

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS

Area of Concern: The geographic area of concern for the National Winter Storms Operations Plan covers the Gulf of Mexico and extends about 150 miles inland along the U.S. Gulf Coast. In the Atlantic, the area of concern ranges from latitudes 25°N to 48°N, west of longitude 55°W, and extends about 150 miles inland along the eastern coast of the United States. It also includes the North Pacific Ocean east of the International Date Line.

Blizzard Warning: The NWS issues a Blizzard Warning to notify the public when blizzard conditions (sustained wind or frequent gusts of 35 mph or more accompanied by falling and/or blowing snow, frequently reducing visibility less than one-fourth mile for three hours or more) are occurring, imminent, or have a high probability of occurrence within the next 36 hours.

Due Regard: Due regard is an operation wherein state operated aircraft assume responsibility for separation from all other aircraft without ATC assistance.

Freezing Rain (or Drizzle): Rain or drizzle that falls in liquid form but freezes upon impact with the ground or exposed objects. Small accumulations of ice can cause driving and walking difficulties while heavy accumulations produce extremely dangerous and damaging situations primarily by pulling down trees and utility lines.

Heavy Snow Warning: The NWS issues a Heavy Snow Warning to notify the public when heavy snow (four inches or more accumulation in 12 hours or six or more inches accumulation in 24 hours in most areas of the country, but some variation in the snowfall criterion is allowable on a regional basis) is occurring, imminent, or has a high probability of occurrence within the next 36 hours.

Ice Storm Warning: NWS issues an Ice Storm Warning to notify the public when significant ice accumulations (generally one-quarter inch or greater, but some variation in the ice accumulation criterion is allowable on a regional basis) are occurring, imminent, or have a high probability of occurrence within the next 36 hours and no other predominate winter weather element is expected to occur.

Mission Identifier: The nomenclature assigned to winter storm aircraft reconnaissance missions for weather data identification. It comprises an agency-aircraft indicator followed by a CARCAH-assigned mission-system indicator.

Reconnaissance Aircraft Sortie: A flight that meets the requirements of the winter storm plan of the day.

Sleet: Sleet is a type of precipitation consisting of transparent or translucent pellets of ice, 5 mm or less in diameter. These pellets of ice usually bounce when hitting hard ground and make a sound upon impact. Heavy sleet is a relatively rare event defined as an accumulation of ice pellets covering the ground to a depth of ½ inch or more.

Winter Storm Outlook: This product may be issued when there is a good chance of a major winter storm beyond the point normally covered by a watch. The intent of an outlook is to provide information to those who need considerable lead time to prepare for the event.

Winter Storm Plan of the Day (WSPOD): The WSPOD is a coordinated mission plan that tasks operational weather reconnaissance requirements during the next 1100Z to 1100Z day; describes reconnaissance flights committed to satisfy operational requirements, and identifies possible reconnaissance requirements for the succeeding 24-hour period.

Winter Storm Warning: The NWS issues a Winter Storm Warning to notify the public when more than one predominate winter weather hazard (i.e., heavy snow and blowing snow, snow and ice, snow and sleet, sleet and ice, or snow, sleet and ice) is occurring, imminent, or has a very high probability of occurrence within the next 36 hours and is expected to meet or exceed locally defined 12 and/or 24 hour warning criteria for at least one of the precipitation elements.

Winter Storm Watch: The NWS issues a Winter Storm Watch when conditions are favorable for a hazardous winter weather event to develop in the next 12 to 48 hours, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing are uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. The watch will cover the possible occurrence of the following elements, either separately or in combination: heavy snow, significant accumulations of freezing rain, and/or heavy sleet. Some event specific watches are issued when only one predominate winter weather hazard is expected. The event specific watches are: Blizzard Watch, Lake Effect Snow Watch, and Wind Chill Watch.

Winter Weather Advisories: Event-specific advisories are used to describe conditions that do not constitute a serious enough hazard to warrant a warning for the general public but; nevertheless, pose a significant threat to specified users. They are highlighted in forecasts and statements. These types of advisories include snow, blowing snow, lake effect snow, wind chill, and freezing rain.