



MARINE REPORTING STATIONS

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1 General. This instruction describes the Marine Reporting Stations (MARS) at coastal land stations on the immediate coast or on inland bodies of water, (i.e. lakes or rivers) primarily at U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) observation stations with a few volunteers and other government operated MARS stations.

2 Introduction. The MARS program is a part of the total observation concept. The concept integrates manually observed weather observations and automated weather observations. The National Weather Service (NWS) utilizes the total observation concept to provide quality forecasts and warnings.

3 Observation Program. MARS observations consist of reports of visually observed elements (i.e., present weather, visibility, wind, and sea conditions). To improve the quality of observations, MARS are equipped, at a minimum with a wind measuring instrument. MARS observers record observations on "Marine Coastal Weather Log-Coastal Station" NOAA Form 72-5a at regular intervals. MARS observers are asked to make special observations when extreme conditions of wind, visibility, and wave conditions are experienced. Observations are transmitted directly to NWS collection points or to Coast Guard stations for radio relay to NWS. Completed observation logs (NOAA Form 72-5a) will be sent to the respective MARS supervising station at the end of each month.

4 Supervising Station Responsibilities. The MARS supervising station will provide limited observation training to observers by periodic visits to MARS. It supplies necessary forms

and materials to MARS under its supervision. Supervising stations, with approval of respective regional headquarters, will select parameters to be observed by the MARS stations.

MARS supervising stations will review, for quality and completeness, observation logs (NOAA Form 72-5a) from MARS under their supervision. After review, the supervising station will send the completed logs to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC):

NCDC Services Center  
Image Entry  
465 Industrial Blvd.  
London, KY 40741-7285 US

5 NWS Regional Responsibilities. Regions provide operational support and guidance to maintain integrity of the MARS network as it pertains to regional and national data needs. Regions will establish the type of observation programs to be carried out by MARS and assign each MARS with an NWS supervising station. Where feasible, the Port Meteorological Officer will be used for this function.

6 National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) Responsibilities. NDBC coordinates the overall MARS program with the regions, USCG, and other participating agencies and updates MARS observational forms as required.

7 Joint NWS-USCG Responsibilities. The instructions to USCG MARS are covered under Weather Reporting Units in USCG Commandant Instruction (COMDTINST) 3140.3 series. COMDTINST 3140.3 is coordinated with Weather Service Headquarters (WSH) and NDBC before issuance to USCG field units. This instruction outlines observation programs for all USCG field units. Included in this instruction are Weather Observation Units (stations which make reports for station record only) which send their completed but unchecked observation forms directly to NCDC for archiving. Changes in an established station's observing program should, however, be cleared through NWS and USCG Headquarters.