Virtual United States Coast Guard

TRAINING POLICY

Version 1.0

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Scope

This document is designed to cover all training policies and procedures for the virtual United States

Coast Guard (vUSCG). This document is updated frequently to maintain compliance with VATSIM

SOA-POL, the VATSIM Code of Conduct as well as the directives of the vUSCG air staff.

Overview

The vUSCG Training Policy demonstrates alignment with the SOA-POL requirements and provides

guidance to members on the training expectations to operate certain aircraft and activities.

vUSCG Commandant

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Introduction

The training of members covers two important aspects of our community which cannot be overlooked. The first; as a *VSOA Active Partner - Restricted* (no AAR); **vUSCG** must meet the VATSIM rules and policies or risk closure. So this is a mandatory aspect and governed by the VSOD through quarterly audits. The second is because we want to provide a learning and development environment. Many members have a wealth of real world experience and knowledge which is shared with vUSCG and thus making it interesting for other members. We have a desire to replicate and simulate the activities of the real USCG with some moderation to make flying as practical as possible.

The current training regime has been assessed by the VSOD as meeting its requirements. Some new members may see the initial training as tiresome and not see its application.

This document and its requirements are designed to maintain our standing as a Partner with VSOA.

VATSIM VSOA Training

VATSIM adopts the POL-Special Operations as its guiding document, a copy is always available https://vatsim.net/docs/policy/special-operations

vUSCG; as a Partner; must ensure that we follow this policy and specifically that our appointment of VSOA members meets *Section 7.4 Training Requirements*. This forms the basis of our initial training. Section 7.4 currently states;

> ● *One hour of aircraft familiarization in VFR conditions verifying that a pilot can maintain control of an aircraft on the ground and in the air. Training must include the following: ATC communication, ground handling, and pattern work.*
>
> ● *Two hours of navigation exercises involving the use of one or more of the following: VOR/NDB/DME/GPS radio systems as well as flight planning, runway selection, executing a radial, overhead breaks, and simulated stall and recovery in VFR conditions both day and night.*
>
> ● *Three hours of navigation exercises involving the use of the following: VOR/NDB/DME/GPS radio systems in IFR conditions to include flight instruments and navigation training, flight planning to include cross country flight, holding procedures, completing precision and non-precision approaches (VOR, DME, GPS, TACAN, & ILS) and missed approaches in day and night conditions.*

● *Four hours of advanced online flight training experience in utilizing aircraft for their designed purpose, such as, fighter, bomber, tanker, cargo, surveillance, carrier operations, etc. to include the following: engine failure at take-off and in-flight, overhead breaks, low level flight, aerial refuelling, airdrops, ACM, weapons deployment, and formation flying based on aircraft capabilities. For VSOA that do not perform militaristic operations the training requirements shall be focused on the primary operations of the group*

● *Pilots must demonstrate a general knowledge of Military Training Routes, rules/limitations in Restricted Areas, and Military Operating Areas. Demonstrate required knowledge regarding locating the proper Air to Air Refuelling Route and how to enter same. Demonstrate the ability to identify, assess, and mitigate risks, encompassing special military manoeuvres and operations.*

● *All training records are to be kept and presented to the VSOD upon request.*

● *All VSO partners are permitted to "fast-track" new recruits only if they have been verified as a certified VSO pilot in another VATSIM approved VSO. All candidates within each Special Operations Partner can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL),. It is at the discretion of that Partner & Special Operations CFI to grant such applications.*

● *Any Military Pilot Rating is transferrable between Special Operations Partners.*

In line with these mandatory requirements, this policy has been designed to allow vUSCG to operate as a responsible Partner.

Q and A

Why do I need to undertake initial training at vUSCG? You must because VATSIM says so and vUSCG is required to so we can continue to operate. The only exemption to completing the initial training is IF you are already a VATSIM VSOA certified member with another Partner. See the RPL process section.

Trainers

The **Training Coordinator CO3** has appointed Instructor Pilots (IP) from within the membership. These IPs have been selected for their ability to disseminate knowledge and support other members through their development of skills.   Not every IP is qualified to instruct on every course, however

there are sufficient available for each course to allow you as a member to develop. If you are interested in helping as an IP you should make contact with the Training Coordinator CO3.

As courses are developed and introduced the IPs are given first opportunity to complete them, that way they can offer extra courses on the topic.

Appointment as an IP requires a level of professionalism and leadership. The appointment can be withdrawn or suspended by the Training Coordinator CO3.

Trainee Management

The vUSCG utilises DisCord for management interactions on almost every operation, including training. On joining vUSCG each individual will have an individual training management thread created for them located Training>#Flight-training>Training Case for Cxxxx. The only members that can access that thread are Air Staff, the IPs and the actual member it relates to, so it is confidential.

All training matters are to be posted in that thread. It serves as the primary evidence for an audit by VSOD and therefore needs to be accurate. IF that thread disappears, it is only because they have a 'show if active' timer on them.

It is expected that each member engaged in a course will commence the course within 30 days and access their thread at least every 30 days, even if it is to provide an explanation of absence. Your assigned IP and the Air Staff have access, so there is no excuse for failing to engage.

If at any time you decide that you no longer wish to continue with the training, please do us a courtesy and post withdrawal.

Minimum joining requirements

Any person wishing to join vUSCG and commence Initial Training to become a VSO Certified Pilot, must have;
1. An active VATSIM CID [https://vatsim.net/docs/basics/join-vatsim]
2. Records to show that you have flown for a minimum of 100 hours on the VATSIM network.
3. A clean VATSIM record in regards to violations especially within other VSOA Partners.

Any person who feels they may have suitable real world experience can make contact with the Training Coordinator CO3, to determine whether this minimum requirement could be waived in their specific circumstances.

We recognize that online network time is not the only way to achieve competence.
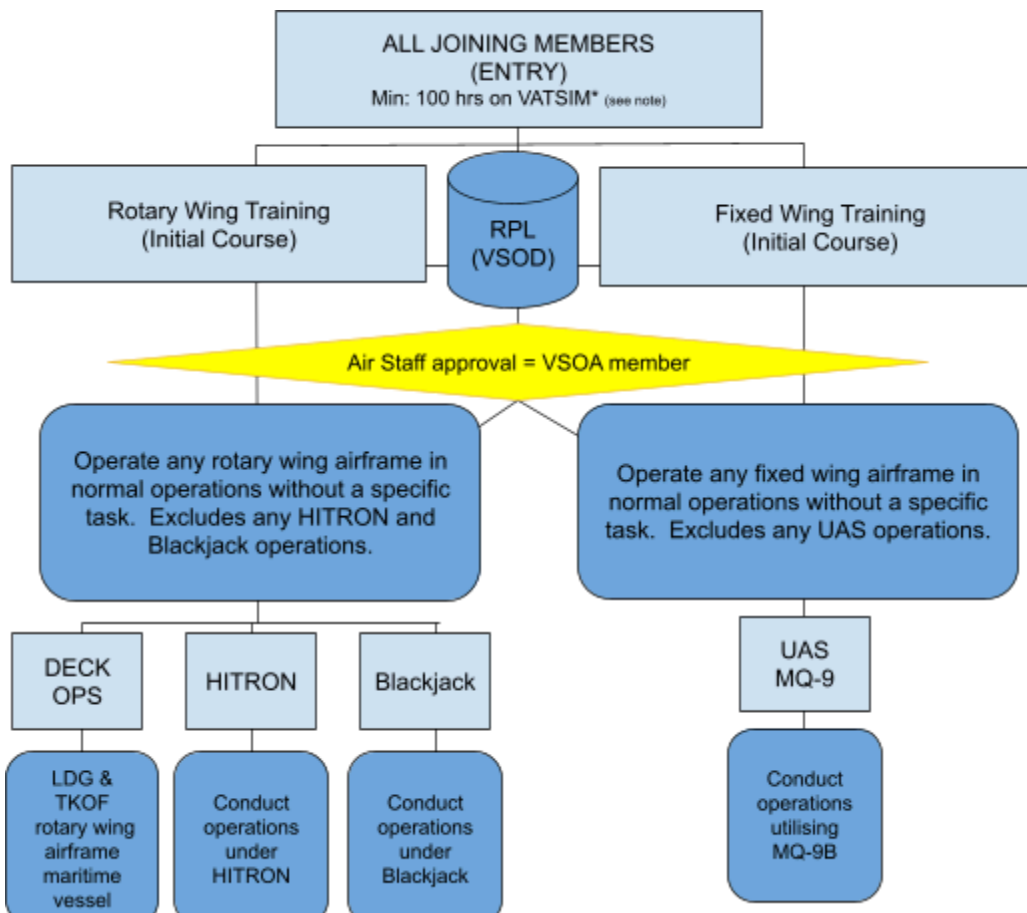
Expectation and Operating Environment

As a VSO Certified Pilot, and pilot with vUSCG, you will be expected to fly on the VATSIM network with a level of proficiency and confidence whilst not causing adverse comment from others. You will operate in all classes of Airspace, with and without Air Traffic Control provided, and intermingled with non-VSOA pilots. You will not always be closely supervised at all times.

Flying military operations on the VATSIM network are not for everyone, and we respect that. If you wish to represent our organization you must be above average in airmanship.

Training Pipeline

The following schematic provides an overview of the vUSCG training provided and the pathway to use to obtain certification for operations. **You must not undertake operations online without successful completion of the required unit**.

The lighter blue boxes are courses that vUSCG has on offer. The darker blue is the authority once the course has been successfully completed. The award of a "VSOA Certified Pilot" requires the Air Staff to announce the fact, as it is recognized by all other VSOA Partners.

Note: *vUSCG does have a policy that allows approved applicants to waive the 100 hours. Please discuss with the **Training Coordinator CO3**.*

Rotary Wing Initial Training

The vUSCG fixed wing initial training consists of a self paced three (3) stage course;

Stage 1 - Based out of South Whiting Field [KNDZ] in the TH-57C as "LUCKYxxx" requires approximately three (3) hours of VFR flight in two (2) flights recorded with SmartCARS3.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JpmLm0Nv6F8VSJbA882XuI6uQBIZFNmP/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

Stage 2 - Based out of South Whiting Field [KNDZ] in the TH-57C as "LUCKYxxx" requires three flights of IFR of about four (4) hours recorded with SmartCARS3.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rj5T25jGKDnOSKTCQU-rePRrjorQXCU9/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

Stage 3 - Based out of Mobile [KMOB] in either the MH-65D or MH-60T as "COAST GUARD xxx" requires four (4) flights over about four (4) hours recorded with SmartCARS3. This includes the SAR component to be an effective Coast Guard Airman.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qXK_dL1xIQknS7vaxVNBnw8fP0_ilrf0/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

On completion of this self paced training and assessment, your Instructor Pilot (IP) will recommend to the Air Staff that you be certified for rotary wing vUSCG operations (excluding any HITRON or Blackjack operations).

Fixed Wing Initial Training

The vUSCG fixed wing initial training consists of a self paced three (3) stage course;

Stage 1 - Based out of North Whiting Field [KNSE] in the T6 Texan II as "SHOOTERxxx" requires approximately three (3) hours of VFR flight recorded with SmartCARS3.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15VeweSL3E1yN1jpbUPQ-kcYPMwuZqsDS/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

Stage 2 - Based out of CGAS Corpus Christie [KNGP] in the T44 Pegasus as "STINGRAYxxx" requires three flights of IFR of about four (4) hours recorded with SmartCARS3.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FcCjenR2eSi3SufVztuE7LZTb7Kjy2MC/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

Stage 3 - Based out of Little Rock AFB [KLRF] in the C-130J as "JODYxxx" requires four (4) flights recorded with SmartCARS3. This includes the SAR component to be an effective Coast Guard Airman.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a8E5INw1qatms8TfZD9k_reGo5Sn-QpU/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105914481808572621846&rtpof=true&sd=true

On completion of this self paced training and assessment, your Instructor Pilot (IP) will recommend to the Air Staff that you be certified for fixed wing vUSCG operations (excluding any UAS).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

This pathway is generally only open to an existing VSO Certified Pilot who is active with another VSOA Partner. It also requires the Special Operations Training Organization Chief Flight Officer (VSODCFI) approval prior to being approved.

As a guide and a procedural step the RPL Application is to be completed by the member wishing to use this pathway. This completed form should be submitted as soon as possible to avoid delay https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eXgk8gs6GoyZ8cLjLa7o8Lq1phedFQMG/view?usp=drive_link

There is no guarantee that every applicant will be successful, nor does this process suggest that some bridging training may be required.

Regardless of the outcome, the Air Staff will have the final call in regards vUSCG operations and Certifications.

Air Staff certification as VSO Certified Pilot

Upon completion of initial training your IP will recommend to the Air Staff whether or not you are acceptable as a VSO Certified Pilot. You will be notified if successful.

OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

Deck Operations

The vUSCG does conduct deck landings and departures on the VATSIM network, generally from Landable Ships such as USCG Cutters. At times we undertake joint operations and may operate from vUSN carriers or other landable ships. To ensure that we are seen in a professional light, members must successfully complete the Deck Operations training before landing or departing from any maritime surface vessel on the network.

Course: Based out of NAS Jacksonville [KNIP] in the MH-65D and consists of one (1) module totally about one (1) hour with an Instructor Pilot. This is Module One of the HITRON course.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B4VI2Q1yrO5xfdGdbYza6ATaBE9Inaf9D8zlweSh8Z8/edit?usp=drive_link

HITRON

Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) is simulated within vUSCG using the MH-65D helicopter. It generally involves marine operations such as Deck Operations with Interdiction under the Maritime Law Enforcement regime. Module 1 is the Deck Operations training and some maritime specific material. Module 2 involves some Advanced flight maneuvers in the MH-65D. Module 3 covers interdiction. Module 4 is undertaken during darkness. Module 5 is a high intensity formative section.

Course: Based out of NAS Jacksonville [KNIP] in the MH-65D and consists of about fifteen (15) hours with an Instructor Pilot to complete.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B4Vl2Q1yrO5xfdGdbYza6ATaBE9Inaf9D8zlweSh8Z8/edit?usp=drive_link

Blackjack

Blackjack is the name given to a specific operation undertaken by the vUSCG helicopter unit that intercepts unidentified aircraft near Washington D.C. This is undertaken from CGAS Washington (KDCA). The Metropolitan Washington DC area is restricted airspace from Surface up to FL180 and is policed by the Blackjack in co-operation with the ARTCC.

Course: Consists of two theory sessions, the first followed by three (3) practical flights, and the later by two (2) practical flights, all with an IP. It has been estimated to take six (6) hours to complete.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rpmm-uFywsTrgkWqY7VQqfenk3HvKfngb2-Pu1Pg8Xo/edit?usp=drive_link

UAS (MQ-9)

The vUSCG is in early stages of developing MQ-9B operations on the network, and some training has commenced. To undertake this training you must have acceptance from the Training Coordinator CO3.

Course:

Link to be added

<u>Definitions</u>

Active Pilot	*A member of a VSOA who has met the requirements of the VSOA AND has flown at least 1 flight on the VATSIM network, for the VSOA, in the last 90 days.*
Air Displays	*The action of planning and executing a Flying Display or air show.*
Carrier Operations	*Conducting all flight operations on or within the vicinity of (with intent to engage with) a carrier ship.*
Conducting joint training exercises with other approved VSO organizations	*Conducting events with other VSOAs with the primary focus on Restricted Operations. Non-VSOA members can take part in events planned and executed by a VSOA as long as the activity is not deemed restricted by this policy & procedures manual and there is referenceable acceptance of such participation.*
Executing air combat manoeuvres	*The actions of executing military manoeuvres used in combat scenarios whether in restricted airspace or not.*
Flying low level military routes	*The action of conducting training through military designated areas at low levels with intent to appear to be conducting it in a military manner.*
Having access to special use airspace	*The action of requesting and utilizing special use or restricted airspace on the VATSIM network.*
Interception/scramble of other aircraft	*The action of conducting a planned flight to meet up with another aircraft (known or unknown) with intent to escort that aircraft (Note: ATC can request an Intercept/scramble of unattended connections when available taking due regard for the enjoyment experience of the other pilot as it applies to the CoC &/or CoR).*
Landable Ship	*A ship that, generally but not exclusively, is created by the user via their simulator scenery or a third-party add-on, for single or multiplayer use, that has the capability of a hardened deck area designed for launch and recovery of aircraft and on a mission specifically authorized by the organization's command structure.*
Search and Rescue Operations	*The action of planning and executing emergency flights (fixed or rotary wing) in search for other targets for the purposes of search & rescue.*

VERSION	CHANGES	DATE
V1.0	Drafted, Reviewed and Approved	13th November 2025

APPROVED
November *13th* 2025

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