Guide to Recording a Professional ATIS

Voice ATIS is one of the most useful tools that VRC gives us as controllers. ATIS in the real world is usually computer generated however some smaller controlled airfields utilize a manually recorded ATIS similar to what we use. The major difference between real world ATIS and our ATIS recordings at Anchorage ARTCC (vZAN) is the procedures followed by real world tower controllers and phraseology. I would like to pass along some information that is used in real world ATIS recordings, as well as information from other ARTCCs in VATSIM. If you have never listened to a real world ATIS you should give it a try. Many ATIS recordings are available via telephone. You can listen to a real world ATIS that is located in our airspace which has a recorded telephone ATIS available. Fairbanks (PAFA) ATIS phone number is (907)456-1244

The first step in recording an ATIS broadcast is to understand what exactly is in it. ATIS broadcasts consist of 10 sections:

1. Location
2. Observation Time
3. Wind Direction and Speed
4. Visibility
5. Sky Conditions
6. Temperature and Dew Point
7. Altimeter Setting
8. Instrument Approaches
9. Landing and Departing Runways
10. Notices to Airmen

Next we need some weather in the form of a METAR

PANC 140053Z 20008KT 10SM FEW040 BKN055 BKN070 BKN130 04/M01 A2970 RMK AO2 SLP059 VIRGA SW-NW AND NE T00391011

We'll use this METAR to create an ATIS broadcast for PANC.

Location

Every ATIS broadcast begins with the official facility name for the airport that it covers and the current information code. In this case it is PANC or Ted Stevens Anchorage Intl Airport Information. If you are unsure what the official name of the airport is look it up on www.airnav.com. The official name will be written next to the ICAO identifier and above the city and state location of the airport at the top of the page. The correct location section for this ATIS broadcast is:

Ted Stevens Anchorage International *Airport Information.

*Note that the word airport was left out, this is a given and does not need to be included.
Observation Time

Observation time is the time at which the observation was recorded. It is not necessary to include the first two digits of the time stamp on the METAR as this is the date of the recording. Real world METARS are regularly updated at xx52 ZULU. If the update is at a different time then it is a special observation which needs to be noted in the broadcast by adding the word “special” after the time. The correct observation time for this ATIS broadcast is:

0053 ZULU. If the time stamp was “0130Z” it would read 0130 ZULU Special.

Wind Direction and Speed

Wind is reported at the time of the observation to give pilots a general idea of what the winds are at the airport. Winds are always reported in knots so the word knots does not need to be included. Gusts are reported immediately after the winds. The correct wind for this ATIS broadcast is:

Wind 200 at 8.

Visibility

Visibility is reported in statute miles (SM) so the inclusion of statute miles in the report is unnecessary. If the visibility is reported to a fraction of a mile then it is to be read “one half” or “one and one quarter”. If the visibility is reported less than 7 statute miles a reason for the reduced visibility is must be included. If visibility is at or greater than 7 the reason for reduced visibility is optional. For example “visibility 4, light snow”. The correct visibility report for this ATIS broadcast is:

Visibility one zero.

Sky Conditions

Sky conditions are always read as individual numbers (11 is read “one one”) and are only reported for 12,000ft and below because the reporting equipment is only considered accurate up to 12,000ft. If there is a cloud layer slightly above 12,000ft then it may be optionally reported if it is the only cloud layer. A report of few clouds should be read before the height such as “few clouds 7 thousand”, where scattered, broken and overcast layers are reported after. The lowest layer of broken or overcast clouds constitute a ceiling and must be reported as such by adding the word ceiling before the cloud layer is reported. If there is no cloud layer below 12,000ft then it is to be read as “clear below one two thousand”. The correct sky condition report for this ATIS broadcast is:

Few clouds four thousand Ceiling five thousand five hundred broken, seven thousand broken one zero thousand broken.
**Temperature and Dew Point**

Temperature and dew point are always reported as individual numbers. Any number with the letter “M” in front of them are negative and are pronounced as “minus”. The correct temperature and dew point report for this broadcast is:

*Temperature zero four, dew point minus zero one.*

**Altimeter Setting**

Altimeter settings are always read as individual numbers and the decimal point is left out. The correct altimeter setting report for this ATIS broadcast is:

*Altimeter two niner seven zero.*

**Runways in Use**

The landing and departing runways in use are reported here. The correct runways in use report for this ATIS broadcast is:

*Landing runways 7L and 7R, departing runway 33*

**Types Of Approaches**

The approaches which inbound IFR aircraft should expect are reported next. For most airports served by ATIS broadcasts this will be either visual approaches or ILS approaches, however any approach that you are currently automatically issuing on initial contact should be reported here. The correct type of approach reported for this ATIS broadcast is one of the following:

*Visual Approaches in use.*
*Visual Approach runway 15 in use.*
*ILS Approach runway 15 in use.*
*Visual Approach runways 7L and 7R in use.*
*ILS Approach runways 7L and 7R in use.*
*Visual and ILS Approach runway 15 in use.*
*Visual and ILS Approach runways 7L and 7R in use.*

Note: real world NOTAM information is available at [https://pilotweb.nas.faa.gov/PilotWeb/](https://pilotweb.nas.faa.gov/PilotWeb/)

This section will also include information about read back instructions and reporting procedures such as:

*Read back all hold short instructions and runway assignments. VFR Aircraft state direction of flight. Advise on initial contact you have information Delta.*
**Notices to Airmen**

Notices to airmen are also reported in ATIS broadcasts. This is where you can report runway/taxiway closures, frequency combinations, contact instructions, and other information pertinent to the airfield that you are controlling. Note that when combining frequencies in the real world this is only done with tower and below. This section always starts with “Notices to Airmen” and for this broadcast would sound like this:

*Notices to Airmen. Runway 15 Closed, Runway 33 Closed to Arrivals. Taxiway Romeo closed between Taxiway Sierra and Tango.*

**Full Broadcast**

A full ATIS broadcast may sound something like this:

*Ted Stevens Anchorage International Information Delta. 0053 ZULU. Wind 200 at 8. Visibility one zero. Few clouds four thousand Ceiling five thousand five hundred broken, seven thousand broken one zero thousand broken. Temperature zero four, dew point minus zero one. Altimeter two niner six one. Landing runways 7L and 7R, departing runway 33. Visual Approach in use. VFR Aircraft state direction of flight. Read back all hold short instructions and runway assignments. Advise on initial contact you have information Delta. Notices to Airmen. Runway 15 Closed, Runway 33 Closed to Arrivals. Taxiway Romeo closed between Taxiway Sierra and Tango.*

**Other ATIS Notes**

* VATSIM requires that Voice ATIS broadcasts be 1 minute or less.
* Any weather over 12,000 AGL does not have to be reported.
* If cloud layer is reported under 3,000 AGL ILS Approaches is recommend.
ATIS Maker Setup

Controller Info Template:

$radioname()$
Information %id%: Wind $wind(%icao%)$ Vis %vis% %precip% Sky %clouds% Alt $altim(%icao%)$ %runways%
Feedback and more info available at www.vzanartcc.net.

Voice ATIS Template:

Ted Stevens Anchorage International information %id% %time% wind %wind% visibility %vis % %precip%,
Sky conditions %clouds% temp %temp% dewpt %dew% altimeter %altim% %runways%,
All aircraft read back all hold short instructions and runway assignments,
VFR aircraft say direction of flight,
Advise controller on initial contact you have information %id%

Voice ATIS Server:
rw.liveatc.net

Voice ATIS Freq:
118.400

Set up Runways:

Add in the runway numbers in the Landing/Departure columns for the Airport your working.
Example if your working Anchorage International:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landing</th>
<th>Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7L</td>
<td>7L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7R</td>
<td>7R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25L</td>
<td>25L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25R</td>
<td>25R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Significant Present, Forecast and Recent Weather - Grouped in categories and used in the order listed below; or as needed in TAF, No Significant Weather.

QUALIFIER

Intensity or Proximity
- Light "no sign" Moderate + Heavy

VC Vicinity: but not at aerodrome; in U.S. METAR, between 5 and 10SM of the point(s) of observation;
in U.S. TAF, 5 to 10SM from center of runway complex (elsewhere within 8000m)

Descriptor

MI= Shallow  BC= Patches  PR= Partial  TS= Thunderstorm
BL= Blowing  SH= Showers  DR= Drifting  FZ= Freezing

WEATHER PHENOMENA

Precipitation

DZ= Drizzle  RA= Rain  SN= Snow  SG= Snow grains
IC= Ice crystals  PL= Ice pellets  GR= Hail
GS= Small hail/snow pellets

UP Unknown precipitation in automated observations

Obscuration

BR= Mist(>= 5/8SM)  FG= Fog(< 5/8SM)  FU= Smoke  VA= Volcanic Ash
SA= Sand  HZ= Haze  PY= Spray  DU= Widespread dust

Other

SQ= Squall  SS= Sandstorm  DS= Duststorm  PO= Well developed
FC= Funnel cloud +FC tornado/waterspout dust/sand whirls

- Explanations in parentheses "( )" indicate different worldwide practices.
- Ceiling is not specified; defined as the lowest broken or overcast layer, or the vertical visibility.
- NWS TAFs exclude turbulence, icing & temperature forecasts; NWS METARs exclude trend fcsts
- Although not used in US, Ceiling And Visibility OK replaces visibility, weather and clouds if: visibility >=10km; no cloud below 5000 ft (1500m) or below the highest minimum sector altitude, whichever is greater and no CB; and no precipitation, TS, DS, SS, MIFG, DRDU, DRSA, or DRSN.