

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-305**  
**AUGUST 22, 2008**

**Operations and Services**  
**Marine and Coastal Weather Services, NWSPD 10-3**  
**MARINE ZONE CHANGE PROCESS**

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:** This directive supersedes NWSI 10-305, Marine Zone Change Process dated May 22, 2007. The following changes were made to this instruction:

1. Made minor grammatical changes in Tables 2 and 4.
  2. Made minor wording changes to Sections 3.1.d, 3.2 and 4.1
  3. Added new item in Table 1 titled, Preliminary notification to Region
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signed  
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August 8, 2008  
Date

**Marine Zone Change Process**

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1. Introduction. This procedural instruction describes the process for requesting, coordinating and implementing changes to marine zone maps and marine zone listings filed in the National Weather Service (NWS) Directives System (NDS).
2. Types of Marine Zone Map and Marine Zone Listing Changes. Three different types of marine zone map and marine zone listing changes are described below.
  - 2.1 Corrections for Errors on Marine Zone Maps and in Marine Zone Listings. These changes are necessary to correct errors, or any errors of omission, found on marine zone maps and in marine zone listings in *NWSI 10-302, Marine and Coastal Services Areas of Responsibility*.
  - 2.2 Changes to Marine Zone Boundaries. Changes to marine zone boundaries involve the movement of current marine zone boundaries, the creation of new marine zones, or the deletion of existing marine zones.
  - 2.3 Changes to Marine Zone Names and Codes. Changes to marine zone names and codes result from the correction of errors or other justifiable needs to modify a marine zone name or code.
3. Change Request Procedures and Levels of Approval.
  - 3.1 Weather Forecast Office (WFO) Responsibility. To encourage early collaboration, WFOs should send an early notification of change request by email to their regional marine program managers 15-30 days prior to submitting the formal change request. See Table 1 for a summary of the marine zone change process.

Each WFO is responsible to initiate the change request for all coastal or Great Lakes marine zones in its area of responsibility. In addition, a WFO also issuing offshore and/or high seas forecasts is responsible to initiate the change request for all offshore and/or high seas marine zones in its area of responsibility. Submit the change request (via e-mail, facsimile, or hard copy) to the responsible regional division in accordance with the following guidance. The division chief, or his/her designate, will submit the request to the Branch Chief, Marine and Coastal Weather Services (OS21).

The change request will contain as appropriate,

- a. Any errors found on marine zone maps and in marine zone listings, and proposed corrections.
- b. A written justification for any change to marine zone boundaries. If necessary for clarification, include a clearly labeled map depicting the changes to marine zone boundaries.
- c. A written justification for any change to marine zone names and code. If necessary for clarification, include a clearly labeled map depicting the names and codes. Assign a unique zone number to all newly created zones. Also include a list of WFO actions in response to all the possible impacts of the proposed marine

zone changes. See Table 2.

- d. Include a draft service or technical change message conforming to format and instructions in NWSI 10-1805. A National Weather Service Change Notice, approved and issued by the Chief, Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch, is required for changes to marine zone boundaries or marine zone names and codes. These changes require at least 120 days of public notification prior to the effective date. Changes to marine zones will be considered for approval two times per year with effective dates of April 1 or October 1. Therefore all coordinating and processing must begin at least seven months prior to April 1 or October 1, and completed at least five months prior to April 1 or October 1, to allow OS21 a minimum of 30 days to complete the clearance process prior to the 120 days notice. See Table 1 for the minimum required timeline for meeting these implementation dates.

3.2 NWS Regional Headquarters Responsibility. NWS regional headquarters are the points of contact for all change requests received from their respective coastal and Great Lakes WFOs, and WFOs with offshore and high seas responsibilities. The division chief is responsible for reviewing requests (e.g., ensuring sound reasoning and adequate justification) and verifying any errors. The division chief forwards the requests to the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief in Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS) at NWS Headquarters.

To bring OCWWS into early collaboration, the division chief or regional program manager should ensure the WFO sends an early notification of changes to the OCWWS Branch Chief 15-30 days prior to forwarding the formal change request. See section 3.1.

<b>Table 1 – Time Line of Marine Zone Changes (WFO-initiated)</b>		
<b>Marine Zone Change Process</b>	<b>Deadlines for April 1 Implementation</b>	<b>Deadlines for October 1 Implementation</b>
Preliminary Notification to Region	August 15	February 15
WFO sends request/justification and draft Service Change Notice (SCN) to Regional Marine Program Manager and appropriate Division Chief. Refer to NWSI 10-1805 for draft SCN preparation.	September 1	March 1
Regional Marine Program Manager gives OS21 Program Manager a heads-up call/email about request received.	September 1	March 1
WFO obtains approval/disapproval from regional Division Chief.	September 15	March 15
Division Chief sends his/her approved request/justification and draft SCN to OS21 Branch Chief and OS21 Program Manager.	September 25	March 25
OS21 Branch Chief notifies Division Chief of approval or disapproval.	October 15	April 15
Regional RC Focal Point submits request to DRG if product and/or communication identifiers are part of the change.	October 31	April 30
OS21 works with OST to create new shapefiles for the zone change.	October 31	April 30
OS21 and Region work together to finalize draft SCN following the procedures in NWSI 10-1805.	October 31	April 30
OS21 completes the OCWWS clearance process which results in a final SCN. Note: OS21 needs a minimum of 30 days to complete the OCWWS clearance process.	November 30	May 31
SCN must go out NLT:	December 1 to meet required minimum 120 day notice (ref. NWSI 10-1805) but preferably as early as possible in preceding 30 days.	June 1 to meet required minimum 120 day notice (ref. NWSI 10-1805) but preferably as early as possible in preceding 30 days.

<b>Table 2 – Marine Zone Change Impacts and Associated Actions (WFOs and Regions)</b>		
	<b>Impact of proposed marine zone change</b>	<b>Minimum Required Actions (other impacts should be identified in the WFO’s request for change)</b>
1	NOAA Weather Radio Broadcast.	WFO addresses the change expected in length of the broadcast cycle.
2	US Coast Guard (USCG) broadcast of NWS marine forecasts over USCG radio frequencies.	WFO presents summary of notification provided to the USCG sector in the WFO Area of Responsibility, and feedback received, on how this change effects USCG broadcast of weather and safety information.
3	Mariners at large.	WFO presents summary of notification provided to the recreational and commercial mariners in the WFO Area of Responsibility, and collects their feedback on how this change affects their activities and operations.
4	Will the proposed change remove portion of inland waters from the marine zones?	If so, WFO takes action to include those affected areas into other marine zones or land zones.
5	Storm Prediction Center (SPC). The SPC marine zone database must be synchronous with the WFO marine zone databases to ensure consistency between SPC and WFO products.	Region coordinates with marine zone focal point at SPC to ensure SPC has made the change(s) to their marine zone database immediately following the implementation date.
6	TPC and OPC. Which of their Offshore Marine Zones line up against the changed WFO Coastal Marine Zones?	WFO/Region coordinates with TPC and OPC to ensure they made any necessary changes to their marine zone databases immediately following the implementation date.
7	EAS/SAME. Commercial broadcasters have to program their EAS boxes for any marine zone/UGC changes. Owners of SAME equipped NWR receivers have to program the marine zones by the pseudo FIPS codes which are based on the UGCs.	WFO/Region includes a draft service or technical change message conforming to format and instructions in NWSI 10-1805 for OS21 approval.
8	Web sites containing marine zones must show the changed zones by the effective date.	WFO/Region coordinates with NOAA webmasters. OCWWS releases SCN to notify impacted non-NOAA web masters.
<b>Table 2 continued on next page</b>		

<b>Table 2 - Marine Zone Change Impacts and Associated Actions (WFOs and Regions) (continued from previous page)</b>		
	<b>Impact of proposed marine zone change</b>	<b>Minimum Required Actions (other impacts should be identified in the WFO's request for change)</b>
9	Customer preparation for zone change(s); need for advance notification.	WFO/Region includes a draft service or technical change message conforming to format and instructions in NWSI 10-1805 for OS21 approval.
10	Neighboring WFOs that provide service backup must have the new maps in their AWIPS databases.	WFO/Region coordinates changes with backup WFOs to ensure they have the new maps in their AWIPS databases.
11	Tsunami Warning Centers (TWC). The TWCs marine zone databases must be synchronous with the WFO marine zone databases to ensure TWC products contain the correct marine zones.	Region coordinates with appropriate TWC to ensure TWC has made the change(s) to their marine zone database immediately following the implementation date.

3.3 NWS National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) Center Responsibility. To encourage early collaboration, the National Center Branch Chief should send an early notification of changes by email to the OCWWS Branch Chief 15-30 days prior to submitting the formal change request. See Table 3 for a summary of the marine zone change process and the minimum required deadlines for meeting these implementation dates. Each NCEP (national) center issuing offshore and high seas forecasts (Ocean Prediction Center or Tropical Prediction Center) is responsible to initiate the change request for all offshore and high seas marine zones in its area of responsibility. The National Center Branch Chief submits the change request (via e-mail, facsimile, or hard copy) to the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief in OCWWS at NWS Headquarters. See the content in section 3.1 and Table 4 for what the change request will contain. In the change request, include a list of National Center actions in response to all the possible impacts of proposed marine zone changes.

<b>Table 3 - Time Line of Marine Zone Changes (National Center-Initiated)</b>		
<b>Marine Zone Change Process</b>	<b>Deadlines for April 1 Implementation</b>	<b>Deadlines for October 1 Implementation</b>
National Center gives OS21 Program Manager a heads-up call or email about a zone change request.	September 1	March 1
National Center Branch Chief submits formal change request for approval to OS21 Branch Chief and OS21 Program Manager. Change request must include a draft Service Change Notice (SCN). Refer to NWSI 10-1805 for draft SCN preparation.	September 25	March 25
OS21 Branch Chief notifies National Center Branch Chief of approval or disapproval.	October 15	April 15
National Center RC Focal Point submits request to DRG if product and/or communication identifiers are part of the change..	October 31	April 30
OS21 works with OST to create new shapefiles for the zone change.	October 31	April 30
OS21 and National Center work together to finalize the draft SCN following the procedures in NWSI 10-1805.	October 31	April 30
OS21 completes the OCWWS clearance process which results in a final SCN. Note: OS21 needs a minimum of 30 days to complete the OCWWS clearance process.	November 30	May 31
<b>Table 3 continued on next page</b>		



<b>Table 3 - Time Line of Marine Zone Changes (National Center-Initiated)</b> (continued from previous page)		
<b>Marine Zone Change Process</b>	<b>Deadlines for April 1 Implementation</b>	<b>Deadlines for October 1 Implementation</b>
SCN must go out NLT:	December 1 to meet required minimum 120 day notice (ref. NWSI 10-1805) but preferably as early as possible in preceding 30 days.	June 1 to meet required minimum 120 day notice (ref. NWSI 10-1805) but preferably as early as possible in preceding 30 days.

<b>Table 4 - Marine Zone Change Impacts and Minimum Required Actions</b> (National Centers)		
	<b>Impact of proposed marine zone change</b>	<b>National Center Actions (other impacts issues should be identified in the national center's request for change)</b>
1	US Coast Guard (USCG) broadcast of NWS marine forecasts over USCG radio frequencies.	Present summary of notification provided to the USCG sector in the National Center Area of Responsibility, and feedback received, on how this change effects USCG broadcast of weather and safety information.
2	Mariners at large.	Present summary of notification provided to the recreational and commercial mariners in the National Center Area of Responsibility, and feedback received, on how this change affects their activities and operations.
3	Web sites containing marine zones must show the changed zones by the effective date.	National Center coordinates with NOAA webmasters. OCWWS releases SCN to notify impacted non-NOAA web masters.
4	Customer preparation for zone change(s); need for advance notification.	National Center includes a draft service or technical change message conforming to format and instructions in NWSI 10-1805 for OS21 approval.
5	Coastal WFOs. Which of their Coastal Marine Zones line up against the changed Offshore Marine Zones?	Coordinates with impacted coastal WFOs to ensure they made any necessary changes to their marine zone databases immediately following the implementation date.

4. NWS Headquarters Roles and Responsibilities. The NWS Headquarters offices that are involved with the marine zone change process include: the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS), the Office of Science and Technology (OST), the Office of

Operational Systems (OOS), and the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO).

4.1 Office of Climate, Water and Weather Services (OCWWS). OCWWS has the responsibility to ensure maps and zone listings are updated as necessary, and is the final approving authority for all marine zone related changes and effective dates and subsequent updates to *NWSI 10-302, Marine and Coastal Services Area of Responsibility*. Approval is granted in coordination with the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief. OCCWS should acknowledge marine zone change requests from regional headquarters and national centers within 15 business days of receipt.

The Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, is the NWS Headquarters focal point for the overall marine zone change process. The Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, coordinates with appropriate offices within NWS Headquarters, regional headquarters, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) centers (includes OPC and TPC), the Tsunami Warning Centers (TWC), and depending upon the required changes, may correspond with involved WFOs. Specifically, the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, is responsible for the following:

- a. Coordinating the details of all marine zone related changes with other NWS Headquarters elements;
- b. Ensuring that any changes made by other NWS Headquarters elements are timely, accurately, and correctly formatted;
- c. Maintaining accurate records for all marine zone map and listing changes;
- d. Approving and processing the PNS Service Change Notice submitted by the appropriate regional headquarters or national centers and making sure these issuances are distributed to NWS users, including the TWCs, within the specified time frame;
- e. Ensuring that all updates to *NWSI 10-302, Marine and Coastal Services Areas of Responsibility* are posted, and as up-to-date as feasible; and
- f. Coordinating with other entities such the U.S. Coast Guard.

4.2 Office of Science and Technology (OST). OST has the responsibility to modify the Geographic Information System (GIS) map shapefile. The revised shapefile is posted to the AWIPS Map Database Catalog for public access, placed on the NOAA1 secure server, and converted to a border point file. OST transmits a notice via AWIPSINFO indicating that the revised marine zone map has been posted to the AWIPS Map Database Catalog, and transmits a “notification of change” e-mail to OOS and the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief in OCWWS.

4.3 Office of Operational Systems (OOS). OOS is responsible for tasking individuals with specific assignments to make the required marine zone map and/or zone listing changes.

4.3.1 OOS Zone Listing Change Procedure. OOS modifies the zone listing files using standard NWS word processing software. The revised files are attached to an e-mail and sent to the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, in OCWWS for review. Once approved, OOS posts the modified marine zone listing files to the appointed server in (.PDF) format.

4.3.2 OOS Zone Map Change Procedure. OOS uses GIS compatible software to make the marine zone map revisions. Once approved, OOS posts the updated maps to the appointed server in (.JPG) and (.PDF) formats for viewing and printing. All zone maps must be clearly labeled with the date of the most recent revision. A “notification of map posting” e-mail is then sent to the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, in OCWWS, and the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO) focal point.

4.4 Management and Organization Division of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO3). The CFO focal point is responsible for updating ***NWSI 10-302, Marine and Coastal Services Areas of Responsibility*** on the NDS website. The CFO focal point should contact the Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch Chief, or designate, in OCWWS when the website update is complete.