HAVANA FIR

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

GROUND CONTROL (GND)

Version 2.5

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This document contains essential information regarding our operations and policies. Therefore, it is required reading for all Havana FIR controllers.

Virtual Havana FIR is governed by America's VATCAR division

Section - Ground Control Procedures

1. Generalities

1.1. In order to staff a Ground position an S1 rating or higher is required, and be listed as active on the Havana FIR Controller roster.

1.2. The Ground Controller (GROUND) will use the callsign and frequency as published on the Havana FIR website under "ATC Positions".

1.3. Airports that do not have a separate radio frequency published for Ground Control should not be staffed by a separate Ground facility.

1.4. Ground is not a radar position and will not track any aircraft.

1.5. GROUND will provide the following ATC services:

(a) Clearance Delivery services at the airport represented by the controller's callsign.

(b) Ground Control services at the airport represented by the controller's callsign.

2. Responsibilities

GROUND is responsible for aircraft movement on taxiways only. Ground is not responsible for aircraft movement on any non-movement area, nor on any active runway.

3. Duties

3.1. GROUND shall provide Clearance Delivery to pilots on the ground at the airport served. ATC Clearances should be given on a first-come, first-served (FCFS) basis.

3.1.1. Prior to issuing an ATC clearance the controller should review the flight plan filed by the pilot and amend it if necessary according to the following:

(a) Flight rules (IFR or VFR)

(b) Aircraft type
As per the ICAO DOC 8643- Aircraft Type Designators

(c) Departure airport
Verify that ICAO code is correct.

(d) Destination airport
Verify that ICAO code is correct.

(e) Cruise altitude
Verify that it conforms to the "Altitude assignment" diagram published on the Havana FIR website. For VFR flights check that altitudes are according to the VFR scheme.

(f) Initial assigned altitude
(See specific provisions bellow)

(g) Route of flight
It should begin with either a current Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedure, or one of the designated transition fixes associated with the Airport of Departure.
Pilots should not be forced to fly a SID. Before assigning one, check if the pilot has Charts, either looking at the FP remarks or asking him/her directly. A direct-to-point or vectored departure should be assigned to pilots unable or unwilling to fly a SID.
Verify that the route of flight conforms to any Letter of Agreement (LOA) with adjacent FIR/ARTCCs.
Although direct routing is not a preferred method, it is acceptable. Controllers may suggest preferred routes to pilots; nevertheless, if the pilot refuses and traffic or existing conditions permit, the cleared route should be as filed.
Important: A controller may suggest amendments to the pilot's FP, but should not force that amendment. If the pilot refuses to change his FP, then the controller should adapt accordingly. Be polite always.

(h) Transponder code

Squawk codes assigned by ATC facilities will be as follows:

IFR International

3400 to 3477 (primary range)
0300 to 0377 (secondary range)

IFR Domestic (aircraft departing from and arriving to airports inside the FIR)

1700 to 1777 (primary range)
1600 to 1677 (secondary range)

VFR flights should squawk 1200

(i) Remarks

Check the remarks for any relevant information regarding the pilot and flight. This includes availability of charts and proper “communications type” code if entered. If none is entered, make sure to add the correct identifier.

3.2. GROUND shall provide Ground Control services to all aircraft requesting such services.

3.3. GROUND will coordinate with the Tower Controller or the controller providing control tower services (when present) with regard to:

(a) The use of runways for departure and the direction of traffic flow
(b) The crossing of active runways

3.4. GROUND will issue Progressive Taxi instructions to any aircraft requesting this service only when it will not interfere with providing timely service to other aircraft.

3.5. GROUND should give notice of departing traffic to the controller providing Approach/Departure Control service (when present), via text or voice, unless otherwise coordinated. The notification should be made soon after the aircraft has been instructed to taxi.

3.6. GROUND will transfer communications when the aircraft is close to the holding point of the assigned takeoff runway but before reaching it, as follows:

(a) To the Tower Controller (when available).
(b) In the absence of Tower, to the controller providing control tower services.
(c) In the absence of any further ATC, to UNICOM (122.8).

4. Specific Provisions

4.1. Initial IFR departure altitudes:

(a) Aircrafts departing from airports inside Havana TMA (MUHA, MUNG and MUPB) should be assigned an initial altitude of FL150. This provision does not apply if Havana Terminal (MUHA_APP) is offline or unless otherwise coordinated.
(b) Aircrafts departing from airports inside Santiago TMA (MUBA, MUBY, MUCU, MUGM, MUGT, MUHG, MUMZ, MUMO and MUVT) should be assigned an initial altitude of FL160. This provision does not apply if Santiago Approach (MUCU_APP) is offline or unless otherwise coordinated.
(c) Aircrafts departing from any other airport not contained above will NOT be assigned a temporary altitude unless otherwise coordinated.

When issuing initial altitudes the following phraseology is suggested:
“... initial climb FLXXX, expect final FLXXX ...”

5. Events

Ground Controller positions could be opened for airports that do not have a separate radio frequency published for Ground Control in case of large events or very high traffic conditions at the specific airport, but ONLY when approved by the ATM, DATM or TA. The frequency for the position would be provided along with the approval.