

WSR-88D Tropical Cyclone Operations Plan

05/14/2012 Build 12 Systems *Without* Dual Polarization

NOTE

For assistance with this Operations Plan at any time, call the WSR-88D Field Support Hotline.

- This plan is designed to be used as an *operational reference*. Although the basic plan as presented here has been shown to be effective in many tropical cyclone events, local modifications to the plan can and should be made as required. Be sure to consult with your local Unit Radar Committee (URC) in advance concerning any changes which result in system wide modifications. Pre-hurricane URC agreements will allow changes to be made operationally as needs arise.
- Colors are used for specific purposes in this document. **Blue** is used to indicate a hyperlink or an alphanumeric value entered in an adaptation data menu. The hyperlinks can link to a different location in this document, to an e-mail address, or to an Internet address. **Red** is for a menu or menu selection.

There are two types of NOTES in this document. A **Green** font **NOTE** is an informational note. A box with a **Yellow** background is for a **very** special note, generally for operational guidance.

Purple or **brown** is occasionally used to make individual words stand out.

- New to Build 11 software was the ability to identify ground clutter dynamically (i.e., automatically with each volume scan) rather than relying on Clutter Suppression Regions or a static Bypass Map, which may often result in undersuppression or oversuppression. This is discussed in procedure 3.
- Perhaps the most important part of this plan is to **ensure that the velocity increment** (0.97 kt or 1.94 kt) **is appropriate** for the anticipated maximum velocities.
- Other important parts of this plan for both Class 1 (associated) users and Class 2 (non-associated) users (e.g., the National Hurricane Center, NHC) are the availability of the **256-data level Velocity** products at multiple elevation angles and availability of **Super Resolution (SR)** base products (i.e., ones with 0.5 degree azimuthal resolution). SR reflectivity can be displayed to 460 km (248

nm), while SR velocity and spectrum width are displayed to 300 km (162 nm). There has been no change in the range of derived products. SR only applies to split cuts (i.e., elevation angles at and below 2.5° for VCP 31 and below 1.65 degrees in all other VCPs).

NOTE

While temporary additions of Generation List products and changes to adaptable parameters can be made on-site, each time the RPG is rebooted or the VCP/weather mode is changed, the edited Generation List and adaptable parameters will be replaced with the baseline versions. Therefore, it is suggested that you record these changes manually or backup your local "default" Generation List and adaptable parameters before implementing any changes and document all changes that are made. The “Adaptation Data Backup” procedure is in the Build 12 EHB 6-520 Table 4-34. (The Build 12 version of this document can be accessed through the Radar Operations Center Web site <http://www.roc.noaa.gov/WSR88D/Program/MaintenanceManuals.aspx>.)

- Whenever there are major operational changes (resetting precipitation accumulations, changing algorithm adaptable parameters, such as Z/R relationship, changing the velocity measurement increment, etc.), **issue a Free Text Message (FTM)** to notify neighboring offices, national forecast centers, and River Forecast Centers of your changes.

NOTE

Execute procedures 1, 2, and 3 (below) before doing any other procedures. Nearly every procedure (or section) of this document assumes that the system is already in precipitation mode and will remain that way until the tropical cyclone event ends.

- After the tropical cyclone threat has passed, return all parameters back to their proper or "default" values. The “**Restore Adaptation Data**” procedure is in the Build 12 EHB 6-520 Table 4-35. **Keep this information near the MSCF in case the data need to be restored.** If you are entering the data manually, refer to the Build 12 version of “*WSR-88D Guidance on Adaptable Parameters Handbook, Volume 1, RPG*” for system-wide defaults and your own notes for your site-specific ones. The Guidance on Adaptable Parameters can be accessed at <http://www.roc.noaa.gov/WSR88D/Program/OperationsManuals.aspx> (which requires a security log-in). Select: 1 November 2010 Change 1.

- All recommended adaptable parameter changes in this Plan are performed by the WFO using the URC level of change authority. If the URC-level password is required in any of the procedures, click on the padlock button in the upper right corner of the window; in the password pop-up window, select the **URC** radio button, type in the password, and then press the **<Enter>** key. There are no commands requiring Agency- or ROC-level passwords in this document.
- This Tropical Cyclone Operations Plan has been designed for sites that have Build **12** software *without Dual Polarization enabled*. If there is a question about the RPG software build being used, check with your maintenance technicians or go to <https://www.roc.noaa.gov/ops/build.asp>. (Access to this site may be restricted.)
- For questions or comments that need an immediate response, contact the [WSR-88D Hotline](mailto:nexrad.hotline@noaa.gov) (nexrad.hotline@noaa.gov) at the Radar Operations Center (ROC). Other questions about this document can be addressed to Stacy.R.Stewart@noaa.gov and Wallace.A.Hogsett@noaa.gov (National Hurricane Center) and Daniel.S.Berkowitz@noaa.gov (ROC).

Here is a brief summary of the recommended procedures in this document:

1. [Generator Fuel](#)
2. [Reinitializing Memory and Precipitation Accumulations](#)
 - a. [Restart RPG](#)
 - b. [Reset Accumulations for Legacy PPS & Dual Pol QPE](#)
 - c. [Check Precip. Accumulation Initiation Parameters](#)
3. [Clutter Suppression](#)
4. [Mode and VCP Selection](#)
 - a. [Mode Selection Function Settings](#)
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5. [Manual Mitigation of Range Folding](#)
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7. [Algorithms](#)
 - a. [Mesocyclone Detection Algorithm Optimization](#)
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- c. [Velocity Azimuth Display \(VAD\) Algorithm](#)
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 - i. [Z/R Relationship](#)
 - ii. [MXPRA](#)
 - iii. [Checking Precipitation Processing Adaptable Parameters](#)
8. [Selectable Product Parameters](#)
- a. [Velocity Data Display Levels](#)
 - i. [16-Level Products](#)
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 - c. [Precipitation Product Display Levels](#)
9. [Archive Level II](#)
10. [AWIPS "Health" Check-up](#)
11. [AWIPS Data Archiving](#)
12. [AWIPS Data Requests from Adjacent Radars](#)
13. [Communications Backup](#)
14. [AWIPS Minimum RPS Lists](#)

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A. At the WSR-88D RPG Human Computer Interface (HCI):

NOTE

All procedures for the RPG HCI in sections 1-9 (below) begin from the HCI Main Menu, the RPG Control/Status window, and may require the URC-level password.

1. Generator Fuel

At least two days prior to the onset of tropical cyclone rain bands, ensure that the RDA emergency power generator fuel level is maximized. It may be several days, or even weeks, before commercial power is restored in the aftermath of a significant tropical

cyclone, and fuel delivery will likely be delayed. To check the fuel level:

- On the right side of the HCI, in the Applications column, select **RDA Performance Data**, then select the **Tower/Utilities** tab.

(Check % of **Generator Fuel Level** in the Power group and order fuel as deemed necessary.) If the generator is the current RDA site power source, the icon to the left of the RPG HCI's RDA icon will indicate "**Gen On**" or "**Util Avail**" and will include an illustration of a fuel tank; the fuel level is indicated within this fuel tank illustration.

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2. Reinitializing Memory and Precipitation Accumulations

2a. A restart of the RPG should be done prior to onset of the tropical cyclone.

At the HCI, click on **Control** in the RPG icon and a menu window will appear.

- In the RPG Control window, click **Shutdown**.
- Click **Yes** in the warning popup window to confirm your Shutdown command.
- Wait for the **State** (at the top of the RPG Control window) to show "**SHUTDOWN**."
- Unlock the Initialization Control menu portion of this window using the **URC** password.
- Select **Product Database** in the State Data group under Initialization Control.
- Select **Startup** under Software near the top of the RPG Control window.
- Confirm the Startup command.
- Close the RPG Control window.

Alternatively, you can do a "clean" RPG startup, but read the following NOTE first.

NOTE

If changes are made to adaptation data without doing a Backup Adaptation Data afterwards, performing a Clean Startup will erase the unsaved adaptation data from the system.

- At the HCI, click on **Control** in the RPG icon and a menu window will appear.
- In the RPG Control window, click **Shutdown**.
- Click **Yes** in the warning popup window to confirm your Shutdown command.
- Wait for the **State** (at the top of the RPG Control window) to show "**SHUTDOWN**."
- Unlock the Initialization Control menu portion of this window using the **URC** password.
- Select **Clean Startup** under Software near the top of the RPG Control window.
- Confirm the Startup command.
- Close the RPG Control window.

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2b. Reset the legacy PPS precipitation products to begin accumulating rainfall at the onset of the tropical event, preferably at 1200Z (although 1800Z, 0000Z, and 0600Z would be good alternate times). Coordinate this and any other changes affecting precipitation accumulations with your Service Hydrologist and River Forecast Center. To accomplish this, certain buffers used by precipitation processing need to be reinitialized.

NOTE

You can reinitialize rainfall accumulations without shutting down the RPG.

To reset rainfall accumulations *only*:

- At the HCI, click on **Control** in the RPG icon, and a menu will appear.
- Ensure the RPG **State** is OPERATE, STANDBY, or SHUTDOWN.
- Unlock the Initialization Control menu portion of this window using the **URC** password.
- Select **Legacy PPS (excludes USP Database)**. *(The **Dual-Pol QPE** option will not be activated until Dual Polarization has been installed.)*
- Click on **Activate** and confirm this command in the warning popup window.
- **Close** the RPG Control window.

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2c. Ensure the parameters for starting and ending accumulations have been set to reasonable numbers.

NOTE

The “Reflectivity (dBZ) Representing Significant Rain” (RAINZ) should be left at the default value of 20.0 dBZ, considered to be the lowest dBZ for liquid precipitable reflectivity. “Rain Area Threshold” (RAINA) should be the normal area of non-meteorological residual reflectivity of at least 20 dBZ (i.e., RAINZ) after proper clutter suppression has been done. An appropriate setting for RAINA should be determined locally during fair weather. Use the value for Significant Rain Area Detected in the Precipitation Status window as a guide. (This is the value being used by the Precipitation Processing Subsystem, as reflected in the AWIPS Supplementary Precipitation Data (SPD) alphanumeric product, WSRSPDxxx, where xxx is the three-letter radar identifier.)

- Select the box to the right of **Precip Status:** (below the USERS icon).

- Read and record the value from the Precipitation Status window for **Significant Rain Area Detected**.
- Click on **Modify Parameters**.
- Unlock this screen using the URC password.
- Set **Reflectivity (dBZ) Representing Significant Rain [RAINZ]** to **20.0** dBZ.
- Set **Area with Reflectivity Exceeding Significant Rain Threshold [RAINA]** to a value (probably **greater than 80** km²) that is typical for the non-precipitation residual clutter area for your site (i.e., not eliminated from base reflectivity by clutter suppression in procedure 3 below). The value you recorded for Significant Rain Area Detected can be your guide for RAINA if precipitation has not yet been detected.
- Click on **Save** and then **Yes** to confirm the **Save** command.
- **Close** the Algorithms (Adaptation Item: Hydromet Preprocessing) screen.
- **Close** the Precipitation Status window.

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3. Clutter Suppression

Use “**CMD**” whenever possible. CMD stands for Clutter Mitigation Decision, software that identifies where there is ground clutter. This will improve rainfall estimates and overall algorithm performance. (Note that **Clutter Suppression Regions** affect nearly ***all*** products.)

NOTE

Refrain from using “All Bins” suppression everywhere, because it will often result in excessive suppression along the zero isodop. Never use “All Bins” in the 200-series VCPs, in VCP 121, nor at batch cut elevation angles (i.e., those from 1.65° to 6.45°) in all other (i.e., legacy) VCPs except 31 (which does not use batch processing).

Enabling dynamic clutter identification (i.e., **CMD enabled**) is generally better than using either Clutter Suppression Regions or a static Bypass Map, because ground clutter locations change with beam propagation changes. If CMD is ***not*** enabled and the Bypass Map is selected, a static Bypass map will be used.

At the lower right of the HCI (under the USERS icon) you will find the following:

Precip Status:	NO ACCUM
VAD Update:	ON
Model Update:	ON
Auto PRF:	ON
Super Res:	ENABLED
CMD:	ENABLED
Calib: [-0.41]:	AUTO
Load Shed:	NORMAL
RDA Messages:	ENABLED
Adapt Times:	MATCH

The following steps describe how to enable CMD and to set up a Clutter Suppression Region with the Bypass Map in control:

- Toggle the box to the right of **CMD:** to ensure the status is **ENABLED**.
- On the right side of the HCI (the Applications column), select **Clutter Regions**.
- Select **File**.
- Select **New**.
- Select the **Segment: 1** (Elevation Segment One) button and edit the table to agree with the one shown below.
- Select each of the higher elevation segments as applicable for your site, and do the same editing.
- Select **Save As**, give this file a name (e.g., **“Minimum”**), and click **Accept** button.
- Select **Close** for the Clutter Region Files.
- Select **Download** in the main Clutter Regions window.
- Confirm changes and **Close**.

Example of Clutter Suppression Definition
With Bypass Map in Control

Elevation Segment 1					
Region	Start Azimuth (deg)	Stop Azimuth (deg)	Start Range (nm)	Stop Range (nm)	Select Code
1	0	360	1	275	Bypass Map

NOTE

Some locations may have residual clutter even after dynamic clutter identification has been invoked (“CMD enabled”), particularly in the lowest elevation segment. If so, define clutter suppression regions only for those locations in order to supplement the bypass map created by CMD.

Refer to Section 3.8 in manual EHB 6-521 (Operations Instructions, Radar Product Generator (RPG) Refresh (LINUX)) for Build 12 software for more details on Clutter

Regions and how to invoke or download them. (The Build 12 version of this document can be accessed through the Radar Operations Center Web site <http://www.roc.noaa.gov/WSR88D/Program/OperationsManuals.aspx> .) [{Return to Contents ↑}](#)

4. Mode and Volume Coverage Pattern (VCP) Selection

4a. Mode Selection Function

The Mode Selection Function (MSF) uses computed reflectivity area above a specified threshold to determine when a system can automatically switch to/from Precipitation Mode and to/from Clear Air Mode. In order to ensure that automatic MSF selections don't override the VCP you have selected, put the Precipitation Switching and Clear Air Switching selections in **Manual**.

- Select **Control** in the RDA icon on the HCI.
- Select **VCP and Mode Control** in the RDA Control/Status window.
- Select the **Manual** buttons under both Clear Air Switching and Precipitation Switching.
- Select the **View/Edit** button under Mode Automation Status.
- Select the **Modify Parameters** button.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Select **Yes** in the "Ignore Mode Conflict Duration?" line.
- Select **Save**.
- Confirm this selection and **Close** this window.
- **Close** the Mode Automation Status window.
- **Close** the VCP and Mode Control window.
- **Close** the RDA Control/Status window.

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4b. VCP Selection

The four main considerations in VCP selection are (1.) the **range** from the radar to the center of the tropical cyclone, (2.) the location (with respect to the radar) of **structural regions** of the tropical cyclone, (3.) frequency of volume updates, and (4.) velocity dealiasing errors, either apparent inbound velocities where outbound should be (or vice-versa) or discontinuities that don't make sense meteorologically.

VCPs 121, 211, 212, and 221 are designed to reduce range-folded Doppler data (or "purple haze"), which is often a major problem in tropical cyclones. A reduction in range-folding results in more velocity coverage, which allows better visual pattern

recognition and better performance of algorithms based on velocity (such as mesocyclone detection, tornadic vortex detection, and clutter likelihood, which is used in precipitation processing).

Structural regions include the fair weather **eye** region, the convective **eyewall**, the convective **spiral bands**, the rather stratiform rainfall outside the eyewall and between spiral bands (sometimes called a “**moat**”), pre-hurricane **squall lines**, and the cirrus **outflow**. The spiral rain bands are particularly important, because they may include smaller circulations that could produce tornadoes or other damaging winds. A good vertical resolution is often very useful when examining these regions. Using a VCP with 14 tilts (such as 211 or 212) may be very advantageous.

Frequent updates (i.e., a short time to complete a volume scan) may sacrifice data quality when the antenna rotates very rapidly. Short volume times may be desirable when monitoring severe events (e.g., tornadic circulations) within a tropical cyclone over land. In general, more frequent volumes (shorter times) are desired when the center of the tropical cyclone is close to the radar. VCPs 212 and 12 are good choices to use.

Velocity dealiasing failures can be a serious problem where there are large gaps between rain bands, and the dealiasing failures may obscure detection of maximum winds in or near the eyewall. To mitigate velocity dealiasing failures, try VCPs 121, 211, 212, and 221 in that order. VCP 12 may require an operator to make frequent PRF changes. When both range folding and dealiasing errors are problematical, VCP 121 is the VCP of choice.

The following table summarizes the recommended VCPs with their limitations and optimal usage in tropical cyclone events:

Tilts	VCP	Time*	Usage	Limitations
9	121	6 min.	Compared to other VCPs, this one significantly reduces range-obscured V/SW data within 230 km and is also useful when a tropical cyclone has a distant center or eye with no echoes near the radar. This should be the first choice for mitigating velocity dealiasing problems.	There are gaps in coverage above 5°. All Bins clutter suppression is NOT recommended. PRFs are not editable for any tilt.
9	221	6 min.	This reduces range-obscured V/SW data out to 300 km when compared to other VCPs. It is useful when a tropical cyclone has a distant center or eye. This should be the fourth choice for mitigating velocity dealiasing problems.	There are gaps in coverage above 5°. All Bins clutter suppression is NOT recommended. PRFs are not editable for SZ-2 (Split Cut) tilts, at 0.5° and 1.5°.
14	211	5 min.	This is useful when a tropical cyclone has a center or eye relatively close to the radar. It significantly reduces range-obscured V/SW data when compared to VCP 11. This should be the second choice for mitigating velocity dealiasing problems.	All Bins clutter suppression is NOT recommended. PRFs are not editable for SZ-2 (Split Cut) tilts, at 0.5° and 1.5°.

Tilts	VCP	Time*	Usage	Limitations
14	212	4 ² / ₃ min.	This has increased low-level vertical resolution compared to VCP 211. Significantly reduces range-obscured V/SW data when compared to VCP 12. This should be the third choice for mitigating velocity dealiasing problems.	All Bins clutter suppression is NOT recommended. PRFs are not editable for SZ-2 (Split Cut) tilts, at 0.5°, 0.9°, and 1.3°.
14	12	4 ¹ / ₃ min.	This is good, particularly for tropical cyclones over land, for detecting a severe convective event, such as a TVS. Extra low elevation angles increase low-level vertical resolution when compared to VCP 11. It has the fastest update rate.	Range folding needs to be monitored, ensuring that velocities around the center or eye can be clearly determined. PRFs may need to be manually changed frequently.

* VCP update times are approximate.

For a more comprehensive overview of *all* VCPs, see Figure 3-12, the “Quick Reference VCP Comparison Table for RPG Operators” in EHB 6-521.

- Select **Control** in the RDA icon on the HCI.
- Select **VCP and Mode Control** in the RDA Control/Status window.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Select “Download VCP from RPG”: **221** (or **211** or **212** or **121**) (“remote” VCPs)
- Confirm and **Close** this window.

All VCPs have a default 0.97 kt velocity increment (or velocity resolution), which limits velocity measurements to +/- approximately 122 kt. To change the VELOCITY INCREMENT to display winds in excess of +/-122 kt, refer to procedure [6](#). (Procedure [8a](#) describes how to change the velocity scales.) As a diagnostic (if you are not sure if the velocity increment change has been made), note that the AWIPS D2D cursor readout will indicate speeds in tenths of a knot for the .97 increment and whole knots for the 1.94 increment.

NOTE

If you see “Pedestal Dynamic Fault” messages, contact your electronics maintenance technician.

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5. Manual Mitigation of Range Folding

RPG HCI operators have the ability to move the maximum unambiguous range (R_{max}) out to a maximum distance of **94 nm** or in to a minimum distance of **63 nm** by adjusting the PRF when allowed by the VCPs described in the above table. This *may* become necessary to improve velocity products (particularly near the center of the storm) as the tropical cyclone approaches.

Local VCPs 11 and 21 (i.e., ones stored at the RDA) are defined with $R_{max} = 79$ nm (PRF selection #5). To increase the unambiguous range to 94 nm (or another chosen range) in a VCP other than 121, 221, 211, or 212, refer to the procedure shown below. The "Download" command invokes a "Remote" VCP (i.e., ones stored in the RPG). Remote VCPs (such as VCP 12) are defined with PRF #4 ($R_{max} = 94$ nm) by default. When Auto PRF is Off, the default unambiguous range will remain at 94 nm for remote VCPs. The range/PRF can then be altered in order to see velocities around the center or eye of the storm.

NOTE

The NHC prefers the R_{max} with sufficient range to provide velocity data near the eye or center of a tropical depression, tropical storm, or hurricane. However, local needs may dictate otherwise and will take precedence. Therefore, a VCP with an operator-specified PRF (e.g., VCP 12) may need to be selected to mitigate range folding in a WFO's region of concern. VCP 121 does not use Auto PRF. VCPs 211, 212, and 221 only use Auto PRF in Batch Cut tilts (i.e., above the 1.65° elevation angle).

- Select **Control** in the HCI's RDA icon.
- Select **VCP and Mode Control** in the RDA Control/Status window.
- Toggle Auto PRF **Off** and confirm this action in the popup window.
- Under Download VCP from RPG, select **12** (with the selected PRF(s), which can be specified for up to three different sectors).
- Confirm this selection and **Close** this window.

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6. Velocity Increment for Extreme Wind Speeds

NHC recommends anticipating that velocities *may* exceed **122 kt** (Category 4 and 5 hurricanes) once hurricane-force winds have been observed at the surface. Therefore, increase the velocity increment from 0.97 kt to 1.94 kt **prior** to getting a forecast of a Category 3 major hurricane. Winds aloft are **always** greater than at the surface, and radar detects winds aloft.

The velocity color scale displayed with all 8-bit (256-data level) Velocity products on AWIPS is the same and *may be the same for both velocity increments*, making it hard to tell which velocity increment is being used. AWIPS D2D cursor sampling of velocity products will indicate speeds in tenths of a knot for velocity increments of 0.97 kt and **in**

whole knots for velocity increments of 1.94 kt.

NOTE

Ensure the velocity increment is the last change you make when modifying a VCP (i.e., in “Modify RPG VCP”). Otherwise, changes will be lost when a VCP change is made or the system is rebooted.

- Ensure **Auto PRF** is **Off** (as displayed in the information lines below the Users icon).
- Select **Control** in the HCI's RDA icon.
- Select **VCP and Mode Control** in the RDA Control/Status window.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Select **221 (211, 212, 121, or other desired VCP number)** on the “Precipitation:” line under “Download VCP from RPG.”
- Confirm that you want to download this VCP.
- Click on the **Modify RPG VCP** button.
- Toggle Velocity Increment (top right) to **1.94 kts.**
- **Save** this setting, **Download** it, confirm changes, and **Close** the RDA Control/Status window.

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7. Algorithm Adaptable Parameter Changes

NOTE

Procedures 7a through 7c will independently increase the radar's detection efficiency for small, shallow circulations typically found in tropical cyclones. Precipitation algorithm changes (procedures 7di and 7dii) will result in more realistic rainfall estimates during tropical weather situations.

7a. Mesocyclone Detection Algorithm Optimization

The Mesocyclone Detection Algorithm (MDA) produces a Meso Detection (MD, #141) product and a Meso Detection Data Array (DMD, #149) product. The strength rank of the mesocyclone circulation should be lowered to enable detection of weaker circulations within the tropical cyclone. Be aware that a greater number of false alarms may be generated. Detections must be within 20 km of a SCIT-identified cell, thus reducing some false alarms.

From the RPG Products menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **MDA** from the drop-down menu.

- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Change **Minimum Display Filter Rank** value from 5 to **4** (or, possibly, **3**).
- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close** this menu.

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7b. Tornado Detection Algorithm Optimization

Parameters within the Tornado Detection Algorithm (TDA) should be changed to increase the probability of detecting weak or distant tornadoes; however, a greater number of false alarms will also be generated. For more information see Lee, R.R., E.D. Mitchell, 1999: Performance of the WSR-88D Build 10 Tornado Detection Algorithm - Development of Optimal Adaptable Parameter Sets. *Preprints, 15th International Conference on Interactive Information and Processing Systems (IIPS) for Meteorology, Oceanography, and Hydrology*, AMS (Boston), Dallas, TX, 318-321. Also, see Spratt, S. M., D. W. Sharp, P. Welsh, A. Sandrik, F. Alsheimer, and C. Paxton, 1997: A WSR-88D assessment of tropical cyclone outer rainband tornadoes. *Wea. Forecasting*, **12**, 479-501. Detections must be within 20 km of a SCIT-identified cell, thus reducing some false alarms. These settings are in the Build 12 Adaptable Parameters Handbook section 7.14.2.7 (Squall Line and Other Adaptable Parameter Set):

- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **Tornado Detection** from the drop-down menu.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Change **Min 3D Feature Depth** from 1.5 to **1.6**.
- Change **Min 3D Feat Low-Lvl Delta Vel** from 25 to **27**.
- Change **Min TVS Delta Velocity** from 36 to **27**.
- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close** this menu.

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7c. Velocity Azimuth Display (VAD) Algorithm

If the center of the tropical cyclone is very close to the radar, it is possible that the wind barbs in the VAD Wind Profile (VWP) may become sparsely populated due to the inability of the VAD algorithm to fit the detected winds into a uniform pattern of incoming and outgoing wind. This can be mitigated by reducing the “VAD optimum slant range” (as long as the center is not within a few kilometers of the radar site).

- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **VAD** from the drop-down menu.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Change **VAD Analysis Slant Range** from the default of 30.0 to **15.0 km** or another value closer to the radar than the cyclone center.

- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close** this menu.

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7d. Precipitation Estimate Optimization

i. Z/R Relationship

Change the default (convective) Z/R relationship ($300R^{1.4}$) to the tropical Z/R relationship ($250R^{1.2}$) to provide better precipitation estimates. As potential guidance for when to change to this relationship at CONUS sites, refer to the Vertical Profile of Reflectivity (VPR) as depicted in the National Mosaic & Multi-Sensor QPE (NMQ, <http://nmq.ou.edu/>) to locate radar sites having a tropical identification. A warm rain microphysical process (a persistent green in the Precipitation Flag window of NMQ's Mosaic3D Derived VPR map) is more likely to benefit from the tropical relationship. Such sites are unlikely to be under the high-level outflow regions of a tropical cyclone. (See Xiaoyong Xu, Kenneth Howard, and Jian Zhang, 2008: An Automated Radar Technique for the Identification of Tropical Precipitation. *Journal of Hydrometeorology* 9:5, 885-902.) *Changes in Z/R relationship should be coordinated with the River Forecast Centers (RFCs) that use data from your radar.* Switching to the tropical Z/R will increase the estimated precipitation accumulations, especially for higher reflectivities (i.e., in the 30-45 dBZ range).

NOTE

Closely monitor rainfall accumulations relative to ground truth observations. If the Z/R relationship is changed too far in advance of the tropical cyclone rainbands, the radar will overestimate totals associated with pre-landfall convection. Refer to the AWIPS text product, WSRSPDxxx (where xxx is the radar 3-letter identifier), to examine the bias table; pay particular attention to radar-gauge comparisons for periods up to 168 hours. Contact your River Forecast Center(s) for guidance.

- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **Hydromet Rate** from the drop-down menu.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Set **Z-R Multiplier Coef. [CZM]** from the current setting to **250**.
- Set **Z-R Exponent Coef. [CZP]** from the current setting to **1.2**.
- Continue to the next step.

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ii. MXPRA (Maximum Precipitation Rate Threshold)

MXPRA should be increased to allow for greater rain rates. A MXPRA of **150** mm/hr (**5.9** in/hr) should be sufficient during most tropical cyclone situations. [The ROC recommends that the MXPRA *never* be set higher than 200 mm/hr (7.9 in/hr).] If the MXPRA is not adjusted, the default value will only allow for a maximum rate of **103.8** mm/hr (**4.1** in/hr). See the Build 12 Guidance on Adaptable Parameters (WSR-88D Handbook, Volume 1, RPG), section 7.7.1, for more information.

- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **Hydromet Rate** from the drop-down menu.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- Set **Max Precipitation Rate [MXPRA]** to a value between **150** mm/hr (**5.9** in/hr) and **200** mm/hr (**7.9** in/hr).
- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close** this menu and the RPG Products menu.

iii. Checking Precipitation Processing Adaptable Parameters

In order to confirm which Z/R relationship is being used, read the REFLECT-TO-PRECIP RATE CONVERSION MULTIPLICATIVE COEFFICIENT and REFLECT-TO-PRECIP RATE CONVERSION POWER COEFFICIENT in paired alphanumeric data with the One-Hour Precipitation (WSROHPxxx in an AWIPS text window, where xxx is the three-letter radar identifier). MAX PRECIPITATION RATE can be found near the bottom of the same list of parameters.

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8. Selectable Product Parameters

8a. Velocity Data Display Levels

Display of 16- and 256-data level Velocity products should be optimized for the current event according to URC policies and procedures.

NOTE

If the “Backup Adaptation Data” procedure was not followed, record values currently being used before making changes. These will be needed after the storm passes.

i. 16-Level Products

Velocity data (display) levels for the 16-data level products can be set to display hurricane force winds. Note the default settings for the 16-data level Velocity products

display a maximum of 64 kt, the minimum speed for a Category 1 hurricane. Begin with the suggested values, then adjust accordingly during the event to best display the maximum winds near the eye or center of the tropical cyclone.

Note that the threshold for a Category 2 hurricane is 83 knots, Category 3 is 96 knots, Category 4 is 113 knots, and (only seen with a 1.94 knot velocity increment) Category 5 is 137 knots. The Saffir-Simpson scale (summarized above) refers to winds measured 10 meters above the ground, not at the elevation of radar returns. Nevertheless, these speeds can draw your attention to locations with significant velocities. Alternative 16-level Velocity values could be 35, 65, 85, 100, 115, and 135 knots for Codes 10-15, respectively.

- Select **Products** in the HCI's RPG icon.
- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Selectable Parameters**, then select Category: **Velocity Data Levels**.
- Unlock the Edit Selectable Product Parameters screen using the **URC** password.
- Select Velocity Table **Precip 16 / 0.97** (for the lower velocity increment).
- Change Code 15 to **100** or other desired number and then set the lower Code numbers to the desired speeds.
- Select Velocity Table **Precip 16 / 1.94** (for the higher velocity increment).
- Change Code 15 to **137** or other desired number and then set the lower Code numbers to the desired speeds.
- **Save** the settings and confirm changes.
- **Close** the Velocity Data levels and Selectable Parameters windows.

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ii. 256-Level Products

The velocity color scale displayed with all 8-bit (256-data level) Velocity products on AWIPS is the same and *may be the same for both velocity increments*, making it hard to tell which velocity increment is being used. AWIPS D2D cursor sampling of velocity products will indicate speeds in tenths of a knot for velocity increments of 0.97 kt and ***in whole knots for velocity increments of 1.94 kt***. You can also view the scale on a 4-bit (16-level) Velocity product to confirm which velocity increment is being used. Edit the 256-level Velocity color scale on AWIPS D2D for radial velocities that exceed 100 knots (inbound or outbound) to improve the visibility of selected velocities (such as 113 kt and, at the 1.94 kt increment, 137 kt).

NOTE

The display levels of Storm Relative Mean Radial Velocity products (SRM and SRR) will probably differ from those used for Base Velocity.

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8b. Super Resolution (SR) Products

SR Reflectivity products (with a range resolution of 0.25 km and azimuthal resolution of 0.5 degree) can be displayed out to 460 km (248 nm) in the low elevation split cuts. SR Velocity products with the same resolution as SR Reflectivity can be displayed out to 300 km (162 nm). Both types of products are displayed with 256 data levels. As stated in EHB 6-521, "The finer spatial sampling of this high resolution base data may improve the identification of small or weak mesocyclones and Tornado Vortex Signatures (TVS's)." Only the split cuts are processed for SR, which is defined by azimuthal resolution. VCP 31 (long pulse) data are processed to display as though it has 0.25 km range resolution (although every pair of range bins has the same value), and its split cuts are at and below 2.5°. All other VCPs (short pulse) have the actual 0.25 km range resolution in their split cuts (below 1.65 degrees). The only algorithm currently using SR data is the Mesocyclone Detection Algorithm. Strictly speaking, enabling Super Resolution is not a selectable product parameter but, instead, a change in the data stream from the RDA to the RPG. **SR is enabled by default.** If it is *not* enabled, follow these steps:

- Select the box to the right of **Super Res:** (in the stack below the USERS icon).
- Toggle the setting from DISABLED to **ENABLED**.

NOTE

There are two indicators on the RPG HCI to show if SR is enabled during the low elevation split cuts: in the text string grouping below the USERS icon and in the radome, directly under the elevation readout. In addition, the system status log (opened from Status in the RPG icon) will display "SR" at the far right of the status line for each volume scan.

SR products are available by One-Time Requests (OTRs) or Radar Multiple Requests (RMRs) from a non-associated AWIPS.

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8c. Precipitation Product Display Levels

Adjust precipitation data display levels if the potential for extremely heavy rainfall exists. [Maximum displayable values are 12.7 inches for One Hour Precipitation (OHP) and Three Hour Precipitation (THP), and 25.4 inches for Storm Total Precipitation (STP) and User Selectable Precipitation (USP).]

- Select **Products** in the HCI's RPG icon.
- From the RPG Products menu, choose **Selectable Parameters**, then select Category: **OHP/THP, OHA Data Levels**.

- Unlock the Edit Selectable Product Parameters screen using the **URC** password.
- Change Codes 3 through 16 as desired for the current event.
- **Save** and confirm changes.
- Select Category: **STP, STA Data Levels**.
- Change Codes 3 through 16 as desired for the current event.
- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close**.

NOTE

The data levels for 8-bit (256-data level) storm total precipitation (i.e., DSP) are set based on the maximum accumulation observed: the levels are every 0.01 inches up to 2.55 inches, every 0.02 inches from 2.56 to 5.10 inches, every 0.03 inches for 5.11 to 7.65 inches, every 0.04 inches for 7.66 to 10.20 inches, etc. Unlike the (4-bit) STP, OHP, and THP products, these levels are not user-adaptable.

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9. Archive Level II

Sites sending NWS, DoD, or FAA radar data to the NWS Level II Data Collection and Distribution Network need to ensure that the Local Data Manager (LDM) connection to the RPG is working properly. The status can be checked by going to <http://weather.noaa.gov/monitor/radar2/> to see how current (or latent) the Level II data are. NWS sites are responsible for sending data from DoD or FAA sites they control.

The system status log (opened from **Status** in the RPG icon) will display “L2: 3” in Build 12 (without Dual Polarization) at the far right of the status line for each volume scan when Super Resolution (SR) is being transmitted through Archive Level II. In Build 12 Adaptable Parameters Handbook Chapter 7.2, SR is described as “full resolution” as opposed to “recombined.” If SR data dissemination needs to be enabled (unless communications bandwidth from DoD or FAA radars do not permit it),

- Select **Products** in the HCI’s RPG icon.
- From the RPG Products menu, menu, choose **Algorithms**, then select Adaptation Item: **Archive II** from the drop-down menu.
- Unlock the padlock with the URC radio button and password.
- There is only one parameter that can be changed in this menu. Select **6** (for SR data in Archive II).
- **Save**, confirm changes, and **Close** this menu.

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B. AWIPS Preparation (At an AWIPS D-2D Workstation):

10. AWIPS Severe Weather Checklist

The "health" of AWIPS systems at the WFOs is integral to radar data availability and re-distribution to the rest of the NWS. All offices in the forecast path of an approaching landfalling tropical system are asked to additionally review the AWIPS "OB9 check list for improved system performance during severe weather **4/28/10**" at:

https://www.ops1.nws.noaa.gov/Secure/awips_install.htm.

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11. Data Archiving

Ensure that the Product Archiver is running for the tropical event. Left click on the graphics monitor background, select "Data Archiver," and then select "Data to Archive" or "Data to Store" and ensure appropriate products are listed.

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12. Data Requests from Adjacent Radars

Initiate "radar multiple requests" (RMRs) to adjacent radar sites for products not centrally collected nor available via SBN (procedure 14). (Refer to http://www.nws.noaa.gov/tg/noaaport_radar_products.pdf or the AWIPS OB9 System Managers Manual Tables 7.6.2 and 7.6.3 for these products.) Continuously monitor adjacent sites, since significant tropical cyclone phenomena are based in the lower levels, and the radar closest to the center will sample the environment best.

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13. Communications Backup

In advance of major land-falling tropical systems, the Radar Operations Center, Regional Focal Points, and the Office of Operational Systems will partner to evaluate and initiate preemptive telecommunication (telecom) solutions and backup scenarios as appropriate. At a minimum, our major telecom Providers will be asked to place a heightened watch on the telecoms they provide to the NWS and WSR-88D systems in the forecast path of any major land-falling tropical system.

Ensure you have printed out a copy of your latest AWIPS radar file help sheet and WSR-88D Comms Documentation. The radar file help sheets provide site-specific radar access information that could become critical information in the event default telecommunication systems become inoperative during a tropical event. Your WSR-88D Comms Documentation similarly provides telecoms information relating to your WFO's specific radar connectivity as well as the telecoms information relative to your NEXRAD tri-agency

partners. Both sets of documentation are now maintained on a secure server at the ROC and ESA's at each office have been provided with the necessary information to access those servers. Contact the WSR-88D Hotline for assistance if your ESA or technicians are not available to provide you with these documents or if they have trouble accessing either server.

Step 4 of the AWIPS Severe Weather Checklist, referenced in Step 10 above, includes the recommendation to test and verify "WAN Dedicated" backup capabilities. Your AWIPS radar file help sheet also provides guidance for WAN Dedicated operations in the section devoted to orgpBackups.txt. We cannot recommend strongly enough that this functionality be tested during benign weather and well in advance of any landfalling tropical system, as it requires pre-constructed and saved RPS Lists for each VCP for each WSR-88D to which your WFO may have access.

Along with the NWS transition to NOAAnet, WFOs deemed to be "high impact" or having problematic communications (as determined by NWS Regional HQs) have been provided with a method in the event the terrestrial NOAAnet AWIPS WAN fails. If your site has been so designated, your maintenance personnel should access the **System Modification Note 3, Revision A: NOAAnet VSAT Equipment Installation** under "NOAAnet" on NWS Headquarters' OPS1 home page (i.e., <https://www.ops1.nws.noaa.gov/>).
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14. Minimum RPS Lists

A set of suggested "minimum RPS Lists" was originally developed when RPS Lists were confined to only 20 products. However, the fundamental philosophy remains the same as operators interrogate tropical cyclones based on range from the radar and intensity.

NOTE

Ensure that your current WSR-88D RPS List on AWIPS includes the products on the lists shown below.

Storm Relative Mean Radial Velocity products (SRR, SRM) should be generated often via One-Time Requests (OTRs) or Radar Multiple Requests (RMRs) with individual or field motions **input frequently by the radar operator**. The algorithm that estimates storm motion may not be able to produce a useful motion on its own due to the rotational aspects of tropical cyclones.

If 8-bit (256-data level) velocity is on your RPS List, your AWIPS will generate an 8-bit SRM; change the motion parameters by selecting **Tools** and then **Radar Display Controls**. When that window appears, select **Custom Storm Motion** and use the slider bars to adjust the values as necessary or use **Storm Motion from WarnGen Track**. (The values provided by Storm Track Information (STI) may not be valid for the

part of the storm that is of interest.) If the SRM was being displayed prior to these changes, clear the display and reselect the product; the new motion will now be applied. [\[Return to Contents ↑\]](#)

The following recommendations do not include products already on AWIPS National Datasets (prodList.txt). Recommended elevation angles are approximate, considering the angles available with various VCPs.

Minimum recommended RPS List: **Center more than 124 nmi from radar**

<i>Product</i>	<i>AWIPS Mnem.</i>	<i>RPG Code#</i>	<i>Data Levels</i>	<i>Range Resolution in km (nm)</i>	<i>Elevation Angle (degrees)</i>
Base Reflectivity	Z	20	16	2 (1.1)	1.5
Super-Res. Reflectivity*	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5
Super-Res. Velocity*	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5

- Super Resolution (SR) needs to be activated. (See Section 8b.) High resolution products (codes 94 and 99) can be replaced by SR products (codes 153 and 154).

Minimum recommended RPS List: **Center 62-124 nmi from radar**

<i>Product</i>	<i>AWIPS Mnem.</i>	<i>RPG Code#</i>	<i>Data Levels</i>	<i>Range Resolution in km (nm)</i>	<i>Elevation Angle (degrees)</i>
Base Reflectivity	Z	19	16	1 (0.54)	6.0 @
Super-Res. Reflectivity	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5
Super-Res. Velocity	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5

@ As a storm approaches, higher elevation angles become more important. The 6.0 degree elevation angle can be replaced by an angle between 5.0 and 6.5 degrees, depending upon the angles available in the VCP being used.

Minimum recommended RPS List: **Center 32-62 nmi from radar**

<i>Product</i>	<i>AWIPS Mnem.</i>	<i>RPG Code#</i>	<i>Data Levels</i>	<i>Range Resolution in km (nm)</i>	<i>Elevation Angle (degrees)</i>
Base Reflectivity	Z	19	16	1 (0.54)	5.0 – 6.5
Super-Res. Reflectivity	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5
Base Velocity	V	26	16	0.5 (0.27)	0.5
	V	26	16	0.5 (0.27)	1.5
Super-Res. Velocity	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5

Minimum recommended RPS List: **Center 0-32 nmi from radar**

<i>Product</i>	<i>AWIPS Mnem.</i>	<i>RPG Code#</i>	<i>Data Levels</i>	<i>Range Resolution in km (nm)</i>	<i>Elevation Angle (degrees)</i>
Base Reflectivity	Z	19	16	1 (0.54)	5.0 - 6.5
	Z	19	16	1 (0.54)	9.9 #
Super-Res. Reflectivity	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	Z	153	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5
Base Velocity	V	25	16	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	V	26	16	0.5 (0.27)	0.5

Product	AWIPS Mnem.	RPG Code#	Data Levels	Range Resolution in km (nm)	Elevation Angle (degrees)
	V	26	16	0.5 (0.27)	1.5
Super-Res. Velocity	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	0.5
	V	154	256	0.25 (0.13)	1.5

The 9.9 degree elevation angle can be replaced by an angle between 7.5 and 10.0 degrees, depending upon the angles available in the VCP being used.

NOTE:

This document is a living document and will be updated as necessary (e.g., due to new research or software changes).

For another version of this document, see <http://www.ofcm.noaa.gov/nhop/wsr-88d/> and select the appropriate .pdf file (e.g., http://www.ofcm.noaa.gov/nhop/wsr-88d/nat_trop_cyc_wsr-88d_ops_plan_12B12DP.pdf for the 2012 version for Build 12 sites *with* Dual Polarization). Alternatively, go to the Web site of the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (<http://www.ofcm.noaa.gov>). At the top of the OFCM home page, there is a line ([Click here](#) -- For the 2012 National Hurricane Operations Plan) that links to the NHOP document. A link to this WSR-88D document and to the one for Dual Polarization systems, and to the “**QUICK CHECK**” listings for each Tropical Cyclone Operations Plan, can be found under Appendix H.

You may contact the [WSR-88D Field Support Hotline \(nexrad.hotline@noaa.gov\)](mailto:nexrad.hotline@noaa.gov) for the “**QUICK CHECK**” listing of items covered by the WSR-88D Tropical Cyclone Operations Plan (or for any other questions regarding the operation and performance of a WSR-88D radar system). The Hotline is normally staffed 24 hours a day 7 days per week by a maintenance specialist and from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CDT on regular workdays by a meteorologist. It *may* have a meteorologist on duty at additional times during major weather events, such as hurricanes. Someone from the Hotline may proactively contact field sites to ensure readiness for these events, especially with respect to communications. In addition, if necessary, the Hotline will contact Applications Branch specialists for problems with velocity, VCP selection, and precipitation estimation.

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