

Fire Weather Services Coordination and Outreach

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1. Coordination of Changes in Products and Services

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) will use a customer-driven approach for the change process for Fire Weather products and services. NWS should have a conduit for coordination of these changes for users at all levels (nationally, regionally, and locally at Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs)). National policy for products and services will reside in the Products and Services to Support Fire and Other Incidents Policy Directive 10-4. WFO or consolidated Fire Weather Annual Operating Plans (in accordance with NWS Instruction 10-404) will serve to further document regional and local implementation of policy and changes.

1.1 WFO Fire Weather Service Area

The WFO Fire Weather Program Leaders (FWPL) along with the Meteorologist-In-Charge (MIC) or other WFO management team member will identify fire weather users within the WFO area of fire weather responsibility. MICs should ensure an updated list of users and points of contact are included in the WFO station duty manual or other appropriate reference

WFO FWPLs, along with other designated staff, should lead the fire weather outreach and coordination efforts and thus are the "user service representatives" for the NWS fire weather program at the local level. These representatives maintain regular contact with fire and land management agencies, helping them assess meteorological needs and informing them of NWS products and services available to meet their needs. Fire and land management personnel should be encouraged to visit the WFO to become familiar with all NWS office personnel and operations. Likewise, WFO staff should take advantage of opportunities to visit land management agencies and operational sites (prescribed burns, Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) platforms, etc.).

MICs should conduct or participate in user meetings at least annually to gauge user satisfaction, determine changes in requirements, and develop and review the Fire Weather Annual Operating Plan.

1.2 State or Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Level

Coordination of user requirements may sometimes be better accomplished at the state or GACC level. At this level, both WFO MICs and the Regional Fire Weather Program Managers should represent the NWS to gauge user satisfaction and requirements, and to develop and review regional/state Annual Operating Plans.

1.3 National Fire Weather Program

The National Fire Weather Program Manager (NFWPM) will coordinate the Fire Weather

program (including budget, training, policy, etc.) with the Regional Program Managers and will operate as the conduit for national user coordination. The NFWPM will work with the National Interagency Fire Center Directors or their representatives, the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG), and other national fire suppression organizations in determining overall fire and land management requirements for meteorological support.

2. Change Notification

The Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS), the Regional Headquarters, and the local offices will notify users of changes in national, regional, and local products and services in accordance with NWS Instruction 10-1805, National Service Change and Technical Implementation Notices.

Regional Headquarters will submit any regional Supplements or other instructions enhancing or modifying Policy Directive 10-4 to the OCWWS for approval.

APPENDIX A - Guidelines for Teaching Interagency Courses

1. The request for a NWS instructor for fire agency courses comes through the requesting agency. As with any other out-of-office training assignment, sufficient lead time of several months is needed for scheduling purposes and the request is coordinated through the local Weather Forecast Office's Meteorologist-In-Charge. If the office or Region supplying the NWS instructor expects or requires reimbursement, several options are available in gaining reimbursement.

a. The preferred method for Federal training assignments is requesting an invitational travel order from the requesting Agency. Invitational travel requires the traveler to fill out a travel voucher in the format required by the requesting Agency. When possible, accommodation, flights and/or other expenses may be paid by the requesting Agency in advance.

b. If an invitational travel order is not possible, an Agreement can be established with the land management unit paying for the training. For the United States Forest Service (USFS), this Agreement is usually established using the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) AD-672 form. For the Department of Interior, the requesting Agency supplies an Interagency Agreement (IAA) in the local unit's appropriate format. Once the requesting agency initiates and completes their official request form or IAA for training, it is the responsibility of the requested NWS instructor's Region to complete and establish coding for reimbursement. It is important to note that the Interagency National Agreement for Fire Weather Services does not provide the legal or financial exchange mechanism to execute training. More detailed instruction on training agreements, including sample templates, are available on the Incident Meteorologist (IMET) Reimbursable Expense Report (RER) instructions presented and distributed each year at the annual IMET re-certification workshop.

In addition, a Gifts and Bequests process can be completed, utilizing guidance found in NOAA's Personal Properties Policies, Chapter 4; sections 4-08 and 4-09. This procedure applies only for travel requested by a Federal source. Non-Federal travel is governed by the Federal Travel Regulations, 41 CFR Part 304.

The website governing Gifts and Bequests can be found here:

<http://www.pps.noaa.gov/policies/gifts-and-bequests-to-noaa.pdf>

This process requires preparation of a CD-210 form, record of Gift or Bequest. If the amount requested is over \$500, advance approval from NOAA CFO is required.

2. The course should have a local, state, or federal land management instructor paid by that agency to team teach with the NWS instructor. The co-instructor cannot be from a private vendor or academic institution.

If 1 and 2 above are satisfied, then an instructor can be provided with all overtime and travel

costs borne by the requesting agency once an AD-673 or IAA is completed. If 1 and 2 cannot be satisfied or it is unclear whether a local, state, or federal land management instructor has been provided, then go to #3.

3. The following questions are asked by the WFO to determine whether an NWS instructor can be approved for the course in question:

- a. Is the NWS instructor unique or can this course be taught by anyone else? Are other fire weather instructors (non-NWS) ready, willing and able to teach the course? Contact the Geographic Area Predictive Services meteorologist(s) for information concerning the availability of non-NWS fire weather instructors.
- b. If it is determined through coordination with the Geographic Area Predictive Services meteorologist(s) that non-NWS instructors are not ready, willing and able to teach the course, can the NWS be reimbursed for overtime and travel costs?

If it is determined by answers to questions 3a and 3b that an NWS instructor is appropriate and can be reimbursed, then the NWS instructor may teach the course.