

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SOUTHERN REGION SUPPLEMENT 07-2005  
APPLICABLE TO INSTRUCTION 10-1603  
March 12, 2009***

***Operations and Services  
Performance, NWSPD 10-16  
Significant Event Report, NWSI 10-1603***

***NOTIFYING SOUTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS***

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

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This supplement supersedes Southern Region Supplement 07-2005 dated November 23, 2005.

The following changes were made to this issuance:

1. Provided more details to reporting procedures.

<signed>

February 26, 2009

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Bill Proenza  
Regional Director

Date

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1. Purpose. Establish procedures to be used by Southern Region offices for reporting significant weather and other specified events.
2. Procedure. Whenever a significant hydrometeorological event impacts an office's County Warning Area or Hydrological Service Area, or a significant event occurs at the office itself, it is important that notification be passed to Southern Region Headquarters (SRH) as soon as possible, and no later than 12 hours after the event (follow-up information can be sent to SRH after the initial notification). This rapid notification will enable Regional and National Headquarters staff to assist in office recovery, document and communicate decision support services, and offer any additional support that may be needed. In most cases, a significant event will require a report to be completed and sent to National Weather Service Headquarters. These reports will be used to brief officials at various levels of government, including NWS, NOAA and DOC.

Although this information is very important, an office will not compromise warning operations during an ongoing event to submit this information.

Where warranted, WFOs and RFCs may combine reports/information to send to SRH to eliminate duplication.

2.1 Events to Report. Events (both hydrometeorological and non-hydrometeorological) should be reported when considered significant. Significant hydrometeorological events are those that directly (see Section 2.1.2 for more information on direct vs indirect events) result in one or more of the following:

- One or more fatalities;
- Several serious injuries;
- Extensive property damage;
- Extensive travel, infrastructure, or other societal impact; or
- Widespread regional or national media interest.

An example of a significant hydrometeorological event is a severe thunderstorm outbreak with large hail, tornadoes, damaging straight-line winds, flooding, and/or winter storms that result in any of the above criteria.

NOTE: For indirect events, if widespread media interest or numerous fatalities have occurred, then you should report the event. An example would be a large chain-reaction pileup of vehicles due to fog. Otherwise, isolated indirect events should not be reported. See Section 2.1.2 for more information on direct vs indirect events.

Some direct hydrometeorology events, in order to be considered significant, must satisfy different criteria. The following events must be reported when any or all of the associated criteria are satisfied:

- *Heat episodes* when resulting in more than 5 fatalities.
- *Lightning events* when resulting in more than 3 fatalities.

- **Major marine accidents** when resulting in:
  - One or more fatality, with weather being a suspected cause;
  - Loss of a vessel that is more than 40 feet in length and/or 100 gross tons in weight, with weather being a suspected cause;
  - Property damage (to the vessel and/or its cargo) estimated to equal or exceed \$500,000, with weather being a suspected cause;
  - Widespread marine pollution (from oil or other hazardous substance), with or without weather being a suspected cause;
  - The loss or involvement of widely known public figures, with weather being a suspected cause; or
  - Actual or imminent regional or national media attention.
  
- **Major aircraft accidents** resulting in:
  - One or more fatalities when weather is a suspected cause; or
  - Three or more fatalities, regardless of weather conditions; or
  - The loss or injury of widely known public figures; or
  - Loss of a commercial passenger aircraft; or
  - Actual or imminent regional or national media attention.
  
- **Hazardous substance spills or releases** when resulting in:
  - One or more fatalities;
  - Significant or numerous injuries;
  - Extensive evacuations or sheltering in place;
  - Environmental damage; or
  - The provision of NWS decision support services for a major/significant event.

Significant non-hydrometeorological events, such as wildfires, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and avalanches, will be reported when resulting in:

- One or more fatalities;
- Significant or numerous injuries;
- Extensive evacuations;
- Major damage (e.g. to homes, bridges, roadways, communications infrastructure, etc.); or
- The provision of NWS decision support services for major/significant events.

Finally, regardless of the suspected cause, the following will be reported:

- One or more fatalities involving on-duty NWS employees;
- Any injury that requires professional medical attention to one or more on-duty NWS employees;
- Major damage to an NWS facility; or
- Any civil disturbance impacting on-duty NWS employees or facilities.

2.1.1 Direct vs Indirect Impacts. As discussed in NWSI 10-1605, Storm Data Preparation, the determination of direct versus indirect causes of weather-related fatalities or injuries can be difficult.

In general, a direct fatality or injury is one directly attributable to the hydro-meteorological event itself, or impact by airborne/falling/moving debris, while an indirect fatality or injury is not directly caused by impact or debris from the event (the weather event is a passive entity or condition). Refer to NWSI 10-1605 Section 7 for numerous examples of direct and indirect fatalities and injuries for different weather phenomena. Direct versus indirect impacts caused by non-weather events should follow similar guidelines based on the type of event that has occurred.

In general, isolated fatalities in single-vehicle automobile accidents occurring in rain-slick, icy, or foggy conditions are considered indirect impacts, and not subject to significant event reporting. However, you may call SRH ROC to discuss borderline events to find out if indeed an event calls for a report.

2.2 Notification Procedures to SRH. Time is of the essence in reporting significant events to SRH. Offices that are aware of significant events (as defined in Section 2.1) should call the SRH Regional Operations Center (ROC) as soon as possible. This phone call serves as the Regional Headquarter's initial notification that an event has occurred. All the details of the event can be provided either at the time of this call, or via follow up calls or e-mails.

2.2.1 Initial Telephone Notification. Offices should notify the ROC using the following procedures:

- Call the ROC at (817) 978-1100 Ext. 147
- Provide the following details to the ROC Duty Officer (leave a message if no one answers; Duty Officer will be paged):
  - Event description (Location of Event and Date/Time of Event)
  - Number of fatalities and/or injuries (provide estimates if exact numbers unknown)
  - Extent of damage
  - Point of contact and phone number

2.2.2 Follow-up Notification. Using the following procedures, offices should provide supplementary event information to the ROC by phone or e-mail:

- Call the ROC and provide the following information:
  - Outlooks valid for the area
  - Watches valid for the area
  - Warnings valid for the area
  - Statements issued concerning the event
  - Services provided by the office, particularly any briefings, conference calls, graphical products, IM sessions, or other decision support to emergency

managers, other responders, or the media

- Equipment/Staffing conditions at the office during the event
- Media and/or emergency management response
- If the use of e-mail is possible and/or preferred, provide the above mentioned information to the ROC via these procedures:
  - A template can be found in Appendix B of this document, or several event templates can be found online in .doc and .pdf formats at:

<http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/roc/sigreport.html>

- Fill out one of the electronic templates/forms from the above website (or use the template in Appendix B) and report what is known, even if some details are unavailable. E-mail the form as an attachment to [SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov](mailto:SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov)

2.3 Office Rendered Inoperable. If an office is rendered inoperable for any reason, SRH should be notified by either the inoperable office or its sister backup office as soon as possible by calling the ROC at (817) 978-1100 Ext. 147. Specific procedural details can be found in Section 3.1 of the SR Supplement “Backup Operations” under Directive 10-22.

APPENDIX A - Quick Reference Guide

# Significant Event Reporting

## Initial Telephone Notification

Call the SRH ROC at (817) 978-1100 Ext. 147

Provide this information (or leave a message and someone will be paged):

- < Event description (Location of event and date/time of event)
- < Extent of Damage
- < Number of fatalities and/or injuries
- < Point of Contact and Phone Number

## Follow-up Notification

Using the following procedures as time permits, offices should provide supplementary event information to the ROC by phone or via e-mail:

Call the ROC and provide the following information:

- < Outlooks valid for that area
- < Watches valid for that area
- < Warnings valid for that area
- < Statements issued concerning the event
- < Services provided by the office, particularly any briefings, conference calls, graphical products, IM sessions, or other decision support to emergency managers, other responders, or the media
- < Equipment/Staffing conditions at the office during the event
- < Media and/or Emergency Management response

Call the SRH ROC at (817) 978-1100 Ext. 147 to inform members of SRH that a Significant Event has occurred and you have e-mailed information to the ROC e-mail address. Leave a point of contact and phone number on the message.

If the use of e-mail is possible and/or preferred, provide the above mentioned information to the ROC via these procedures:

- A template can be found in Appendix B of this document, or several event templates can be found online in .doc and .pdf formats at:

<http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/roc/sigreport.html>

- Fill out one of the electronic templates/forms from the above website (or use the template in Appendix B) and report what is known, even if some details are unavailable. E-mail the form as an attachment to [SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov](mailto:SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov)

**APPENDIX B - For The Record Memorandum Template**

	Date, Year
MEMORANDUM FOR:	The Record
FROM:	Name Title, Office
OFFICE:	Office Name
SUBJECT:	June 12, 1999 Flood Fatality in Texas
EVENT:	Brief event narrative
LOCATION of EVENT:	Specific location of event
DATE/TIME of EVENT:	Date and time of event
DEATHS:	Number, age and sex of each if known
INJURIES:	Number
DAMAGE:	Brief description, including approximate numbers, if known
OUTLOOKS:	Outlooks issued prior to event that were in effect
WATCHES:	Watches issued prior to event that were in effect
WARNINGS:	Warnings issued prior to event that were in effect
SERVICE:	Narrative of service provided by the WFO or RFC (briefings, etc.)
SYSTEMS:	Equipment status during event
RESPONSE:	Media/EM response
<p><i>Disclaimer</i></p> <p><i>Any times listed pertaining to event occurrences and lead times associated with outlooks, watches and warnings are based on the best information available at the time this preliminary report was prepared. Subsequently, these data may be changed as time permits a more thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding this event.</i></p>	