Federal Aviation Administration

Basics for ATC
INFORMATION SHEET
FOR NEW-HIRE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SPECIALISTS

This Basics for ATC information sheet is provided to you based on your selection under an Air Traffic Control Specialist-Trainee job announcement. While these guidelines apply to you, they may not apply to other employees who were selected under a different hiring initiative.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

1 | Read this Information Sheet Carefully

2 | Complete and return attached Basics for ATC Election Form with job offer decision letter

1 | ABOUT BASICS FOR ATC

What is Basics for Air Traffic Control (ATC)?

The Basics course is blended training for newly hired air traffic control specialists. The course features web-based content, facilitated discussion, and activities delivered by Air Traffic instructors on a web conferencing platform. It covers basic air traffic and aviation topics that are prerequisite to option-specific skill training. Course numbers are 50043002 (TRACON), 50045001 (Tower), and 50147001 (En Route).

Who must take the Basics for ATC course?

Most employees hired into Air Traffic Control Specialist-Trainee positions are required to attend Basics immediately before initial qualification training in the En Route, Terminal Tower, or Terminal Radar tracks. Basics is considered a prerequisite for those courses. Some candidates may qualify to request to voluntarily skip the FAA-provided Basics for ATC course. See Section 2 on the next page for additional information about the Basics for ATC Election.

Are there prerequisites?

There are no prerequisites for the Basics for ATC course.

How long is the training? Where is it held?

It is 19 days and is conducted via a web-based conferencing platform.

Who pays for Basics for ATC training?

The FAA pays for the Basics course. There is no cost to the student. New hires who take the course are on temporary assignment and are paid their salary.

How will employees be scheduled for training?

New hires will be scheduled to take Basics for ATC soon after receiving clearance for hire unless they voluntarily choose to skip the course. See Section 2 on the next page for additional information about the Basics for ATC Election.

How is AT Basics training performance assessed?

Employees who attend Basics must pass an end-of-course examination with a score of 70 percent or better. Those who pass will proceed to option-specific skill training. Those who fail the end-of-course examination will not proceed with option-specific skill training and will no longer be employed by the FAA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Facility assignment will occur after successful completion of option-specific skill training and will be based, in part, on your class rank during training. Those who take Basics for ATC must pass the course to advance to option-specific skill training.

The FAA and its Mission
The Future Air Traffic System
Air Traffic Controller Career Field
FAA Academy

FAA Videos and Multimedia
FAA YouTube Channel
FAA TV

What is the Basics Election about?

Complete and submit the attached Basics for ATC Election form. Not everyone is eligible to skip Basics. Those who qualify to skip Basics may still choose to take the course anyway. But once you make your choice, it is irrevocable. Please read the remainder of this page carefully.

Who should complete the election form?

We are asking all selectees to let us know their Basics for ATC course attendance decision. Prospective employees who meet certain prior experience and/or education requirements may voluntarily skip the FAA provided Basics course.

An individual may skip Basics for ATC if he/she:

- Has completed courses that cover the Basics for ATC objectives, OR
- Holds, or has previously held, an FAA-recognized Air Traffic Certification. These include the Control Tower Operator certificate and facility certifications and/or ratings at military air traffic control facilities.

Prospective employees who do not meet either of these criteria must take Basics for ATC.

Is the FAA changing the training requirements for certain employees?

No. Knowledge of Basics for ATC course objectives remains a prerequisite for all initial training courses. The Basics attendance decision allows selectees with certain prior training or experience to opt out of the course, but it does not exempt the employee from having to possess the knowledge of what is covered in Basics for ATC.

Can I change my mind on the decision?

No. While your decision is voluntary, it is irrevocable.

Why is the FAA providing this option?

The initial training courses are designed for someone with little or no prior air traffic experience. However, some new hires may have already achieved a level of knowledge that exceeds the materials covered in the Basics for ATC course. For that reason, we are giving these trainees the opportunity to begin immediately training in the option-specific courses.

What are the Basics for ATC objectives?

The Basics course objectives are included as an attachment to this document.

What are FAA-recognized Air Traffic certifications?

These include the Control Tower Operator and facility certifications and/or ratings at military air traffic control facilities such as a control tower, radar approach control, radar final control, or en route center where the primary mission is to separate air traffic and issue safety alerts.

What happens if I note I am eligible and select "I choose to skip" on the Election form?

You are certifying to the FAA that you do not need to attend the Basics course before further training, and that you are solely responsible for knowing the Basics course objectives. Once you have completed pre-employment processing (medical, security, etc.), we will schedule you directly for Initial Qualification Training based on your track assignment.

What happens if I note I am eligible and select "I do NOT choose to skip" on the Election form?

You are communicating to the FAA that you want to take the Basics for ATC course. Anyone who attends Basics (even if they could opt out) must successfully pass the end-of-course examination in order to advance to Initial Qualification Training.

What happens if I note "I do not qualify to skip" on the Election form?

You are communicating to the FAA that you are not eligible to skip the Basics for ATC course. You will be scheduled for a Basics course prior to Initial Qualification Training, and you must successfully pass the end-of-course examination to remain employed and advance in training.

How will my election be validated?

You must self-certify that you meet either the prior training or prior experience criteria for bypassing Basics for ATC. If you elect to skip the course by signing the form, you are accepting responsibility for knowing the Basics for ATC objectives.

How do I know if I have achieved the Basics for ATC objectives?

Even if you are a prior certified controller or have prior ATC education (i.e., AT-CTI student), it does not mean you fully understand the concepts taught in Basics for ATC. It is your responsibility to determine whether you have learned (and maintained knowledge of) the objectives and have achieved the level of proficiency needed to progress to initial training.

Factors such as your personal learning abilities, instructor capabilities, exposure to aviation, and actual experience impact your level of understanding. A list of Basics objectives is provided to help you better prepare for training.

Will my decision affect my class date?

It is hard to say, because so many factors go into assigning class dates. However, you will be placed into the next appropriate training slot based on when you successfully complete your pre-employment clearances. If you elect to skip the Basics for ATC course, you will be assigned to the next available option-specific course. If you elect not to skip the training, we will assign you to the next available Basics for ATC course that feeds into your option-specific training.

Will my decision affect my starting salary?

No. Whether your FAA training begins with the Basics for ATC course or option-specific training, the FAA will pay the same salary. When you attend courses at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, the FAA will also pay per-diem rates.

Who must complete: All individuals accepting a job offer for the Air Traffic Control Specialist Trainee position.

Instructions: Please read, complete, sign, and return this form as instructed by Human Resources. Please contact your assigned representative at (405) 954-4657 if you have questions regarding this paperwork.

MEMORANDUM FOR AHF-C420 (AVIATION CAREERS)

FROM: _____ (name)

SUBJECT: Basics for Air Traffic Control Course Attendance Decision

I have read the accompanying information regarding the Basics for ATC course (Basics for ATC Information Sheet, Course Objectives). I understand that employees hired as trainees for the entry-level Air Traffic Control Specialist position are generally required to successfully complete the FAA-provided Basics for ATC course as part of their Initial Qualification Training. However, I understand that certain candidates may voluntarily elect to skip this course if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

    A. PRIOR EDUCATION: I have completed courses that cover the Basics for ATC objectives as described in the accompanying information.

    B. PRIOR EXPERIENCE: I hold, or have previously held, an FAA-recognized Air Traffic Certification as described in the accompanying information. These include the Control Tower Operator certificate and facility certifications and/or ratings at military air traffic control facilities.

After reviewing the accompanying information regarding the Basics for ATC course: (check ONE statement below)

    I MEET ONE OR BOTH OF THE CRITERIA ABOVE: A _____ B _____ (Check one or both, as applicable)
    AND I **CHOOSE TO SKIP** THE FAA-PROVIDED BASICS FOR ATC COURSE

    I understand that my choice to skip the FAA-provided course is voluntary and irrevocable, and I acknowledge that I am now solely responsible for possessing and demonstrating the content covered in Basics for ATC. I give permission for the FAA to schedule me directly, upon completion of pre-employment processing, for Initial Qualification Training (En Route, Terminal Radar or Tower) based on my track assignment. I understand that the FAA will not review my prior experience or credentials for the purpose of verifying my declaration above regarding my eligibility to skip the Basics for ATC course.

    I MEET ONE OR BOTH OF THE CRITERIA ABOVE: A _____ B _____ (Check one or both, as applicable)
    BUT I **CHOOSE NOT TO SKIP** THE FAA-PROVIDED BASICS FOR ATC COURSE.

    I understand that I must successfully complete the FAA-provided course in order to advance to Initial Qualification Training (En Route, Terminal Radar or Tower) based on my track assignment.

    I **DO NOT QUALIFY TO SKIP** THE FAA-PROVIDED BASICS FOR ATC COURSE.

    I understand that I must successfully complete the FAA-provided course in order to advance to Initial Qualification Training (En Route, Terminal Radar or Tower) based on my track assignment.

_____
DATE

Form developed: June 18, 2014
Updated: January 5, 2022

ATTACHMENT: BASICS FOR ATC OBJECTIVES

Module	Objective
2	**Air Traffic Control (ATC) System and National Airspace System (NAS)** • Identify the functions and structure of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) • Identify purpose and responsibilities of the ATC system • Identify types of Air Traffic Control (ATC) facilities • Identify the primary functions and position responsibilities of ATC facilities • Identify purpose and responsibilities of the Traffic Management (TM) system • Identify elements of the National Airspace System (NAS) • Define VFRs and IFRs
4	**Airports** • Identify areas of an airport • Identify airport markings • Identify airport signs • Identify airport lighting
5	**Separation** • Identify vertical separation and basic minimum requirements for providing separation • Identify types of nonradar separation and basic minimum requirements for providing separation • Identify radar separation and basic minimum requirements for providing separation • Identify visual separation and basic minimum requirements for providing separation • Identify runway separation and basic minimum requirements for providing separation • Identify basic holding procedures and requirements to perform holding
6	**Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs)** • Identify methods of disseminating airmen's information • Identify types of Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) • Describe responsibilities for reporting NOTAMs
7	**Air Traffic Control (ATC) Surveillance Sources** • Identify uses of primary radar • Identify components of primary radar • Identify uses of secondary radar • Identify components of secondary radar • Identify features of a video map • Identify features of ADS-B
8	**Introduction to FAA Orders and Manuals** • Identify purpose of FAA orders and Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) • Identify changes, notices, and supplements • Define terminology used in FAA orders
9	**Introduction to Letters of Agreement (LOAs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** • Define purposes of LOAs and SOPs • Identify content of LOAs and SOPs
10	**Principles of Flight** • Identify primary and secondary sources of lift • Identify types and parts of airfoils • Identify forces affecting flight, their interrelationships and their effects on aircraft performance • Identify effects of altitude, temperature, and pressure on aircraft performance • Identify functions of primary and secondary flight controls and the movement around the aircraft axes • Identify helicopter aerodynamics and controls • Describe hazards that affect flight
11	**Wake Turbulence** • Define wake turbulence • Identify factors affecting wake turbulence intensity • Describe wingtip vortices • Identify hazards associated with an induced roll • Describe helicopter downwash and vortices • Identify the impact of wake turbulence on Air Traffic Control (ATC)
12	**Aircraft Characteristics and Recognition** • Identify categories of aircraft • Identify weight classes of aircraft • Identify performance characteristics of aircraft • Identify aircraft designators • Identify identification features of aircraft
13	**Airspace** • Identify classes of airspace and their uses • Identify Special Use Airspace (SUA) as designated in the United States
14	**Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs)** • Define Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) • Define basic terms associated with Title 14 CFRs • Define Title 14 CFRs' general operating and flight rules • Identify requirements for achieving an Air Traffic Control (ATC) certification
15	**Title 14 CFR Part 91** • Identify the purpose of a flight plan • Identify rules for filing a flight plan in accordance with Title 14 CFR Part 91 • Identify VFR flight plan requirements • Identify VFR flight plan rules • Identify IFR flight rules • Identify supplemental oxygen requirements per Title 14 CFR Part 91
16	**Basic Navigation** • Identify reference lines of the Earth and their purpose • Identify coordinates and measurements used in navigation • Identify methods of conversion for time, speed, and distance • Identify types of speed • Identify effects of altitude and temperature on speed • Identify methods of calculating time, speed, and distance • Identify effects of wind on flight • Identify magnetic variations and deviation • Identify basic navigation methods
17	**Radio and Satellite Navigation** • Identify types of radio-based NAVAIDs • Identify characteristics of radio-based NAVAIDs • Identify components of radio-based NAVAIDs • Identify components of Instrument Landing System (ILS) • Identify characteristics of ILS • Identify components of Inertial Navigation System (INS) • Identify characteristics of INS • Identify types of satellite-based navigation systems • Identify components of satellite-based navigation systems • Identify characteristics of satellite-based navigation systems • Identify characteristics of airways established for federal airway system • Identify characteristics of routes established for federal airway system
18	**Pilot's Environment** • Define types and characteristics of pitot-static system • Define operating principles of gyroscopic flight instruments • Define operating principles of navigational instruments • Identify types and characteristics of radio equipment • Identify instrumentation used to manage aircraft flight • Identify alert systems used to prevent airborne collisions • Describe characteristics of physiological factors affecting pilots during flight
19	**VFR Charts and Publications** • Identify contents and information in a Sectional Aeronautical chart • Identify contents and information in a VFR Terminal Area chart • Identify Chart Supplements
20	**En Route IFR Charts** • Identify the purpose and contents of En Route Low Altitude charts • Identify the purpose and contents of En Route High Altitude charts • Identify the purpose and contents of IFR Area charts
21	**SIDs and STARs** • Identify types of departure procedures • Identify types of SIDs • Identify components of SIDs • Identify "No SID" procedures • Identify the purpose of STARs • Identify layout/components of STARs • Identify how to interpret a STAR • Identify "No STAR" procedures
22	**Approaches** • Define Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) • Describe types of IAPs • Identify Instrument Approach Procedure (IAP) Charts • Identify alternate approach procedures
23	**Fundamentals of Weather and Aviation Weather Services** • Identify characteristics and properties of the Earth's atmosphere • Describe characteristics of atmospheric moisture • Define forms of clouds • Identify air masses and their characteristics • Identify air mass modifications and their characteristics • Identify frontal types and their characteristics • Identify ingredients required to form precipitation • Identify types of precipitation • Identify duties and responsibilities of selected National Weather Service (NWS) offices
24	**Hazardous Weather** • Define adverse weather conditions that can affect an aircraft • Define adverse wind effects that affect an aircraft • Describe IFR weather hazards during aircraft takeoff and landing • Identify types of turbulence that affect aircraft • Identify causes of aircraft turbulence • Describe effects of high density altitude on aircraft • Identify characteristics of icing • Identify how icing affects an aircraft • Identify hazardous effects of thunderstorms on an aircraft • Identify effects of low-level wind shear (LLWS) on aircraft

ATTACHMENT: BASICS FOR ATC OBJECTIVES

Module	Objective
25	**Current Weather (METAR/SPECI)** • Identify types of METAR • Identify content of the METAR/SPECI • Identify format of the METAR/SPECI • Decode wind groups recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode visibility groups recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode runway visual range (RVR) groups recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode present weather groups recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode sky condition group recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode sky condition group phraseology recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Decode temperature/dew point and altimeter groups recorded on a METAR/SPECI • Identify components of remarks as shown on a METAR/SPECI • Identify decoded examples of a METAR/SPECI
26	**Forecasts and Advisories** • Identify the purpose of a Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAF) • Identify elements of a TAF • Decode examples of a TAF • Identify types of In-Flight Advisories • Identify the purpose of a Significant Meteorological Information (SIGMET) • Decode a SIGMET • Identify the purpose of a Convective SIGMET (WST) • Decode a Convective SIGMET (WST) • Identify the purpose of Airmen's Meteorological Information (AIRMET) • Decode an AIRMET • Identify the purpose of a Center Weather Advisory (CWA) • Decode a CWA • Identify the purpose of a Meteorological Impact Statement (MIS) • Decode an MIS • Identify the purpose of a Wind and Temperatures Aloft Forecast (FB) • Decode an FB
27	**Pilot Weather Reports (PIREPs)** • Identify the purpose and uses of a PIREP • Identify content included in a PIREP • Identify information recorded in a PIREP
28	**Introduction to Emergencies** • Describe characteristics that constitute an emergency • Identify required information for reporting an emergency • Identify roles and responsibilities of the controller during emergencies • Identify roles and responsibilities of the pilot during emergencies • Identify types of aircraft emergencies

Module	Objective
29	**Search and Rescue (SAR)** • Identify Search and Rescue (SAR) responsibilities to conduct effective civil SAR missions • Identify procedures for reporting unreported, overdue, or missing aircraft
30	**Basic Communications** • Identify frequency use for authorized radio and interphone communications • Identify International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) phonetics • Identify number group usage during communication • Identify proper number usage during communication • Identify proper facility identification during communication • Identify proper aircraft identification during communication • Identify proper route descriptions during communication • Identify NAVAID descriptions during communication • Identify intra- and interfacility coordination • •Identify procedures for conducting a Position Relief Briefing
31	**Stripmarking** • Identify the purpose and legal requirements of flight progress strips • Identify content requirements of terminal/en route strips • Identify abbreviations and symbols used in flight progress strips
32	**Air Traffic Control (ATC) Clearances** • Identify the purpose of an ATC clearance • Describe the pilot's responsibility for compliance • Identify use of ATC clearance prefixes • Identify ATC clearance items and their sequence • Identify types of ATC clearances