

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-17

September 30, 2002

Operations and Services

DISSEMINATION

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

OPR: OS5 (D. Wernly)

Certified by: OS (G. Mandt)

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1. The National Weather Service (NWS) produces weather, water, and climate forecasts, warnings and other data. This suite of information forms a national data base and infrastructure that can be used by United States customers and the global community. This policy directive governs dissemination of the NWS information suite and relay of emergency information.

2. The NWS delivers critical life- and property-saving products directly to customers and makes available its entire information suite through various government operated systems and through our partners in the media and private sector.

2.1 The NWS relays non-weather-related emergency information following the “all hazards” concept. Government authorities external to the NWS providing hazardous information for delivery by NWS dissemination systems must, except during unanticipated situations, execute and adhere to stipulations in a Memorandum of Agreement defining the conditions for use of NWS systems in collecting and disseminating non-weather hazard warnings.

2.2 The NWS information suite is disseminated in formats and various media (e.g., satellite broadcast, NOAA Weather Radio, Internet, etc.) appropriate to customer needs in an equitable and open manner according to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 552), and Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-130, “Management of Federal Information Resources” (61 Fed. Reg. 6428, February 20, 1996). In so doing, NWS will (a) avoid establishing, or permitting others to establish on its behalf, exclusive, restricted, or other distribution arrangements interfering with availability to all on a timely and equitable basis; (b) avoid establishing restrictions or regulations, including the charging of fees or royalties, on the reuse, resale, or re-dissemination of NWS information by the public; and (c) where appropriate set user charges for information at a level sufficient to recover the cost of dissemination but no higher. All NWS data and products are “essential” within the meaning of the World Meteorological Organization’s Resolution No. 40 (CgXII).

3. This policy directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

- 3.1 The Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS) provides policy and instructions on the content and format of NWS information.
- 3.2 The Office of Operational Systems (OOS) and Chief Information Officer (OCIO) manage dissemination systems, including engineering, maintenance, logistics, financial management, and customer support.
- 3.3 OCIO coordinates with the World Meteorological Organization on data codes, formats and telecommunications policy.
- 3.4 The Office of Science and Technology (OST) directs research and development for improving current systems and for new systems.
- 3.5 The regional headquarters ensure the field offices are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill dissemination responsibilities. They recommend requirements to NWS Headquarters (NWSH); ensure dissemination policies are compatible across regional boundaries; provide technical assistance to field offices; oversee regional dissemination outreach efforts; coordinate and address customer requests and concerns within their region; manage upgrades or expansions of dissemination systems in coordination with NWSH; ensure dissemination systems are properly maintained and operational; and evaluate performance and effectiveness of dissemination within their region.
- 3.6 The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) provides timely, around-the-clock dissemination of regional- and national-scaled NWS information through operational production methods and provides education outreach to customers and partners. The NCEP recommends requirements to NWSH; provides technical assistance to its Centers; oversees dissemination outreach efforts; addresses customer concerns relating to NCEP products; and evaluates its dissemination performance and effectiveness.
- 3.7 NWS field offices, including the National Data Buoy Center, provide timely, around-the-clock dissemination of NWS information and appropriate externally originated emergency messages for their areas. They provide education outreach to customers and partners. They collect information on customer needs and send these to NWSH through administrative channels.
4. The NWS will measure effectiveness of dissemination through the various NWS systems. NWS will provide customers with performance parameters and limits of the systems. Where standard measurement tools are available, the NWS will measure whether results meet performance parameters.
5. This policy directive is supported by references and glossary of terms in **Attachment 1**.

signed by John E. Jones, Jr. September 30, 2002

John J. Kelly, Jr.
Assistant Administrator
for Weather Services

Date

Attachment 1

REFERENCES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Procedural Directives

Instruction 10-1701, *Text Product Formats and Codes*

Instruction 10-1702, *Universal Geographic Code*

Instruction 10-1703, *Valid Time Event Code*

Instruction 10-1704, *Complementary Dissemination Services*

Instruction 10-1710, *NOAA Weather Radio Dissemination*

Instruction 10-1711, *NOAA Weather Radio System Management*

Instruction 10-1712, *Specific Area Message Encoding*

Instruction 10-1715, *NOAA Weather Wire Service Dissemination*

Instruction 10-1716, *NOAA Weather Wire Service System Management*

Instruction 10-1721, *International Satellite Communications System Management*

Terms

All Hazards Concept - The dissemination of non-weather-related emergency messages from external authorities, in addition to NWS information. These emergency messages include both natural events, such as earthquakes and volcanic activity, and technological events, whether accidental or intentional, such as chemical or biological releases, oil spills, or nuclear incidents.

Customer - User of NWS weather information and services.

Partner - Company, corporation, vendor, agency, university, etc., that associates with the NWS in the collection or distribution of weather information and services.

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