

MODULE 9.1A

Simulator Briefing Tips

Tips for Shift Change, Aviation and Media

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2. Introduction: MOIP Simulator Briefing

There will be a variety of briefings given during the simulator. They will differ in content, length and presentation styles, depending on their purpose. Some examples are:

Desk brief: used for student evaluation purposes. These should be detailed and comprehensive “stories” identifying the main weather systems and the steps taken to arrive at the forecast. Analyses, working charts and finished products should all be used in this briefing.

Shift change brief: done daily on a rotating basis by 2 or 3 students. These should follow a format that will be used when fully operational. (see hand-out for guidelines*) Wall charts and projected images should be used.

Aviation brief: evaluation may take several forms. The aviation forecaster could be asked to prepare a 1) general area or 2) a route brief to be given at the desk to the evaluator. They would be given some time to prepare it (~15 minutes). It should include the use of real time data, such as radar and satellite pictures, and hard copies of forecast products.

A second type could be over the phone where no visual aids are used.

Public or Media brief: tape record a synopsis and area forecast (guidelines have already been handed out).

On a significant weather day a media interview could be done over the phone and taped. This could be a pre-arranged interview (questions given before hand) or an off-the-cuff one.

Phone calls from the public (evaluators) could also be used.

3. SHIFT CHANGE BRIEFINGS TIPS

Remember the purpose of the shift change briefing is to:

- Give sufficient background for the oncoming shift to act immediately to revise or issue a new forecast if required.
- Convey the degree of confidence in the current forecast strategy.
- Alert the oncoming shift to any current problems
- Enable the oncoming shift to properly plan for upcoming tasks and deadlines.

Length: 5-15 minutes. Remember that the listeners' attention usually begins to wander after 5 minutes. Try to get the most important information covered before then.

Spend some time before your brief preparing the charts and images you are going to use. Enhance them so the important features are clear to your audience. (be it only an audience of one!)

Run through the brief quickly beforehand. What features are you going to emphasize on each chart or image? What chart or image is best for the point you want to make?

Be organized. Your brief, like a good story, should follow a logical sequence that makes sense to the listener.

Make sure your audience can see your display and make sure they can hear you!
(turn down the music or TV)

Speak clearly.

Don't be annoyed with questions.

4. GUIDELINES FOR SHIFT CHANGE BRIEFINGS

OVERVIEW: (tell me what is going on right now)

- Describe the main weather or forecast problem of the day
- Describe the big picture (use charts, sat pixs, radar)

HIGHLIGHTS: (tell me what to look for)

- Describe general areas of concern (ie weather, sky condition, temperatures, wind, bad model data...)
- Describe any warnings or sigmets in effect (end times, confidence)
- Give details and examples to explain your problem areas
- What is the message you want to convey to the next shift?

FORECASTS: (what do I have to worry about?)

- How did you handle the problem areas in your forecast?
- Was there any special wording you used in the forecast to describe the situation?
- Are your forecasts working out? What would you change?
- Are there potential problems to deal with? (not only with the weather but with the computers, missing charts, satellite/radar outages...)
- Are there any scheduled client briefings coming up; any clients that might be calling for updates?
- Is there any newsworthy weather happening? (local or further afield)
Any records close to being broken?

QUESTIONS: (have I made myself perfectly clear?)

- Part of a good briefing is dialogue about uncertainties.

5. TELEPHONE BRIEFINGS AND IN-PERSON CONSULTATIONS

Once you are on an operational desk your normal work routine may be interrupted by weather requests from outside the office. You should be able to handle these requests politely and professionally. Sometimes these requests will be scheduled, which will give you time to plan your work load and prepare for them. However, most of the time they won't be, and will usually come when the weather is at it's worse and you aren't quite at your best...

During the course of the simulator you will be evaluated on your communications skills and briefing techniques in these sort of situations. To give you practice we will be presenting you with several scenarios dealing with telephone calls and in-person consultations.

If you are on the Public desk:

- 1) A media interview will be scheduled for a certain time during your shift. The interviewer will indicate what they will be asking you about and some of the general questions they may ask. It will deal with the current weather situation. During the interview you will be live on the air (answering the questions and being taped).
- 2) You may be asked to answer the phone to deal with an unscheduled interview or a inquiry from a client on the present weather situation.

If you are on the Aviation desk:

- 1) A flight brief will be scheduled for a certain time during your shift. This may be an aviation brief for a general area (i.e. conditions for southern Alberta for the next 6 hours) or a route forecast (i.e. low level flight from CYED to CYQR). You will be briefing the client at your desk and may be taped.
- 2) You may be asked to answer the phone to deal with a client asking for current aviation weather information.

Attached are some guidelines and tips for handling these situations.

5.1. TELEPHONE TIPS

- Be aware of the telephone and consultation policies and protocols for your office. (you can check PAAWC's on their website)
- Try to answer the phone by the third ring. This creates the impression that the organization is professional and ready to help.
- Don't eat, drink or chew gum while speaking with a caller.
- Be courteous; greet the caller, identify the organization, introduce yourself, and offer your help.
"Good morning, Newfoundland Weather Centre, Public Forecaster speaking. May I help you?"
- Determine the caller's requirements.
 - Are they interested in the marine, public, or aviation weather?
 - What time periods are they interested in?
 - By asking a few simple questions you can identify what information is important to the caller.
- Try to paraphrase the forecast rather than just reading it. Using a conversational tone will get the information across better.
- Avoid carrying on "side" conversations while on the line with the caller. Place them on hold if you have to ask for information from a colleague.
- If you are going to place them on hold, ask permission first.
- When giving information remember the caller has no visual aids to refer to. Speak "visually", presenting a vivid mental picture of the conditions. Use well-known geographical descriptions. Avoid jargon.
- Slow down as you give your information. The caller may be trying to copy down your information.
- Verify their understanding. Give a quick summary of the details before ending the conversation.
- End the call in a courteous manner.
 - "I trust this information has been helpful, please call again."

6. AVIATION BRIEFS

Aviation briefs can be requested by a large variety of users for numerous different purposes. Although the content will vary considerably for a pilot planning a VFR flight around the airport as opposed to one flying across the Atlantic, the format of the briefing will be the same.

DETERMINE THE REQUIREMENTS:

Information you should be getting from the pilot is their route, the time of take-off, the expected duration of the flight, the level at which they will be flying, and their preferred alternate airports.

INTRODUCTION:

Highlight the significant factors affecting the flight. It should be kept short, but contain enough specific information for the pilot to make a “go” or “no go” decision. Introduce any product that supports your interpretation of the trends or hazards. Use relevant SIGMETs and AIRMETs. The pilot may decide it’s a “no go”, or they may change the route making a new brief necessary.

CURRENT WEATHER:

Discuss the synoptic picture using the latest surface chart. Supplement this by a general overview of the latest conditions. (i.e. Near the warm front ceilings range from 3 to 6 hundred feet with the visibility one to 3 miles in light rain and mist) Describe the conditions in the sequence of the flight...departure, enroute and destination. Use PIREPS if they are available. Incorporate RADAR and satellite images. Remember you are painting a picture of the current conditions.

FORECAST WEATHER:

Use the available prognosis charts to link the current weather picture to one in the future. These can be GFAs, surface progs, or high level significant weather charts. Don’t use the NWP as briefing charts, since it will only confuse the pilot. Progress in an ordered manner. State the valid time of the prognosis. Link the forecast synoptic features to their current position giving speeds and direction of motion.

Give the enroute clouds and weather using the appropriate product for their flight level (i.e. GFA for low and mid level flights. Sig weather prog for high-level flights).

Give an overview of the freezing level along their route or over the area of concern and any icing conditions.

Show areas of turbulence at the pertinent flight level along the route.

FLIGHT LEVEL WINDS AND TEMPERATURES:

Start this section by giving a general overview of the wind pattern for their flight level at the current time. The upper air analysis for the appropriate flight level can be used as a visual aid. Forecast winds and temperatures can be in a graphical form from WADS or in a digital form from the FD file. When giving the winds and temperatures start with the ascent, continue through along the route at the selected flight level, and end with the descent.

Direction can be rounded off to the nearest 8 points of the compass (i.e. 360°, 045°, 090°, 135°...or N, NE, E, SE...) Speed can be rounded to the nearest 5 knots. Temperatures should be stated as given.

AERODROME WEATHER (TAFS/METARS):

Detailed information is given at this stage. Scan through the appropriate information first to note any anomalies in the forecast products. There may be a discrepancy between the current and expected conditions you may wish to highlight.

Give the latest METAR for the departure station followed by the TAF covering the departure time \pm 3 hours.

Give the latest METAR for the destination and alternate stations followed by the TAFs covering the estimated arrival time \pm 3 hours.

If there is doubt regarding the times of departure and arrival or if the TAF is indicating significant changes during the \pm 3 hours, give the whole TAF.

The pilot may ask for other stations along the route.

SUMMARY:

Ask for questions to confirm understanding and clarify any points that the pilot has raised.

Provide a brief review of the significant factors and hazards. Check for any updated observations or forecasts.

Request a PIREP, suggesting a particular feature such as cloud tops or turbulence. Link the request to a concern you may have raised in the briefing.

DOCUMENTATION:

Usually copies of relevant charts and products are included with the briefing. These should include copies of SIGMETS and AIRMETS, surface chart, satellite picture, GFAs or Sig Wx charts, TAFS and METARS, and Upper wind and temperature information either in graphic or digital form.

Attached is an example of a briefing outline used by the military briefers to help organize your briefing.

6.1. AVIATION BRIEFING CONSIDERATIONS

	LOW LEVEL BELOW FL 100	MID LEVEL FL 100 - FL 240	HIGH LEVEL ABOVE FL 250
CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Usually single engine aircraft -Sometimes recreational pilots -Un-pressurized aircraft -Often VFR -Short duration and distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Usually multi-engined aircraft -Experienced pilots -IFR rated -Pressurized aircraft -Longer duration and distance than low level -generally operating along specific airways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multi-engined aircraft -Experienced pilots and air crews -IFR rated -pressurized aircraft -Long duration and distance -Sophisticated weather avoidance and nav systems -Operate along specific airways -Fast climb rates
CLIENT CONCERNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cloud bases and visibility -Precipitation (phase and intensity) -Obstructions to visibility -Icing and FZLVL -Turbulence -LLWS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Height of FZLVL -Embedded convective cloud -Cloud free levels -Length of time in cloud -Rate of ice accumulation -Enroute winds/temps -Below minima weather at departure/arrival or alternate stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Aerodrome conditions -Flight level winds/temps for fuel economy -Turbulence (CAT) -Thunderstorms/ Cbs -Climb out/descent weather
PRODUCTS UTILIZED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Surface analysis -850 or 700 hPa analyses -TAF/METARs -PIREPs -SIGMET/AIRMETSs -GFAs -Radar/Sat pics -Winds/temps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Surface analysis -700 or 500 hPa analyses -TAF/METARs -GFA or 700-400 hPa Sig Wx prog -Upper winds/temps -SIGMET/AIRMETS -Radar/Sat pics -PIREPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Surface analysis -250 hPa analysis -TAF/METARs -700-400 hPa Sig Wx prog for climb-out/descent -Upper winds/temps or FL240/FL340 progs -Hi level sig wx prog -SIGMETs -Radar/Sat pics -PIREPS (high level)

6.2. AVIATION BRIEFING OUTLINE

Date:	ETD:	ETA:	Route: Flight Level: Alternates:
INTRODUCTION			
PROGNOSIS			
ENROUTE CLOUDS AND WEATHER			
FZLVL/ICING			
TURBULENCE			
AVIATION WEATHER REPORTS (METARS)			
AERODROME FORECASTS (TAFS)			
UPPER WINDS/ TEMPERATURES			
OUTLOOK			
SUMMARY			

7. LIVE ON-THE-AIR TIPS

§ The following tips are presented with permission from Glennie Langille, a freelance journalist in Halifax.

§

§ Listen in on some live weather broadcasts. You'll soon find that some are better than others. Ask yourself what made them better.

§ Remember you have rights as a guest on the show. Find out what the announcer expects of you, the length of the broadcast, are there any hot topics they are interested in. Ask the questions you need answered **BEFORE** you go on the air.

- Review the previous forecasts, especially if there have been significant changes. You may be asked to comment on a “bust” forecast.
- Monitor any newsworthy weather across the region or country. You may be asked about “last night’s storm in the Maritimes”
- The format of the broadcast may vary. Although, as a general rule:
 - Commence with a brief conversation on the weather (it may be yesterday’s, today’s or weather elsewhere).
 - Give a broad synopsis to bring the broadcast into focus.
 - Move to a discussion of the present weather (general weather for stations throughout the area of interest...i.e. Edmonton airport is reporting cloudy skies, light show flurries, temperature of -25, and winds from the NW at 20km/h).
 - Give the forecast weather for the time period required (usually today, tonight and tomorrow).
 - Give the 3 to 5 day outlook if required (usually only as the weekend is approaching).
 - Give climate data if required (i.e. extremes for the date, extremes for the country, weather at this time last year...).
 - Close with a quick summary, focusing on the first 24 hours of the forecast.
- The basic rule in radio is: **“Tell them, tell them what you’re going to tell them, and then tell them again!”** (i.e. Start off your broadcast with...“The

story today is snow and wind”. Give the forecast. Then finish up in the summary by stating the obvious...“So snow and wind for the city today”

- Have a snappy “lead”. Start the presentation with a phrase that grabs the listener’s attention. What would attract your attention better?... “A cold front will move in from the north today bringing strong winds to the region...” or “Hold onto your hats today...”
- Tense? Try yawning. Excited, scared, out of breath? Slow down your speech. Tired? Bounce on your toes for 20 seconds. Stumbling over some words? Write them the way they make sense to you. Keeping your voice at a moderate level gives you more control.(don’t yell!)
- Use a hard copy of your forecast and weather reports. Highlight the relevant areas and important points. Have copies of your charts handy, you may need to refer to them to clarify a point.
- Read your forecast out loud to yourself prior to the broadcast. You are then familiar with it, and have an idea where the “rough” spots are.
- Try not to read directly off the printed copy. Paraphrase it so it “flows” better. You will sound more informed if your forecast is conversational rather than stilted.
- Use a natural tone of voice, speaking as you would when talking to friends.
- Make your forecast sound interesting. Instill some enthusiasm in your voice.
- Keep your forecast simple, clear and informative. Do not dilute your message with blather.
- Avoid jargon. Remember, you are speaking to the public, not your colleagues or specialists.
- If you get a question that you can’t answer, don’t try to bluff your way out. Say you’ll get back to them on the next broadcast. If there won’t be one, call the station back with the answer so then can pass it onto their listeners.

- Take a short break before you perform.