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Operations and Services
Performance, NWSPD 10-16
SERVICE EVALUATION

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

This directive supersedes National Weather Service Instruction (NWSI) 10-1602, dated January 6, 2003. The requirement for Regions to send annual reports to the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services was eliminated in this version. Coordination to share best practices and address service-related problems is ongoing during the year. In addition, all instances of the word "customer" were replaced by "user" per NOAA General Counsel guidance.

    /signed/   12/21/05
Dennis McCarthy   Date
Director, Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services

Service Evaluation

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1.   Objectives. The objectives of the service evaluation program are to measure service quality, identify service improvement areas, and encourage use of best practices throughout the organization.

2.   Evaluation at Weather Service and Regional Headquarters. Weather Service Headquarters (WSH) offices and regional headquarters will hold periodic workshops and/or use other methods to interact and cooperate with NWS partners. Feedback from partners will contribute to policy changes and service improvements. Where applicable, WSH offices and regional headquarters should hold joint activities when working with partners and users.

3.   Evaluation at Weather Forecast Offices (WFO). Due to the number of partners, WFOs are encouraged to use teams for obtaining feedback. Appendix A provides guidance on the creation and use of teams. Each office will document evaluation and outreach activities and summarize changes made to services resulting from partner/user feedback. Based on outreach activities and interaction with users, each office will be able to summarize the overall level of user satisfaction in the various program areas including: (1) major areas of user concerns, and (2)

programs/efforts that have been well received. Recommended and preferred practices are included in Appendix B.

4.   <u>Evaluation at Center Weather Service Units (CWSU)</u>. Evaluations at CWSUs will focus on its internal activities and service to the FAA and aviation community. The Meteorologists-in-Charge (MIC) of the CWSU, local Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) personnel and the associated WFO will collaborate on CWSU evaluation and determine:

      a.   frequency and scope of evaluation activities;

      b.   reporting requirements; and

      c.   the level of support (e.g., staff, training, coordination, etc.) provided by the WFO and regional headquarters.

5.   <u>Evaluation at National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP)</u>. The breadth and scope of NCEP's evaluation program, as well as the schedule of evaluation activities, is at the discretion of NCEP management. Evaluation activities should be ongoing so partner/user feedback is continuous and there is prompt identification and resolution of problems. Where applicable, NCEP should hold joint evaluation
activities with WSH offices, regional headquarters, and WFOs with national center-type responsibilities.

6.   <u>NCEP Evaluation for Internal (NWS) Partners</u>. Teams are recommended to obtain feedback from the various constituencies in the NWS. NCEP will determine how these constituencies should be grouped, for example:

      a.   meteorology, hydrology, computer science, etc.;

      b.   aviation, marine, long-range prediction, etc.;

      c.   WFOs, River Forecast Centers, CWSUs, etc.

Activities to be evaluated will include but not be limited to:

      a.   quality and usability of NCEP services, including models, model data, and other products;

      b.   ease of access to NWS employees;

      c.   collaborative research efforts;

      d.   internal processes leading to more efficient operations; and

e.   collaborative activities among Centers issuing similar products and with WFOs with National Center-type responsibilities.

NCEP will also determine the methods whereby evaluations will be accomplished (workshops, visiting scientist programs, etc.).

7.   <u>NCEP Evaluation for External Partners and Users</u>. Workshops or other methods of obtaining feedback should be employed on a periodic basis to determine:

a.   the satisfaction level of external partners and users with NCEP products and services;

b.   effectiveness of NCEP/partner relationship in serving users;

c.   ease of access to external users and partners;

d.   quality and utility of NCEP services, including models, model data, and other products;

e.   needed improvements in products and services;

f.   partner/user impact on future models, products and services; and

g.   other information as determined by NCEP and/or its partners and users.

NCEP will also determine the methods whereby evaluations will be accomplished.

8.   <u>Managing Service Evaluation Results</u>. Offices are encouraged to share evaluation successes and failures with other offices. Regional and National service program managers should coordinate in the development and maintenance of this information exchange, monitor information flow, and publicize the most effective strategies for running a successful program. WFOs with national center-type responsibilities in aviation, marine, hurricane, and other programs should encourage the exchange of information with the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP). Problems uncovered by the evaluation process at individual offices or Centers will be addressed by the respective region or NCEP unless the problem is national in scope or otherwise requires WSH collaboration.

APPENDIX A – Teams

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1.   Teams. While this directive does not mandate the use of teams, the guidelines are written with the philosophy that team operations are indispensable for service evaluation. When used effectively, teams:

      a.   empower employees, raise morale through staff ownership of the team process, and result in employee buy-in;

      b.   enable thorough analysis of problems and provide innovative solutions supported by staff;

      c.   create an atmosphere of constant improvement that allows an office to function with greater efficiency.

Managers are responsible for forming teams and should provide a charter for each team. The charter includes:

      a.   a vision (the ideal state for the future);

      b.   a mission (clear statement of the issue the team should address and goals the team will accomplish);

      c.   team membership, including the leader;

      d.   scope of authority (decision-making capacity, budget, other resources, limitations or constraints);

      e.   termination date (project completion);

      f.   success criteria (how the team will know it has accomplished its mission).

2.   Sample Team Charter. A sample team charter is shown below. Teams should be chartered for a specific time period. Before the termination date, the necessity for continuation should be determined and, if necessary, a new charter issued. In normal circumstances, the need

for re-chartering is for teams addressing ongoing issues on a periodic basis, such as user feedback for a specific program.

Vision: WFO XYZ and the media in the WFO's area of responsibility will collaborate to provide superior public service.

Mission: The WFO XYZ Outreach Team will develop a process to provide prompt:

- Updates to the media on changes to WFO products services and procedures.
- Response to media questions and requests.
- Method to determine a baseline measure of media's relationship with WFO and then to determine percent improvement.

Team Membership:

Bob Black
Barbara Brown - Team Leader
George Gray
Gordon Green
Wendy White

Scope of Authority: The team can require all office staff, except electronic technicians, to conduct research for the project.

- Staff time must not exceed 4 hours per person.
- The plan must be implemented with no additional office staff.
- The plan must be implemented with no changes in regional/national policy.
- The team may spend up to $1,000 to plan and implement.
- The plan's operating costs cannot exceed $1,500 per year.

Termination Date: Implementation by September 1, 2002. Adjust by October 1, 2002.

Success Criteria: The WFO XYZ Outreach Team will have been successful when 70 percent of county warning area media outlets state their relationship with the WFO has improved.

APPENDIX B – Recommended and Preferred Practices

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1. <u>WFO Evaluation</u>.

   a. Evaluation activities and recommendations to the MIC on enhancing the office's evaluation program will be managed and coordinated by the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM). The WCM will also summarize recommended changes to products and services for office management.

   b. Obtain evaluation data through feedback from partners and users to determine the level of satisfaction with the office's products and services.

   c. When weighing adherence to NWS policy against modifying products and services to conform to custom, practice, and need of partners and users in their respective county warning areas, WFOs will seek the help of their respective regional headquarters. Examples of possible changes to products and services include using characteristic terminology or wording common in the local area and providing additional avenues of personal contact. Any changes will be coordinated with the regional headquarters.

   d. Teams should be used (Appendix A) to develop an ongoing relationship with partners and users so that evaluation feedback is continuous and there is prompt identification and resolution of deficiencies. Methods of feedback can be face-to-face meetings, workshops, seminars, telephone/conference calls, announcements over the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, Internet etc.

2. <u>WFO Internal Evaluation</u>. Internal evaluation of WFO operations includes all activities that support or lead to provision of the office's products and services. Normally, internal changes should be driven by partner/user requests or requirements based on evaluation of external products and services. Changes that result from management directive, union negotiation, or employee/team suggestions, and have a major impact on products or services, should be

discussed with partners and users to ensure no decrease in satisfaction. Internal activities and processes chosen for evaluation should be those most likely to result in improvements that are readily apparent to partners/users.

3.   <u>WFO External Evaluation</u>. External evaluation covers those areas of WFO operations that are "visible" to partners and users; in most cases, this means the products and services the office supplies. The following program areas, if applicable, will be evaluated: public weather, aviation, marine, hydrology, and fire weather.

Other activities for evaluation include but are not limited to:

    a.   Severe weather products and services;

    b.   Office interaction and partnership with the media, emergency managers, other government agencies;

    c.   Outreach activities (visiting schools, giving talks, participating at boat shows, training of HAM radio operator networks, etc.);

    d.   NOAA Weather Radio, NOAA Weather Wire Service, Emergency Managers Weather Information Network, and other NWS dissemination systems; and

    e.   Public access (ease of use in accessing NWS Internet sites, digital telephone answering systems, visits, etc.).

4.   <u>Documentation</u>. Offices may find it useful to document their program evaluations annually and share the results with others using the following format:

    a.   Innovative evaluation processes/feedback methods used (other than normal interaction with users) and the benefits derived from such activities;

    b.   Summary of the effectiveness of products, services, programs and initiatives. Include a description of any product and/or service which is particularly well received by partner/users;

    c.   Major concerns or problem areas associated with products and services;

    d.   Trends, as appropriate; and

    e.   Success stories.

APPENDIX C – Glossary of Terms

Service Evaluation - The process of determining how users value NWS products and services. The determination is made by qualitative and quantitative feedback from partners and users.

Qualitative Feedback - The value of products and services to partners and users. It takes the form of subjective data (comments, compliments, complaints, etc.).

Quantitative Feedback - The utility of products and services to partners and users. It takes the form of objective data (timeliness, clarity, ease of use, etc.).

Office Evaluation - Review of field office integrity, including compliance with policies, internal controls, information technology, facilities, and human and fiscal resource management.

Partner - Companies, corporations, vendors, agencies, universities, etc., that associate with NWS in the distribution of weather information and services.

Public - The people of a parish, county, commonwealth, state, territory, region, or nation.