



PRODUCT CHANGES FOR THE 2009 HURRICANE SEASON

Effective May 15, the National Hurricane Center will implement important changes in some of its text and graphical products. It will also make some additions to its Web site and experimental products. This is part of a continuing effort at the National Hurricane Center to expand and enhance its level of service.

Changes:

- 1) The Tropical Cyclone Storm Surge Probability products, previously experimental, will become operational. In addition, the products will be available with thresholds of one foot increments ranging from two to 25.
- 2) The Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclone Wind Field Graphics will become operational.
- 3) The Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Graphical Tropical Weather Outlooks will become operational.
- 4) The Monthly Tropical Weather Summary will have a change in content. It will be in tabular form, displaying the latest seasonal statistics (names of storms, dates, estimated peak intensities and minimum central pressure) with a short narrative of records of interest, if any. Individual storm narratives will no longer be included.
- 5) Changes to the Public Advisory will include an easier-to-read "Repeat" section near the end of the advisory, and the "Zulu" or "Z" time designation will be replaced by "UTC".
- 6) The Tropical Cyclone Discussion and Public Advisory will be issued with the same time zone designation.
- 7) The "Special Tropical Disturbance Statement" will be discontinued and replaced with a "Special Tropical Weather Outlook". The Special Tropical Weather Outlook will be issued when significant changes have occurred to disturbances between the regular Outlook issuance times.
- 8) Storm surge information and forecasts in the Public Advisory will be expressed in terms of "height above ground level" or "inundation".

- 9) The thresholds for the low/medium/high risk of tropical cyclone development will be adjusted. The new thresholds will be: Low risk: Less than 30 percent; Medium risk: 30 to 50 percent; High risk: Greater than 50 percent.
- 10) The risk of tropical cyclone development outlook (low, medium or high) will be added to the text version of the Tropical Weather Outlook. The text outlook will include the same categorical chance of development shown in the Graphical Tropical Weather Outlook.
- 11) The size of the tropical cyclone forecast cone will be adjusted. The cone represents the probable track of the center of a tropical cyclone, and is formed by enclosing the area swept out by a set of imaginary circles placed along the forecast track (at 12, 24, 36 hours, etc.. The size of each circle is set so that two-thirds of historical official forecast errors over a 5-year sample fall within the circle. The circle radii defining the cones in 2009 for the Atlantic and eastern North Pacific basins are given in the table below.

| Forecast Period (hours) | Circle radius Atlantic Basin (nautical miles) | Circle radius Eastern North Pacific Basin (nautical miles) |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 12 | 36 | 36 |
| 24 | 62 | 59 |
| 36 | 89 | 85 |
| 48 | 111 | 105 |
| 72 | 167 | 148 |
| 96 | 230 | 187 |
| 120 | 302 | 230 |

Website Additions:

- 12) Graphical Tropical Weather Outlook RSS/XML feed

<http://hurricanes.gov/gtwo.xml>

- 13) Improved version of website for PDAs and Smartphones

<http://hurricanes.gov/mobile>

Experimental Products: (Note that the timeliness and accuracy cannot be guaranteed)

14) Podcast RSS/XML feed for time when the media pool is activated.

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/audio/index.shtml>

(The media pool is typically activated when a hurricane watch is issued for any portion of the U.S. contiguous coastline.)

15) Various GIS products

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gis/>

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