

Handover-Takeover

A **structured and informative handover** ensures a smooth transition when transferring control of a sector. This is **especially critical during high-traffic periods and events**, where situational awareness must be maintained.

WEST Principle for Tower Handovers

Category	Explanation	Examples
W - Weather	Any weather conditions that impact operations.	"Heavy rain reducing visibility to 2000m," "Wind gusts up to 35 knots from the west," "Moderate turbulence reported at FL120."
E - Equipment	Mention any operationally significant equipment issues (rarely relevant on VATSIM).	"ILS for Runway 22 out of service," "Transponder issues reported with several aircraft," "Coordination line to adjacent sector is down, using text chat for now."
S - Situation	Describe the current operational environment, including staffing, airspace restrictions, or agreements.	"Ground and Tower online, Approach offline—providing top-down service," "Runway 18 closed for maintenance," "Holding established for arrivals due to congestion."
T - Traffic	List active aircraft and pending actions.	"BAW123 cleared for takeoff, waiting for departure separation," "AFR452 holding at FL150 due to traffic," "DLH789 approaching the boundary, handoff required in 2 minutes."

Structuring Approach and Center Handovers

When conducting **handover between Approach and Center**, follow a **general → specific** structure:

1. **Basic Information** → Area of responsibility, active runways, NOTAMs.
2. **Sector Configuration & Agreements** → Which adjacent sectors are online, special coordination agreements.
3. **Traffic Picture** → Who is on frequency, their current status, any coordination already completed.
4. **Additional Details** → Any reported issues, equipment failures, special operations.

This structured approach helps the incoming controller **gradually build an understanding** of the traffic picture before assuming control.

Handover Completion Process

- The **handover controller remains responsible for the frequency** until the relieving controller is fully ready to assume control.

- In **high-traffic situations**, **handovers may take several minutes**—the relieving controller should only **assume the frequency when confident in the airspace situation**.

RAWFTO Handover Format

Runways

- Which runways are in use?
- Any recent or planned runway changes?

Airspace

- Any **abnormal conditions** in your airspace?
- Which **adjacent sectors are online**?
- Are any **airspace releases** active?
- Are you **extending control to adjacent sectors**?
- Are you **providing top-down service** to any aerodromes?

Weather

- Any **significant or abnormal weather** affecting operations?
- Is the **Area QNH restricting cruise at FL110** (below 1013 hPa)?

Frequencies

- What **active frequencies** are in use?
- Any **planned changes or handoffs**?

Traffic

- Go through each **jurisdiction and aircraft on screen**.
- Highlight **any pending coordination or outstanding instructions**.

Outstanding Instructions / Other Information

- Any **ongoing coordination** that needs completion?
- Any **frequency transfers still pending**?
- Any **additional notes or situational awareness items**?

Example Handover Exchange

"Runway 35R in use for departures, Runway 35L for arrivals at GMMN. GMME Runway 03 for departure and Runway 21 for arrivals."

"Airspace: GMMM_CTR is online, extending to cover GMMN_APP and GMME_APP. Providing top-down service at GMMN and GMME. No temporary restrictions or closures. Traffic flow normal."

"Weather: Winds 010° at 12 knots, occasional gusts up to 18 knots at GMMN. Visibility 10km, no significant weather affecting arrivals. Cloud cover SCT at 4000 feet, BKN at 10,000 feet. GMME reporting similar conditions with lighter winds at 5 knots from the west."

"Frequencies: 119.10 and 124.75 active. Handoffs to DAAA_CTR for eastbound traffic above FL250."

"Traffic: RAM213 is taxiing for departure from 35L, IFR to LFPG. ATY502 is descending DCT ORSUP, coordination with DAAA_CTR is done. AFR423 is inbound from the north, estimating BARIS in four minutes. LBY112 is climbing out, handoff needed to the next sector. CN-RGB (a VFR flight) is holding at 2000 feet west of the field for sequencing."

"Outstanding: Just frequency transfers and the handoff for LBY112. No conflicts at the moment."

"Any questions?"

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