

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 80-2**  
**OCTOBER 1, 2002**

*Science and Technology*

**SYSTEM COMMISSIONING AND DECOMMISSIONING**

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**OPR:** OPS2 (D. Hess)

**Certified by:** OPS (J. McNulty)

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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:** This directive supersedes WSOM Chapters A-73, *Systems Commissioning Policy*, Issuance 92-07, dated August 26, 1992, and A-74, *Systems Decommissioning Policy*, Issuance 92-11, dated September 30, 1992.

1. The NWS will follow a standard process to ensure major systems can support operation and use at field sites. This process, referred to as system commissioning, will follow an approved system-specific commissioning plan. The NWS will also follow an approved system-specific decommissioning plan for the removal of legacy systems and equipment.
2. The objective of the commissioning process is to ensure major systems meet NWS requirements, specifications, policies, and procedures before their complete use in NWS field operations. Before a new system can be commissioned, the following provisions must be met:
  - a. NWS forecast and national center staff are prepared to use the system in routine operations, having been trained to operate and maintain the system. The necessary infrastructure, such as logistical support must be in place and functioning to ensure the system can operate properly.
  - b. The system can be used in an operational setting by the field unit as the primary system for the preparation of weather forecasts, guidance products, or data acquisition.
  - c. The system can transmit weather products in a reliable manner over NWS telecommunications. NWS customers of these products and services have been notified in advance to allow them sufficient time to make modifications to their systems.
  - d. The system can replace the legacy system and adjunct equipment performing the function.

3. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:
  - 3.1 The Assistant Administrator for Weather Services is responsible for the overall implementation of NWS System Commissioning and Decommissioning.
  - 3.2 The Director, Office of Operational Systems (OOS), in coordination with the Director, Office of Science and Technology, will specify which systems will be commissioned and under what conditions. The Director, OOS, will determine which systems require the decommissioning process.
  - 3.3 The Field Systems Operations Center within OOS is responsible for coordinating all activities associated with the commissioning of major systems and the decommissioning of legacy systems, including following Government-wide regulations regarding asset disposal (e.g., safety, environmental, General Services Administration).
4. Effectiveness will be measured by comparing the projected schedule against the actual date a site commissions a system.
5. This policy directive is supported by the references and glossary of terms listed in Attachment 1.

Signed by John E. Jones, Jr.	10/01/02
John J. Kelly, Jr.	Date
Assistant Administrator	
for Weather Services	

**Attachment 1**

**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

***References***

NWS Instruction 80-201, System Commissioning Process  
NWS Instruction 80-202, System Decommissioning Process

***Terms***

**Legacy System** – A centrally supported major system currently fielded and commissioned, which may be replaced in total by a new technology. Examples include, but are not limited to, Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS), Next Generation Weather Radar (NEXRAD), Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS), Microcomputer-based Automated Radio Theodolite (MicroART), and NOAA Weather Radio Console Replacement System (CRS).

**Major System** – The totality of equipment, facilities, and supporting functions (e.g., training, maintenance, logistics, and communication networks) required to provide operational capabilities. Examples include: ASOS, NEXRAD, AWIPS, Radiosonde Replacement System, Cooperative Observer Program (COOP) Modernization, and CRS.

**NWS Site** – A location containing the NWS system(s). Sites may or may not be staffed.

**System Commissioning** – The process of applying technical and administrative judgments quantitatively and qualitatively to:

- a. Determine when a major system at an NWS site can be officially used in the conduct of NWS operations.
- b. Evaluate the effectiveness of system support functions. An example of a support function is logistical support at the NWS depot.

When a surface weather observation system is commissioned, for example, its products are deemed acceptable for official use. A system can be used in the conduct of field operations for familiarization and training purposes before it is commissioned.

**System Decommissioning** – The process through which technical and administrative judgments are applied quantitatively and qualitatively supporting the removal of a legacy system from official use.