

HOUSTON ARTCC (ZHU) and FORT WORTH ARTCC (ZFW)

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

EFFECTIVE: June 22, 2009

SUBJECT: Inter-Facility Coordination

DISCLAIMER: Information contained in this document is designed specifically for use in a virtual controlling environment on the VATSIM Network. It is not applicable nor should it be referenced for operations in the real National Airspace System.

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish interfacility coordination procedures between Houston ARTCC (ZHU) and Fort Worth ARTCC (ZFW).
2. **CANCELLATION:** This LOA cancels all prior LOA between these facilities.
3. **SCOPE:** Airspace of ZHU and ZFW and the mutual border between ZHU and ZFW.
4. **RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES:** Crossing ZHU/ZFW border.

Controllers from ZHU and ZFW shall comply with the following procedures for aircraft that cross the ZHU/ZFW border:

- a. ZFW Center controllers will ensure that pilots who depart from airports within the Dallas/Fort Worth (Regional) TRACON who are destined for airports within the Houston TRACON, and who file flight plans with cruise altitudes greater than FL230, are instructed to descend to FL230 before they cross the ZHU/ZFW border.
 - b. ZHU Center controllers will ensure that pilots who depart from airports within the Houston TRACON who are destined for airports within the Dallas/Fort Worth (Regional) TRACON, and who file flight plans with cruise altitudes greater than FL240, are instructed to descend to FL240 before they cross the ZHU/ZFW border.
 - c. ZFW Center controllers will ensure that pilots traveling to airports within the Austin TRACON and who file flight plans with cruise altitudes greater than FL180 are instructed to descend to FL180 (or 17,000 ft. MSL for east bound traffic) before they cross the ZHU/ZFW border.
 - d. ZHU Center controllers will ensure that pilots who depart from airports within the Austin TRACON who are destined for airports within the Dallas/Fort Worth (Regional) TRACON, and who file flight plans with cruise altitudes greater than FL230, are instructed to descend to FL230 before they cross the ZHU/ZFW border.
 - e. Both ZHU and ZFW Center controllers will ensure pilots that cross the ZHU/ZFW border, and perform ground operations at airports that lie within 40 nm of the border, will cross the border at or below 10,000 ft. MSL.
 - f. Both ZHU and ZFW Center controllers will ensure that the radar handoff and the radio handoff are completed for an aircraft no earlier than 30 nm before and no later than 5 nm after the aircraft crosses the ZHU/ZFW border.
 - g. Controllers from ZHU and ZFW will ensure that flight plans of pilots travelling from their airspace to the other ARTCC's airspace contain the most current information. Both ZHU and ZFW Center controllers will ensure that any special instructions have been included on the flight strip before handoffs are initiated.
 - h. The controller initiating a handoff will notify the receiving controller if the pilot is unresponsive and the estimated length of time the pilot has been unresponsive.
 - i. If an unresponsive pilot crosses the ZHU/ZFW border the receiving controller will assume responsibility for ensuring separation from other aircraft in their airspace.
 - j. If an unresponsive pilot calls the initiating controller after they have crossed the ZHU/ZFW border, the initiating controller will advise the pilot to contact the receiving controller immediately.
5. **RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES:** Airspace divisions and frequencies.

Controllers from ZHU and ZFW shall comply with the following airspace divisions, frequencies, and procedures:

- a. When ZHU Center uses their “Combined” configuration the following shall occur:
 - HOU_38_CTR or HOU_CTR controls their entire airspace, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 126.950 MHz
- b. When ZHU Center uses their “East/West” configuration the following shall occur:
 - The ZHU Controller-In-Charge (CIC) will inform the ZFW Center controller(s) via VRC ATC text message that multiple centers are in use and the frequencies for each.
 - HOU_38_CTR controls east of the division line, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 126.950 MHz
 - HOU_87_CTR controls west of the division line, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 128.600 MHz
 - Aircraft on either the RIICE or TEXNN arrival shall be handed off to HOU_87_CTR
- c. When ZHU Center uses their “High/Low” configuration the following shall occur:
 - The ZHU Controller-In-Charge (CIC) will inform the ZFW Center controller(s) via VRC ATC text message that multiple centers are in use and the frequencies for each.
 - HOU_38_CTR controls east of the division line, at or above FL210, on frequency 126.950 MHz
 - HOU_83_CTR controls east of the division line, from SFC to FL200, on frequency 128.050 MHz
 - HOU_87_CTR controls west of the division line, at or above FL210, on frequency 128.600 MHz
 - HOU_78_CTR controls west of the division line, from SFC to FL200, on frequency 126.420 MHz
- d. When ZFW Center uses their “Combined” configuration the following shall occur:
 - FTW_NE_CTR or FTW_CTR controls their entire airspace, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 135.750 MHz
- e. When ZFW Center uses their “East/West” configuration the following shall occur:
 - The ZFW Controller-In-Charge (CIC) will inform the ZHU Center controller(s) via VRC ATC text message that multiple centers are in use and the frequencies for each.
 - FTW_NE_CTR controls east of the division line, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 135.750 MHz
 - FTW_NW_CTR controls west of the division line, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 127.000 MHz
- f. When ZFW Center uses their “Four Center” configuration the following shall occur:
 - The ZFW Controller-In-Charge (CIC) will inform the ZHU Center controller(s) via VRC ATC text message that multiple centers are in use and the frequencies for each.
 - FTW_NE_CTR controls the northeast quadrant, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 135.750 MHz
 - FTW_NW_CTR controls the northwest quadrant, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 127.000 MHz
 - FTW_SE_CTR controls the southeast quadrant, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 132.720 MHz
 - FTW_SW_CTR controls the southwest quadrant, from SFC to FL600, on frequency 132.070 MHz
- g. When ZFW Center uses their “High/Low” configuration the following shall occur:
 - The ZFW Controller-In-Charge (CIC) will inform the ZHU Center controller(s) via VRC ATC text message that multiple centers are in use and the frequencies for each.
 - FTW_HI_CTR controls their entire airspace, from FL240 to FL600, on frequency 135.750 MHz
 - FTW_LO_CTR controls their entire airspace, from SFC to FL240, on frequency 127.000 MHz
 - NOTE: This configuration is rarely used.

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES:** Deviations, exceptions and Military/Special Operations
- Deviations from this LOA are allowed on a temporary basis between the two center controllers that are online at the time as long as both agree to the deviation.
 - If ZHU Center is offline, ZFW Center is not bound by this LOA. Likewise, if ZFW Center is offline, ZHU Center is not bound by this LOA. However, both ZHU and ZFW should exercise good judgment and follow the procedures in this LOA regardless of whether the other Center is online or not.
 - All controllers should exercise common sense in the execution of this LOA. If an initiating Center controller feels that a deviation is required for the expeditious flow of traffic they should coordinate with the receiving Center controller to explain any possible problems; however, such coordination is not required to carry out the deviation.
 - There are three Military Operations Areas (MOA) that lie on or cross the ZHU/ZFW border: TEXON, BROWNWOOD, HOOD, HACKETT and JENA1. ZHU and ZFW shall be responsible for the areas of the MOA that fall within their ARTCC.
7. **ATTACHMENTS:**

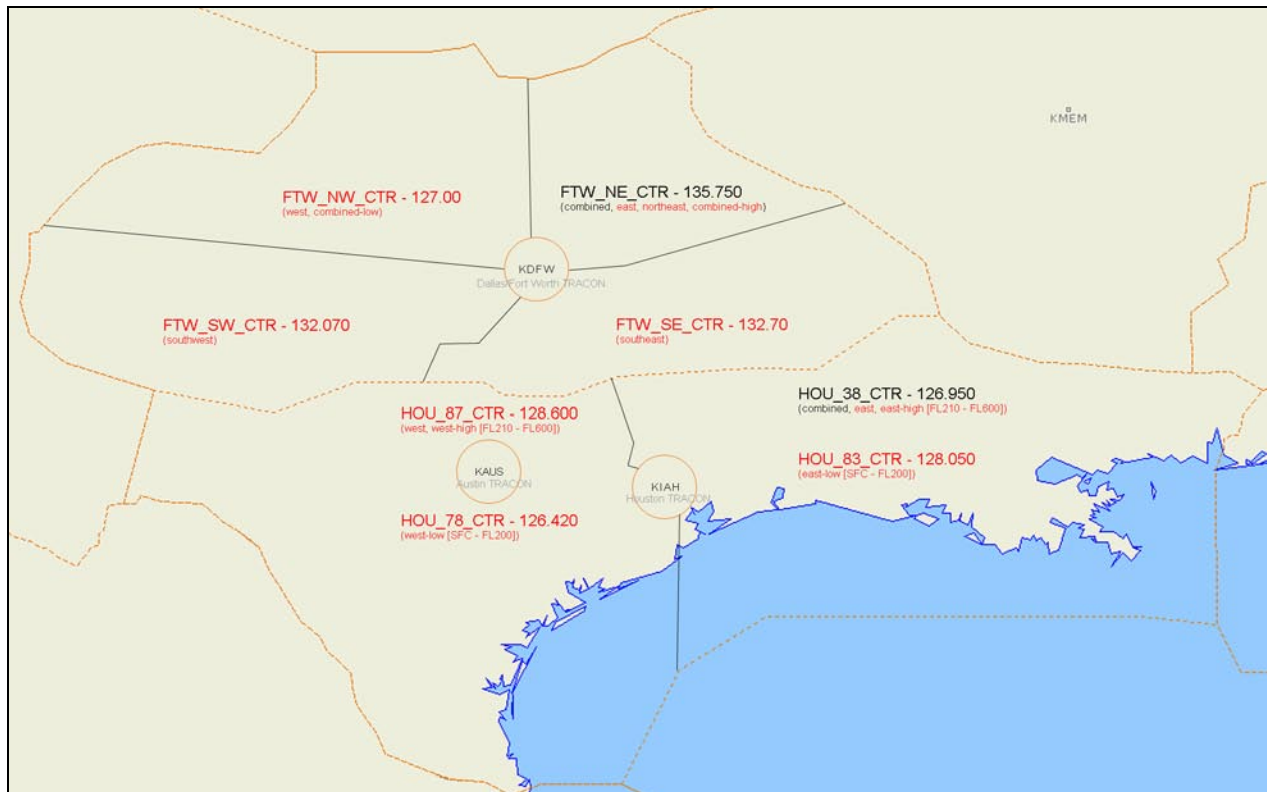


Figure 1 - ZHU and ZFW Airspace, Center Position Divisions, Frequencies

Signed by ZHU Air Traffic Manager: Josh Guyer

Signed by ZFW Air Traffic Manager: Jose Suarez

Signed by VATUSA Southern Regional Air Traffic Director: Robert Prescott