Department of Commerce $ National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration $ National Weather Service

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1607
June 27, 2008

Operations and Services

Performance, NWSPD 10-16

OFFICE EVALUATION

NOTICE: This publication is available at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/.

OPR: OS52 (D. Young) **Certified by:** OS5 (R. McLeod)

Type of Issuance: Routine

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes National Weather Service Instruction (NWSI) 10-1607, dated April 24, 2006.

Changes include the following:

1. Increased time to submit report to Regional Coordinator from 2 to 4 weeks.
2. Allowed Regional senior staff to make more decisions on the evaluation process.
3. In the Sample checklist, Appendix A, added the following statement to the *Purpose* section, "Regional Headquarters Senior Staff should design; review annually and update the checklist as needed."
4. Deleted question on Sample checklist which concerned retaining hard copies of Directives and Instructions for 5 years.
5. Added following words to end of question 4 of section B on the sample checklist, "either via the Internet, local Intranet, or hard copy?"

______signed by__________________________ 6/13/08______
David B. Caldwell Date
Director, Office of Climate,
Water, and Weather Services

Office Evaluation

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1. Objective. The objective of the office evaluation program is to assess the operational effectiveness of National Weather Service (NWS) field offices.

2. Program Requirements. NWS Regional Headquarters (RH) offices are responsible for the oversight of field office operations. As part of this oversight, RH personnel should conduct field office visits or field office program reviews. At a minimum, such visits or reviews should assess the effectiveness of the office's programs and services and the operational integrity, including compliance with policies, internal controls, information technology, facilities, and human and other resource management. RHs may wish to identify a regional coordinator to guide the process.

3. Field Office Checklist. Appendix A, "Field Office Evaluation Checklist," can be used as a checklist or as a guideline in developing an office checklist. It contains questions designed to evaluate the effectiveness of operations at most NWS field offices. RHs are responsible for ensuring the Field Office Evaluation Checklist(s) they use are kept up to date with regard to programmatic and service changes or otherwise address the topics necessary for a thorough operations review.

4. Evaluation Frequency. RHs should conduct formal on-site field office evaluations on a three- to four-year cycle. On-site evaluations provide RH personnel an opportunity to observe

office operations, verify answers to questions on the checklist used in evaluation, and interact with office personnel. Interaction with field personnel helps to ascertain office morale. Field offices will conduct a self-evaluation based on the schedule set by their RH. The "Field Office Evaluation Checklist" was designed to allow for field office self-evaluation.

5. Regional Headquarters On-Site Evaluation Process. An evaluation schedule will be developed at the beginning of every fiscal year and provided to field offices as soon as the schedule is finalized. RHs may develop their own methods of an On-Site Evaluation Process or use the process below.

a. Field office completes the evaluation checklist before the team arrives.

b. Evaluation team delivers on-site agenda.
   (1) Formal office overview from Meteorologist in Charge (MIC) or Hydrologist in Charge (HIC)
   (2) Office-In-Brief presented to the team
   (3) Field Office Evaluation Checklist presented to the team.

c. The evaluation team will evaluate all aspects of office operations.
   (1) Evaluation teams are strongly encouraged to speak one-on-one with as many office personnel as possible.
   (2) The team should make every effort to observe all shifts during their evaluation.

d. Out briefing by the evaluation team.
   (1) Team Leader discusses findings with the MIC/HIC.
   (2) Both agree on action items and due dates.

e. Team Leader submits report to the Regional Coordinator within four weeks of the formal evaluation.

f. Upon completion of the report, Team Leader briefs the RH Staff per the Regional Director's guidance on findings and recommendations.

g. Regional Coordinator tracks findings and recommendations to completion. Findings, recommendations, and best practices are circulated to other offices to aid their evaluation efforts.

6. Field Office Self Evaluation Process. Field offices will receive an on-site evaluation by RH personnel according to the schedule developed by their RH. This should occur every three to four years. Field offices should continuously self evaluate. They may use the "Field Office Evaluation Checklist" or an alternate one developed by their respective RH. RHs may develop their own methods for the Field Office Self Evaluation Process or use the process below.

a. Each field office submits a completed “Field Office Evaluation Checklist” to the Regional Coordinator as directed by the Regional Director.

b. The Regional Coordinator reviews the checklist with RH subject matter experts.

c. Regional Headquarters personnel discuss findings, recommendations, and best practices with the field office manager.

d. Within a time limit set by the Regional Director, RH personnel will present an action plan addressing findings, recommendations, and best practices to the Regional Director and RH senior management.

e. The Regional Coordinator tracks recommendations to completion. Findings, recommendations, and best practices are circulated to other offices to aid their office evaluation efforts.

7. National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) Office Evaluations. NCEP will evaluate its service centers. The “Field Office Evaluation Checklist” can be modified to evaluate the centers. All NCEP service centers should receive an on-site visit every three to four years. Centers not receiving an on-site evaluation will conduct an annual self-evaluation.

APPENDIX A – Sample of a Field Office Evaluation Checklist

Purpose: The "Field Office Evaluation Checklist" is designed to help offices to evaluate the effectiveness of office programs, services, and operational integrity, including compliance with policies, internal controls, information technology, facilities, and human and other resource management. Regional Headquarters Senior Staff should design; review annually and update the checklist as needed.

Instructions: This checklist is intended to cover all aspects of operations. The checklist is in table format, with three columns. Column 1 – Evaluation Criteria/Questions, is composed of questions requiring "Yes/No" answers or an explanation of how the office performs particular tasks. The answer should be entered into column 2. Any "No" response requires an explanation in column 3. If the question does not apply to an office, N/A (not applicable) should be entered in column 2. Please use column 3 for responses to "how" questions or other responses requiring explanation.

This checklist can be used in electronic or hard copy form. After completing the checklist, please send the file to the appropriate RH point of contact by e-mail, postal mail, or fax.

FIELD OFFICE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

OFFICE NAME:		**DATE:**
EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTIONS	**Y/ N/ NA**	**IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/ REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION**
I. OFFICE OVERVIEW		
1. Does the office have an Office In Brief presentation?		
II. FORECAST OPERATIONS		
A. STATION DUTY MANUALS (SDMs)		
1. Do you have a routine operations SDM?		
2. Are SDMs located in the operations area?		
3. Is an electronic copy of the routine SDM available? When was it last updated?		
4. Is there a separate emergency SDM?		
a. Does it have an equipment failure section?		
b. Are maintenance priorities clearly delineated?		
c. Is there a back-up operations section for:		
(1) Power/equipment failures?		
(2) Communications failures?		
(3) Service back-up for other offices?		
(4) Extended back up operations, for more than 24 hours?		
(5) Multiple communication methods with back up offices?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTIONS	**Y/ N/ NA**	**IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/ REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION**
5. Has current reference material for back-up operations been exchanged with surrounding offices?		
6. Is the Regional Network emergency service phone number present in the SDM?		
7. Are appropriate Regional Headquarters emergency/severe weather notification procedures Listed in the SDM?		
8. Do your operational area computers have the National Directives System and Regional Supplement homepage link book marked?		
9. Have all operational staff signed off on the annual SDM review sheet within the past year?		
10. Are SDM pages dated and current?		
11. Are superseded SDM pages retained for five years?		
12. Are there written instructions outlining the local policy regarding routine forecast and severe weather coordination in the SDM.		
13. Is the Regional policy for forecast coordination outlined in the SDM?		
14. Does the office have instructions on initiating Blast-Up conference calls in the SDM along with a listing of their coordination call lists?		
B. Policy Directives		
1. Are Local Instructions up-to-date?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTIONS	***Y/ N/ NA***	***IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/ REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION***
2. Please describe the mechanism used in your office to ensure all staff have reviewed new Policy Directives, Instructions and Supplements.		
3. Are Policy Directives, Instructions and Supplements readily accessible to the staff either via the Internet, local Intranet, or hard copy?		
C. SHIFT LOGS		
1. Are shift logs generated for each operational shift?		
2. Are shift logs archived for 5 years?		
3. Is an equipment Status board maintained in the operational area?		
D. WARNING CHECKLISTS		
1. Does the office maintain and use a short-fused warning checklist? When was it last updated?		
2. Does the office maintain and use a long-fused warning checklist? When was it last updated?		
3. Does the office maintain any other operational checklist? If so, please list.		
4. Are copies of the checklists readily available within the operations area?		
5. Is there a duties checklist, including appropriate contacts, in the event of a tsunami affecting your office or forecast area?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION
E. REAL-TIME PRODUCT QUALITY CONTROL		
1. Are all products routinely spell checked and proofread before transmission?		
2. Are NDFD monthly completeness standards met 90% of the time or more? If not, what is being done to achieve this standard?		
F. ON-STATION DRILLS		
1. List all on-station drills performed during the past year.		
2. When was the last EMRS refresher training conducted?		
G. OFFICE SPOTTER PROGRAM		
1. Is the spotter manual up-to-date?		
2. Are maps included?		
3. Are spotter contact numbers readily accessible to the operations area?		
4. How many spotter training sessions were held in the last 12 months?		
H. NOAA WEATHER RADIO (NWR) OPERATIONS		
1. Is a table of SAME alerted products and instructions plainly visible?		
2. Are NWR tone and SAME features tested weekly?		
3. Are all transmitters within your CWA equipped with ROAMS units to detect NWR outages?		
4. In the event of an NWR failure, what procedures are in place to alert EAS sites?		
5. Is there a listing of LP1 and LP2 EAS entry points and their phone numbers in the operations area?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION
I. AWIPS / IFPS		
1. Is the phone number for NCF easily accessible in the operations area?		
2. Does the office have a resource binder or Intranet page providing reference materials on GFE Smart Tools and SmartInits, and grid-editing best practices?		
3. What safeguards exist to prevent test/practice products from being externally disseminated during training activities or software upgrades?		
4. Does the office routinely use 12Planet for interoffice coordination of short and long fused watches and warnings?		
J. OTHER		
1. Are NAWAS warning (not tests) contacts logged?		
2. Is the NAWAS repair number easily accessible in the operations area?		
3. Does the office have a set of climate records to support all operational programs?		
4. Does the office have an archive of its MOAs/MOUs?		
5. Is the emergency generator tested weekly?		
6. Does the office have up-to-date E-19's for all forecast points in the service area?		
7. **RFCs Only:** Does the office have a policy to extend beyond normal operating hours?		
6. **RFCs Only:** Does the office have established HAS coordination procedures with appropriate WFOs, adjacent RFCs, NCEP, and external users?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION
III. OPERATIONAL PROGRAM & SERVICES EVALUATION PLAN		
1. Does the office have a plan that evaluates products and services? If so, what program areas does it cover?		
2. If not, what method(s) does the office use to:		
a. Ensure product and service quality is maintained/enhanced?		
b. Track corrective actions and the implementation of improvements?		
c. Document significant activities and service trends?		
3. If the office has a Center Weather Service Unit within its area of responsibility, when was the last semi-annual visit conducted?		
5. If the office has a FAA Flight Service Facility within its area of responsibility, when was the last semi-annual visit conducted?		
5. When was the last time forecasters visited the nearest RFC?		
6. Does the office have an in-house verification procedure for specific program areas (e.g., hydrology, public forecasts, aviation, marine, severe weather)?		
7. How are QA/QC results and verification scores used to improve office forecasts and warnings?		
IV. SIGNIFICANT WEATHER EVENTS/FORECASTER PROFICIENCY		
A. REAL-TIME EVENT DOCUMENTATION		
1. Does the office report details of significant storm events promptly and in accordance with Regional policy?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	**Y/ N/ NA**	**IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION**
2. Is there an up to date listing of Public Affairs contacts, Regional and National, in case there is a significant media story related to your office? The listing should include contacts for normal and outside of normal business hours.		
B. POST-EVENT DOCUMENTATION		
1. Are post-storm analyses conducted after significant weather events? If so, is the process formalized?		
C. FORECASTER PROFICIENCY		
1. Does the office have a structured training program? Is the program documented?		
2. Does the office have a record of completed training? What method is used to log/track training activities?		
3. Is there a forecaster reference file where local forecast studies, techniques, or analogues are maintained?		
4. Is forecaster proficiency assessed routinely? Describe the methods used (e.g., drills, seminars, oral evaluations) and how often.		
V. USER/PARTNER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES		
1. How does the office evaluate service on a routine basis? When was the last time this was accomplished?		
2. What actions does the office take to foster good relations with its users and partners?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	**Y/ N/ NA**	**IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION**
VI. WORK FORCE MANAGEMENT		
A. COMMUNICATIONS		
1. How often does the office hold general staff meetings? (Include date of last meeting.)		
2. Does the staff provide agenda items for the meeting?		
3. Is a meeting agenda distributed prior to the meeting?		
4. Are meeting notes/minutes distributed to the staff?		
5. List other methods used to communicate with the staff.		
6. How often does the office management team hold management meetings? (Include date of last management meeting.)		
7. Is a list of focal points and associated duties available to the staff? When was the list last updated?		
8. Is there a list of office teams and team members? When was the list last updated?		
9. Are employees encouraged to do work-related projects? How is this accomplished?		
B. PERSONNEL ISSUES		
1. Are performance and conduct issues reported to the Regional Office if required by directive?		
2. Do you have a formal orientation process for new employees?		
VII. LABOR/MANAGEMENT		
1. Do you meet with your local union steward as directed in latest version of the Collective Bargaining Agreement?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION
VIII. ADMINISTRATION		
1. Do all employees have performance plans and individual developmental plans (IDP)?		
2. Does the supervisor discuss performance with employees at least twice per year?		
3. Does the office have a procedure in place to track property movements, transfers, acquisitions, disposal, or changes? Please describe the procedure?		
4. Are excess property items being identified and disposed of?		
5. Do all office laptop computers have hand receipts (NOAA Form 37-40)?		
6. Are property custodians ensuring sensitive property is secured in a central location?		
7. Are appropriate staff members trained on maintaining accountable property records?		
8. Are requests for leave and approved absences on file (OPM-71)?		
9. Is proper documentation on file for all overtime and compensatory time worked (CD-81)		
10. Are travel orders approved prior to travel?		
11. Are travel vouchers completed within 5 days of returning?		
12. When was the last review conducted on employees having telephone calling cards?		
13. Do all employees who travel five or more times a year have travel cards?		
14. Are the office’s vehicle mileage electronically submitted once per month?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	**Y/ N/ NA**	**IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION**
15. Are accident reporting forms located in the Government vehicle(s) or in the office?		
16. Are vehicle logs kept for all government vehicles?		
17. Does the office periodically analyze vehicle use to ensure:		
a. They are being used in an appropriate manner?		
b. There is a demonstrated need for the current number of official vehicles?		
c. All excess vehicles are returned to the appropriate source (GSA, etc.)?		
18. When was the last time your office conducted an assessment of the need for government vehicles?		
19. Have all purchase card holders:		
a. Read CAMS 1313.301 and signed the acknowledgement in Attachment A?		
b. Completed online training prior to application for the card?		
20. When was the last review of the need for:		
a. Purchase cards?		
b. Convenience checks?		
21. Does the Approving Official review:		
a. Monthly purchase card statements prior to approving to ensure compliance with regulations?		
b. Monthly convenience check account statements prior to approving to ensure compliance with regulations?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	***Y/ N/ NA***	***IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION***
22. Are original monthly statements and receipts maintained by all:		
a. Purchase cardholders?		
b. Convenience check account holders?		
23. Does the Approving Official have access to monthly statement files for:		
a. Purchase cardholders?		
b. Convenience check account holders?		
24. Are all personnel records kept confidential in locked file cabinets?		
IX. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
A. GENERAL		
1. Are passwords on all office computers generated and changed in accordance with DOC policy on password management? List date this was last done.		
2. Are pass worded screen-savers on all office computers activated in accordance with NWS IT security policy?		
3. Have all office personnel completed the on-line NOAA Computer Security Awareness Training Course? http://noaa.learnsecuritywith.us.us/		
4. Does the office have a designated Information Technology Security Officer (ITSO)? Please provide the name of the office ITSO.		
5. Does the ITSO review the office security logs? Please provide the date of the last review.		
6. Is the government warning banner displayed on all office computers (both Windows and Unix machines) in accordance with Public Law 99-474?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION
7. Is the government warning banner displayed on Telnet, FTP, and XDM (GUI) logo screens?		
B. PERSONAL COMPUTERS (PCs)		
1. What version of McAfee Virus Scanner is installed and running on all PCs?		
2. What version on the McAfee Scan Engine is installed and running on all PCs?		
3. What version of the DAT file is installed and running on all PCs?		
4. Has the office implemented a scheduler that will update all PCs with the latest DAT file automatically at least once a week?		
5. Are all anti-virus software settings properly set to allow appropriate PC software functions to work?		
C. BACKUPS		
1. How often is the backup run on your office server?		
2. Where are backup tapes stored?		
3. Are periodic data integrity tests conducted on office server backups?		
D. SECURITY, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTATION, AND MAINTENANCE		
1. Does the office have an IT security plan, risk analysis, contingency plan, and disaster recovery plan in place?		
2. Have the NWS ITSO, NOAA Security Officer, and DOC Security Manager reviewed and approved the office IT security, risk analysis, contingency plan, and disaster recovery plan?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTION	*Y/ N/ NA*	*IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLECTION*
3. Are the backup and contingency procedures tested on regular intervals?		
4. Does the office follow NWS procedures for responding to security incidents?		
5. Does the office ITSO report security incidents to the NWS ITSO, NOAA Computer Incident Response Team (CIRT), DOC CIRT?		
6. Is there an emergency contact list in place for key personnel?		
7. Does the office risk analysis address external risks (i.e., scans, probes, compromises, etc)?		
8. Does the office have an inventory of system hardware and software, including software license information?		
9. Has all automation hardware and software been implemented?		
10. Does the office have a systems maintenance schedule?		
11. Is regular maintenance being performed on office equipment?		
12. Are personnel trained on the use of EMRS?		
13. Is the time spent on repairs recorded in EMRS?		
14. Does the office have spare parts on hand to enable timely repair of equipment?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA / QUESTIONS	Y/ N/ NA	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN/REQUIRED EXPLANATIONS; CORRECTIVE ACTION AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION
X. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH		
Use Checklists from M-50-1115 NWS Safety and Health Manual to evaluate your office's compliance with NWS Occupational Safety and Health policies and procedures (http://www.oso3.nws.noaa.gov/safety/ehb-15.htm). Checklists can be downloaded directly from the Web page.		

APPENDIX B - Glossary of Terms

Service Evaluation - The process of determining how users value NWS products and services. The determination is made by qualitative and quantitative feedback from partners and users.

Qualitative Feedback - The value of products and services to partners and users in the form of subjective data (comments, compliments, complaints, etc.).

Quantitative Feedback - The utility of products and services to partners and users in the form of objective data (timeliness, clarity, ease of use, etc.).

Office Evaluation - Review of field office integrity, including compliance with policies, internal controls, information technology, facilities, and human and fiscal resource management.

Partner - Companies, corporations, vendors, agencies, universities, etc., that associate with the NWS in the distribution of weather information and services.

Public - The people of a parish, county, commonwealth, state, territory, region, or nation.

Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) - A uniform measure of users' experience with NWS products, information, and services. The CSI will track trends in user satisfaction and allow the NWS to continually improve its service programs.