aircraft. It doesn't matter what follows the ICAO code.
6. The title line should look like: `title=B744 Boeing 747-400`
7. Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 for the `[fltsim.1]`, `[fltsim.2]` and `[fltsim.3]` sections for the other aircraft variants.
8. Save the edited "aircraft.cfg" file to the `b747_400` folder.
9. This aircraft will now work with ATAVS.

If you follow this procedure for your aircraft and get a message from ATAVS indicating that your aircraft is not approved for use, then the "aircraft.cfg" file was probably not edited properly.