

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1606

June 28, 2010

**Operations and Services
Performance, NWSPD 10-1606
SERVICE ASSESSMENT**

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWS Instruction 10-1606, "Service Assessment," dated March 31, 2008.

The following changes were made:

1. Entire instruction edited and rewritten for clarity and internal consistency.
2. Team leaders encouraged to share time critical recommendations with appropriate offices prior to report release.
3. Team leaders will share critical report information with the AA/DAA as soon as practical.
4. Increased emphasis on assessment team independence and control of report.
5. Restricted service assessment completion timeline to 180 days.
6. The OCWWS Director's signature on the Approval Memorandum begins the assessment process.

/signed/

6/14/2010

David B. Caldwell
Director, Office of Climate, Water,
and Weather Services

Date

Service Assessment

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1 Introduction

A service assessment is an independent evaluation of NWS performance, in the form of a report, generated by a service assessment team within 180 days of the start of the assessment. It follows a significant hydrometeorological, oceanographic, or geological event that results in warning and/or other operational activities by the NWS. The report serves as an evaluative tool to (a) identify and share best practices in operations and procedures, and (b) identify and address service deficiencies. The term “service assessment” applies to those conducted at the national level. Regional and local assessments will be identified as such, respectively.

Information collected by the service assessment team, report drafts, briefings and discussions, are internal and confidential until the final report is publicly released. All employees with access to these data are also expected to maintain confidentiality. The team leader is the sole authority for the early release of information as detailed in various sections of this Instruction.

While the service assessment process is run by the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS), authority for the program stems directly from the Assistant Administrator for the Weather Services (AA).

2 Mission Connection

A service assessment, along with verification and evaluation, helps determine the usefulness of products and services to NWS employees, partners, and other users. Verification and evaluation are ongoing activities that lead to continuous improvement. A service assessment is undertaken when unusually destructive or rare events occur.

3 Initiating a Service Assessment

3.1 Criteria

A service assessment may be conducted if an event results in any of the following conditions:

- a. Multiple fatalities
- b. Numerous injuries requiring hospitalization
- c. Significant impact on the economy of a large area or population
- d. Extensive national public interest or media coverage
- e. Unusual level of attention to NWS operations (performance of systems or adequacy of warnings, watches, and forecasts) by the media, emergency management community, or elected officials

Regional and local assessments maybe conducted at lower thresholds.

3.2 Authority

The OCWWS Director, with input from the Performance Branch, and in collaboration with the Regional Director(s) of the affected region(s), decides if a service assessment is warranted.

3.3 Service Assessment Team Membership

The Performance Branch will facilitate and provide input to team membership. Teams will be formed by a consensus of the OCWWS Director and the Regional Director(s) (or their designees) of the affected region(s). Team member selection should be a highly collaborative process to ensure subject matter experts with strong team building and leadership skills are identified. Once the leader is selected, he/she will provide input on team membership. The OCWWS Director approves the team leader and members (see Section 3.4).

Meteorologists-in-Charge and Hydrologists-in-Charge should periodically assess staff and forward names of people with appropriate skills to their respective Regional Headquarters for consideration as members on future service assessment teams.

3.4 Approval Memorandum

Once the team is formed, the Performance Branch will prepare an Approval Memorandum for the OCWWS Director. It will include a brief outline of the event, impact(s), justification for conducting the assessment, and team charter. A sample Approval Memorandum is in Appendix A.

The team charter includes:

- a. Mission—what the team will investigate
- b. Scope of Authority / Limitations—defines the team’s decision-making capacity including length of data-gathering period, fiscal parameters, resource allocation, and any limitations. Because assessment teams operate as an independent entity within the NWS, they are normally given broad authority to accomplish the mission. This includes allowing teams to determine where to go and what to investigate and report. However, teams are bound by specific requirements as detailed in the charter.
- c. Termination Date—deadline for completing the assignment
- d. Success Criteria—defines the expected output and how the team will know it has successfully completed its mission
- e. Team Membership—named team members

The charter will clearly and specifically define the role of team members who are not NWS employees. The charter will also outline expected contributions to the assessment report.

Charters will be drafted by the Performance Branch in collaboration with the team leader and affected regions.

The OCWWS Director's signature on the Approval Memorandum begins the assessment process.

3.5 Regional and Local Service Assessments

Events for which a service assessment is not undertaken may result in a regional or local service assessment. The decision to conduct an assessment at one of these levels is under the authority of the affected region(s) with input, if requested, by OCWWS and/or the Office of Hydrologic Development.

The Performance Branch, OCWWS, should be apprised of regional and local assessment activities and provided with copies of all resulting reports. Coordination among all levels is encouraged.

4 Post-Storm Data Acquisition (PSDA) Quick Response Team (QRT)

When extreme events occur (e.g., greater than EF3 tornado), a PSDA report should be compiled. To gather the data necessary for accurate post-event analysis, the rapid deployment of a PSDA QRT may be required. Guidelines and requirements for initiating PSDA QRT action are detailed in [NWS Instruction 10-1604, Post-Storm Data Acquisition](#).

If an NWS service assessment team is convened, the PSDA QRT will provide ground and aerial survey information as an aid in the storm intensity rating process, if applicable. The PSDA report may be attached to, or integrated into, the service assessment report at the discretion of the service assessment team leader. It may be advantageous to include a PSDA QRT member on the service assessment team to provide continuity and expertise.

5 Team Composition, Qualifications, and Responsibilities

5.1 Team Leader

The team leader will be from outside the affected region(s). He/she will have demonstrated leadership and project management skills and be impartial with respect to the assessment's objectives. Also, it is preferable that the leader has served on a previous assessment team and is an NWS employee. In exceptional situations (e.g., when NWS leadership of the assessment team might be viewed as a conflict of interest), the team leader may be selected (in decreasing order of preference) from within NOAA, other government agencies, or the meteorological/hydrologic community.

He/she is responsible for setting the schedule for team activities, assigning tasks, keeping the team focused, adhering to the charter, briefing the Corporate Board, and coordinating activities with the Performance Branch.

The team leader is to remain objective and maintain the independence of the team. The team leader writes the report or assigns writing tasks. He/She is also the final authority on the content of the report and the release of information. Release of preliminary information outside the team will be limited to special situations. The decision should be made in consultation with the team members, and with the advice of the Performance Branch, NWS public affairs, and appropriate Regional Directors. Under no circumstances will there be any information released without the express consent of the team leader. Distribution of the draft report within the NWS is limited to the procedures detailed in this Instruction. While on assignment, and until the report is published, the grade and/or position of the team leader within the NWS is irrelevant and he/she is invested with full authority by the AA.

The team leader is encouraged to seek advice on team activities, his/her responsibilities, and the writing and content of the report, particularly from previous team leaders. Team leaders should ensure report recommendations are coordinated to avoid duplication of ongoing projects.

5.2 Team Members

The team will include:

- a. At least one subject matter expert for the type of event in question.
- b. At least one person with experience in field operations.
- c. A public affairs officer.

It is preferable to have:

- d. A member from outside the NWS with expertise related to the event.
- e. A behavioral science expert.
- f. A PSDA QRT member (if applicable).
- g. A facilitator from the Performance Branch or a previous team leader to help coordinate the process and provide guidance for report format and content. At the discretion of the team leader, the facilitator may be released before the team has completed its data gathering assignment.

The team may also include one or two NWS employees in a training capacity

5.2.1 Team Representation

The maximum number of NWS team members from **affected** regions should be:

- a. Two people for one-region events.

- b. Three people for two-region events (two from one region and one from the other region).
- c. Three people for three-region events (one from each region).

For unusual situations where a large team is needed, this requirement may be relaxed.

Team members work under the authority of the team leader. They devote full time to the team while on-site and then, as needed, until released by the team leader. Team members are expected to employ good team skills including respect for differing opinions, ensuring all have an opportunity to be heard, adherence to mission requirements and the team charter, as well as maintenance of confidentiality.

6 Service Assessment Process

The service assessment process begins once the Approval Memorandum has been signed. The actual start usually occurs when recovery efforts are sufficiently advanced to allow team members access to the affected area and emergency management, local officials, NWS personnel, and the media have time to interact with team members. Final determination on when to begin the assessment process is made by the team leader with advice from the region(s) and the Performance Branch.

The service assessment process should be completed within 180 days. It is preferable that this period include the time from team activation to report publication, but it may be measured from team deployment, particularly when there is a delay. See Appendix B for a flow chart of the timeline and process.

6.1 Pre-Assessment Activities

6.1.1 Itinerary and Logistics

The team leader will work with affected region(s) and local NWS offices to develop the travel itinerary and then coordinate with OCWWS. Travel arrangements should be made by each team member through local administrative support personnel and will be reviewed and approved by the OCWWS budget office unless the team charter states otherwise. OCWWS pays costs associated with the team and provides budget code(s). OCWWS (with assistance from affected regions) will ensure team members have the necessary equipment (e.g., laptops, cameras, appropriate software). OCWWS will also provide additional supplies as needed (signs, copies of previous assessments, pertinent documents, identifying clothing, etc.).

It is preferable to have a facilitator on site to help brief the team on the assessment process and answer questions. The team leader has final authority whether the facilitator should be present (and if he/she should work with the team in the field), should coordinate by teleconference or other remote methods, or is not needed.

All team members should read appropriate directives, instructions, and other applicable documents no later than the start of field work.

6.1.2 Initial Meeting

The team leader will convene a meeting to:

- a. Outline objectives and work procedures.
- b. Assign tasks.
- c. Create sub-teams, as necessary.
- d. Assess the need for an initial press conference and establish media strategies.
- e. Establish a work schedule.

6.1.3 Affected NWS Offices or Centers

NWS Offices or Centers should coordinate with the team leader or designee to:

- a. Make copies (electronic versions whenever possible) of all relevant public products, forecast discussions, and logs.
- b. Arrange interviews with local emergency management officials, media, elected officials, and cooperating agencies.
- c. Recommend suitable hotel accommodations.
- d. Arrange for meeting space.

NWS Offices or Centers will not release information such as probable maximum wind speeds, water levels, or quality/accuracy of NWS services without the express consent of the team leader. In the case of tornadoes, see NWSI 10-1604 for instructions on the release of preliminary information.

6.2 On-site Assessment Activities

Team members gather information as assigned and report daily findings to the team leader. The team leader conducts meetings, as necessary, to:

- a. Assess progress.
- b. Modify or develop new assignments for the next day.
- c. Coordinate with the Performance Branch, OCWWS.
- d. Identify information, if any, to be released.

It is preferable to begin writing the assessment report, or at least create an outline, before the team is released. However, the final decision rests with the team leader.

6.3 Post-Assessment Activities

Team members may have responsibilities until the final report is released. They may be asked to write, rewrite, and/or review various sections of the report; assist in developing appropriate briefing materials; and/or conduct briefings.

6.3.1 Draft Report

The team leader will provide a draft report to the Performance Branch, OCWWS. The draft should adhere as closely as possible to format and content as described in Appendix C. However, the team leader has authority to depart from these requirements after consultation with the Performance Branch.

Statements made in the following sections notwithstanding, no changes will be made to the report without the express consent of the team leader.

The review process should proceed as follows:

Step 1. Service assessment program personnel, and others as designated by OCWWS management review the report and edit for content, technical accuracy, format and grammar, and other issues as needed. This is accomplished in close collaboration with the team leader. It is preferable to bring the team leader to National Weather Service Headquarters (NWSHQ) for this step.

Step 2. The draft report is sent for review to the affected regions, NCEP, WFOs/RFCs/Center Weather Service Units (CWSU), and others impacted by the event. Findings and recommendations are sent to the NWS Training Division for early identification of potential training issues. Confidentiality requirements will be followed. Comments are forwarded to the team leader and Performance Branch for consideration. All changes to the report are under the sole authority of the team leader. The team leader and/or the Performance Branch will make a good faith attempt to inform those submitting comments as to their disposition.

Step 3. Once comments are reviewed and changes, if any, are made to the report, the Corporate Board will be briefed. The team leader presents the briefing in person at NWSHQ. If necessary, the team leader may be joined by other team representatives with specialized expertise. Normally, the briefing includes an overview of the event and its impact, highlights best practices, and identifies areas of needed service or program improvement. The findings and recommendations are presented with a justification for inclusion in the report. Questions and comments should be limited to clarification.

Attendance at the briefing should include:

- a. Corporate Board or their designee(s).
- b. NOAA Legislative Affairs.
- c. NOAA General Counsel.
- d. NOAA Public Affairs.
- e. NCEP Center Director(s) at the discretion of the NCEP Director.
- f. Affected MIC/HIC(s) at the discretion of the regional director(s).
- g. NWS Employees Organization Representative.
- h. Others (as determined by AA or OCWWS).

Step 4. After the briefing, attendees will have one week (5 business days) to submit final comments to the OCWWS Performance Branch. The team leader, with support from the Performance Branch, will determine if any report changes are needed.

Step 5. The Performance Branch will forward the final draft report to the Director, OCWWS, for approval.

Step 6. NWS Executive Affairs will review the report and recommend any changes required.

Step 7. The AA signs the report signifying the end of the report review period and readiness for public release. It also signifies a commitment to make a good faith attempt to implement all recommendations.

6.3.2 Prerelease of Report Information

The prerelease of report information to NWS and NOAA leadership and the prompt implementation of recommendations are in the public's best interest.

- a. Team leaders, in consultation with the Performance Branch, are strongly encouraged to initiate contact with appropriate office(s) before the report is officially released. This includes both operational (e.g., WFOs/RFCs, regional offices) and programmatic (e.g., training, awareness) entities. Contact can occur at any time during the service assessment process. In no case will there be prerelease of information without the express consent of team leaders. Confidentiality requirements will be followed.
- b. Team leaders will share critical report information with the AA and the Deputy Assistant Administrator as soon as practical after drafted by the team to inform NOAA leadership of any critical recommendations

6.3.3 Dissemination of the Service Assessment Final Report

Prior to, or in conjunction with, the release of the final report, NOAA Public Affairs (NWS), NOAA Legislative Affairs (NWS), OCWWS, and the team leader, will collaborate on what briefings are required. Briefings are normally held when findings reveal significant issues or problems.

- a. NOAA Legislative Affairs (NWS) will work with the team leader, OCWWS and the appropriate region(s) to arrange briefings for appropriate members of Congress. If a briefing is not necessary, an announcement of the report release and a contact for additional information will be sent to appropriate members of Congress. Normally, the briefing will be held, or the announcement sent, the day before release of the report to the general public. Activities involved with briefings and/or announcements are the responsibility of Legislative Affairs.
- b. NOAA Public Affairs (NWS) will work with the team leader, OCWWS and the appropriate region(s) to develop a rollout strategy. If a media briefing is unnecessary, appropriate press release(s) may be issued. Briefing or press releases normally occur after Congressional notification and in conjunction with release of the report. Activities involved with briefings and/or press releases are the responsibility of Public Affairs.
- c. At least five days before release of the service assessment report, the document will be distributed internally to all those originally invited to attend the Corporate Board briefing. This is the responsibility of the Performance Branch. The report will be labeled on each page with the title "FOIA Exempt - Not for Public Release until" The label will reflect the official release date, if known. There will be no external distribution before the release date and time.

On the official release date, the report will be made available on the NWS, OCWWS, regional office(s), and local office(s) Internet home pages, as appropriate. Printed reports will be distributed internally to: Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Public Affairs, OCWWS Director, Regional Directors, all service assessment team members, and affected offices. Upon request, a reasonable number of additional hard copies may be created and made available by the Performance Branch. OCWWS will be responsible for funding and printing of service assessment reports and costs connected with media, Congressional, and/or NOAA briefings.

6.3.4 Assignment and Implementation of Report Recommendations

Authority and responsibility for assignment of recommendations rests with OCWWS. Assignment will be at the Office Director/Regional Director level. The Performance Branch will formulate specific actions from each recommendation in the service assessment. These actions are collaborated with appropriate personnel throughout the NWS to determine the responsible

office and the expected closeout date. If disputes arise as to the responsible office and/or the closeout date, the decision will be elevated to the appropriate level of management.

Once actions are assigned, monthly progress reports will be developed by the Performance Branch and posted on the Performance Management Web site. Progress on actions with long closeout dates may be updated less frequently in the monthly reports after coordination between the Performance Branch and the responsible office.

6.3.5 Service Assessment and Action Tracking and Reporting

OCWWS tracks all on-going service assessments and actions and maintains data to monitor progress on implementation.

6.3.5.1 Service Assessment Data

For each service assessment, data include:

- a. Assessment name.
- b. Assessment date(s).
- c. Number of actions, number of completed actions, number of open actions.
- d. List of actions, status (open or closed), due date, action wording.

A service assessment is considered open until all associated actions are closed. Service assessments will be carried on monthly reports for one month after closeout.

6.3.5.2 Service Assessment Actions Data

For each action, data include:

- a. Assessment name.
- b. Assessment date(s).
- c. Finding.
- d. Action (recommendation part).
- e. Responsible office and contact.
- f. Due date.
- g. Status with all monthly updates.

Service assessment actions are considered open and remain on monthly reports until implemented, or otherwise closed for valid reasons (e.g., Corporate Board decision). Actions will be carried on monthly reports for one month after closeout.

6.3.6 Recommendations and Best Practices Retention

NCEP, regional headquarters, WFOs, RFCs, and CWSUs, are encouraged to maintain data from all service assessment report recommendations and best practices that apply to their respective areas of responsibility. These should be used for service improvement, training, etc.

Performance Branch should maintain similar data that includes all recommendations and best practices. These data should be used to determine if recommendations are repeated and why, and to avoid repetition in future service assessment reports.

APPENDIX A - Sample Approval Memorandum with Assessment Team Charter



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE**
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration**
National Weather Service
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
October 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: David B. Caldwell
Director, Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services

FROM: Douglas C. Young
Chief, Performance Branch

SUBJECT: Service Assessment Team for Southeast United States
Flooding of September 2009

A Service Assessment team has been formed to assess the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) performance before and during record flooding in the southeast United States from September 18 to 23, 2009.

The NOAA Hydrology Program Manager; Southern Region Headquarters; and Eastern Region Headquarters concur on the attached charter, which focuses the team's work and establishes the resources, scope, and timeline for the service assessment. If you agree with the contents of the charter, the team will be activated.

Attachment

Approve:

Disapprove:

Let's Discuss:

Date

Date

Date

Sample Team Charter

NOAA-NWS Operations and Services during Record Flooding in the Southeast United States September 18-23, 2009

Purpose: NOAA's NWS mission is focused on providing weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. This team is tasked with documenting and evaluating the effectiveness of NWS services and operational procedures related to significant flooding in the southeast United States.

Event Summary: Copious moisture drawn northward into the southeast United States produced showers and thunderstorms from Friday, September 18 through Monday, September 21, 2009. Rainfall amounts across the region totaled five to seven inches, with locally higher amounts near 20 inches. The northern two-thirds of Georgia and Alabama, and southeast Tennessee were hardest hit as the southeasterly low level winds provided a favorable upslope flow. Flash flooding and areal flooding were widespread with the greatest impacts concluding on Wednesday, September 23, 2009.

Expected Outcomes/Activities: The assessment team should identify best-case operations, procedures, and practices, and make recommendations to address service deficiencies, if necessary. The assessment should be focused and concise. In addition, decision makers' needs and River Forecast Center (RFC), and Weather Forecast Office (WFO) products and services will be examined from the perspective of high impact services and decision support. Recommendations will be made regarding new service opportunities, necessary forecaster decision assistance tools, and communication methods to effectively carry out decision support in a high impact event.

The following are recommended areas of investigation for the team:

- Timeliness, quality, accuracy, and usefulness of NWS forecasts and warnings
- Effectiveness of NWS internal and external coordination/collaboration
- Effectiveness of NWS information dissemination and communication of uncertainty and flood risk
- Effectiveness of hydrologic forecasting and warning procedures at NWS offices
- Identification and evaluation of opportunities for collaboration among other federal, state, and local agencies

Other more specific items the team could examine include (but are not limited to):

- Meteorologist's-in-Charge (MICs)/Hydrologist's-in-Charge (HICs) observations/comments with regard to successes and shortcomings in operations and services.
- Ability of Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) and River Forecast Centers (RFCs) to ingest, process, and assess data to generate forecasts, identify threats, and disseminate flood and flash flood warnings. (e.g., Why was the creek crest in the flood warning for the Sweetwater Creek under-forecast at the same time disastrous widespread flooding was past the forecast flood stage?)
- Sufficiency of in situ observations and remote sensing.
- Were Local Storm Reports (LSR) disseminated frequently and routinely throughout Monday and Tuesday as the event required? What is the WFO priority for issuing such reports? Do they help communicate the urgency of the situation to the public?)
- Effectiveness of modeling and analysis tools used to create quantitative precipitation forecasts, river forecasts, and flood warnings.
- Adequacy of WFO/RFC personnel resources.
- Information on how emergency responders, the media, and other officials obtained NWS warnings and information.
- Actions taken by officials in response to NWS products, services, and briefings. (e.g., How did local, county, and state emergency management and the media operate during this time? Did they communicate the situation to the public? Did they issue evacuation orders, other than in situations where flooding already occurred and they had to get people out after the fact?)
- Action taken by the general public in response to NWS products and services. (e.g., Did a lack of urgency in the flood warnings negatively impact people's actions by leading them to inaction, i.e., possibly ignoring the warning? Could other bulletins, e.g., Special Weather Statements or Civil Emergency Messages, have been issued to communicate the urgency or severity of the flooding to the public? Did people feel "safe" or "like the event was over" because the rain had ended, even though major flooding had started to occur? Why did people drive into flooded roadways? What role, if any, did dissemination of weather and warning information via wireless devices and other new methods play in the event?)

Scope of Authority/Limitations: The service assessment team should interact with impacted stakeholders, including, but not limited to, emergency managers and those directly involved in flood operations along with civil authorities, floodplain managers, farmers, transportation officials, and the media. Additional information can be obtained from others as deemed necessary by the team. The minimum geographic area to be evaluated by this service assessment includes Alabama, Georgia, western North Carolina, and southeastern Tennessee. This includes the Southeast River Forecast Center and the following WFOs: Birmingham, Huntsville, Peachtree City, Greenville-Spartanburg, and Morristown.

The team has the authority to:

- Obtain and use all products, logs, etc., produced by offices significantly impacted (e.g., WFOs, RFCs, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, Southern Region Headquarters, and Eastern Region Headquarters).
- Interview any employees in the NWS it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.
- Make recommendations for improving NWS services and operations. (Recommendations will be vetted through the NWS Corporate Board.)
- The team are to limit spending to reasonable expenses. ***Total expenses are not to exceed \$25,000***, unless approved by OCWWS.

The team should employ the most efficient method for gathering information (i.e., telephone interviews, video teleconferencing, travel, etc.). Trip authorizations are reviewed and initialed by the budget office in OCWWS. Travel authorizations should be generated by the local office supporting the traveler. The front page should be faxed to the attention of the Performance Branch Chief (301-713-1598) as soon as practical for coordination and approval in OCWWS.

Time Frame: Team activities should be prioritized based upon the issues that most significantly and directly influenced NWS performance during the event. The preliminary schedule is as follows:

- Initial team meeting: ***Monday, October 12, 2009.***
- Begin first week of assessment activities (e.g., office visits): ***Tuesday, October 13, 2009.***
- Travel home: ***On or about Saturday, October 17, 2009.***
- Draft report sent to OCWWS Performance Branch: ***No later than December 23, 2009.***
- Team briefs NWS Corporate Board: ***On or about February 25, 2010.***

Communication Requirements:

- Team leader should report progress of the team in weekly messages to the Directors of the affected Regions, the OCWWS Director, the Hydrologic Services Division Chief, the Performance Branch Chief, and the NOAA Integrated Water Forecasting Program Manager. This report should contain travel itineraries, a list of people interviewed, and a brief description of important findings, recommendations, and/or issues.
- Team leader should coordinate on spending, keeping the Performance Branch Chief informed on money spent, as well as spending plans.
- Team leader should conduct meetings as necessary to assess the team's progress, modify or develop new assignments for the day, and address issues regarding the release of information.
- Team leader will provide a briefing on the team's findings and recommendations to the Corporate Board.

- Team leader and team members may be asked to review the report before it is finalized by OCWWS.

Members: Team members have been selected based upon their expertise, experience, and potential for contributing significantly to a constructive and thorough service assessment. The team should make use of subject matter experts to answer questions regarding policy, technological capabilities (e.g., software, communications, dissemination, etc.), training options, or other issues as they arise. It is not necessary for these consultants to be members of the team.

The assessment team will include the following members:

1. John Jannuzzi, *team leader*, Meteorologist-in-Charge WFO Boise, Idaho.
2. Nezette Rydell, Meteorologist-in-Charge, WFO Brownsville, Texas.
3. Brent MacAloney, Meteorologist, NOAA/NWS, Office of Climate Water and Weather Services, Silver Spring, Maryland.
4. Chris Vaccaro, Director, NWS Public Affairs, Silver Spring, Maryland.
5. Melissa Tuttle-Carr, Freelance Meteorologist/Weather Producer at Cable News Network, Atlanta, Georgia.
6. Jim Noel, Service Coordination Hydrologist, Ohio River Forecast Center, Wilmington, Ohio.
7. Rick Shanklin, Warning and Coordination Meteorologist, WFO Paducah, Kentucky.
8. Keith Stellman, Warning and Coordination Meteorologist, WFO Shreveport, Louisiana.
9. Don McKinnon, Emergency Manager, Laurel, Mississippi. (Jones County).

The team leader is responsible for engaging the collaboration that will lead to the success of the team. The role of the team leader includes:

- Keeping the purpose, goals, and approach of the team relevant and meaningful
- Building commitment and confidence in team members
- Utilizing the skills and expertise within the team through task delegation and cooperation
- Managing feedback from outside of the team and soliciting advice/input from outside of the team when needed
- Working closely with the National Service Assessment Program Leader to ensure the process is efficient and the results are timely and effective

All members of the team can provide leadership in the achievement of the assessment team objectives and should assume personal accountability for the success of the team.

The role of each team member includes:

- Communicating with the team in an open and courteous manner
- Providing support, suggestion, opinion, and information toward the objectives of the team

APPENDIX B - Assessment Timeline

The timeline is guidance and may vary based on individual assessment characteristics. The 180 day deadline is firm.

Assessment Timeline		Activity
Day	1 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team activation • On-site assessment and data gathering
Day	11 - 73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report development and composition • Draft delivered to Performance Branch, OCWWS
Day	74 - 94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report editing and formatting
Day	95 - 115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affected entities review and comments
Day	116 - 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite
Day	127 - 140	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics and preparation for Corporate Board (CB) briefing • Draft report sent to briefing invitees (one week prior to briefing)—OCWWS review
Day	141 - 149	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited comments from attendees and OCWWS editing
Day	150 - 155	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCWWS approval and signature
Day	156 - 163	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Affairs
Day	164 - 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA approval and signature
Day	171 - 180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing, briefings, release

APPENDIX C - Service Assessment Report Format

The report will be written by the assessment team leader who will determine the amount of written input from team members. The team leader may request help from the Performance Branch, if needed. Below are guidelines for report format; however, each assessment is unique and the format may be adapted if necessary.

The service assessment report is a comprehensive, formal document that contains information concerning:

- a. The nature, intensity, and impact of the event.
- b. The performance of NWS offices affected prior to, and during the event, focusing on the full range of products and services. Post event activities, if pertinent, may be included. OCWWS will provide recommendations as to which offices are to be included in the report, but final determination is made by the team leader unless specified in the Charter. Performance includes accuracy and quality of warnings, forecasts, and other products and such things as responsiveness to requests for data and briefings.
- c. The response to NWS warnings and forecasts by those affected by the event. Examples of partner/user groups include emergency managers, media, local / state / national officials, general public.

The report will contain information with supporting evidence. It should be written in a readable style. While technical language is sometimes needed, explanations should be provided. Excessive detail is discouraged and the report should be as short as possible and still tell the whole story. Graphs, tables, and photographs should be included, but limited to those that complement the story and/or demonstrate the event's impact. Editorial comments (opinions) should be avoided. Be wary of making subjective blanket statements of high performance/success, especially when there are more than a few recommendations for improvement. When recognition is appropriate specific people, offices, or actions should be praised. Quotes from partners and users are encouraged. Draft materials for service assessments are pre-decisional documents. All draft materials will be marked "FOIA Exempt - Not for Public Release." (FOIA refers to the Freedom of Information Act.) In addition, every page of all draft documents will include a prominently visible label of "Draft."

Final National Service Assessment Reports can be viewed at:
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/assessments/index.shtml>

Service assessment reports will contain (at a minimum) the following sections:

- a. Cover - contains a picture associated with the event.
- b. Title Page.

- c. Preface – A brief statement, signed by the AA, an introduction to the report, and any pertinent background scope, and intent. It should be brief, well under a page and give the reader a sense of why it should be read. The Preface is signed by the AA.
- d. Table of Contents.
- e. Members of the assessment team, their titles, and home office or company. Significant contributors should also be listed.
- f. Acknowledgements, if necessary, and are not included in the significant contributors section above.
- g. Acronyms.
- h. Executive Summary or Introduction – team leaders may choose to have one or the other, or both. If both, they should not be redundant. Normally, the Executive Summary is a brief, non-technical version of the report primarily for those who do not intend to read the entire document. Only the most important details of the event and its impact, NWS activities, and user response will be included. Recommendations should be limited to a summary or one or two of the most pertinent. If an introduction is also included, it should be limited to a few general sentences that describe what is in the report.
- i. Report Body – the team has leeway to arrange this part in the way that best tells the story. It may include an event overview; office and center activities; observations; systems; communications; coordination; continuity of operations; outreach and preparedness; statistical and model guidance; training; management; etc.
- j. Facts, Findings, and Recommendations - Facts, Findings, and Recommendations will be spread through the body of the report.

A Fact is a statement that describes something important learned from the assessment and does not lead to a recommendation. Facts are not numbered. An example of a Fact is: “**Fact:** During the event, WFO Cleveland issued 24 severe thunderstorm warnings, with an average lead time of 22 minutes. This is 5 minutes better than the regional average for the past three years.”

A Finding is a statement that describes something important learned from the assessment. Findings are numbered in ascending order. They should be clear and concise with no opinions, repetition, or unrelated information and lead directly to a recommendation. Findings may lead to multiple, associated recommendations.

An example of a Finding is: “**Finding 1:** The team discovered many users of WFO XYZ and WFO ABC Internet sites had trouble locating specific information because the sites were arranged in different formats.”

A Recommendation is a specific course of action, directly related to a Finding, that will lead to improved NWS operations and/or services. Each Recommendation is numbered with the same number as the associated Finding. They should be written in terse, declarative sentences and be practical, trackable, and closeable within a reasonable amount of time. Avoid statements such as “WFO River City should continue to work with emergency managers to publicize the value of NOAA Weather Radio.” Limit the use of adjectives (most, few) and adverbs (generally, usually). An example of a Recommendation is “**Recommendation 1:** The NWS should have standard formats for all Internet sites.”

Additionally, reports should include an appendix listing all Findings, Recommendations, and Best Practices. A separate listing of Facts (other than in the body of the report) is not required.

- k. Best Practice – Innovative, successful actions taken to accomplish the NWS mission that are worthy of use and can be used in other parts of the agency. At the discretion of the team leader, these may be grouped or spread through the body of the report, whichever enhances reader comprehension.
- l. Appendices – included here should be information of interest but not essential to the report story line. Examples include charts of tornadoes associated with hurricanes, definition of EF-scale or the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, PSDA information, etc.