

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SOUTHERN REGION SUPPLEMENT 08-2005

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Training and Education

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Participation In Meetings Of Professional Societies

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This Supplement supersedes Southern Region Supplement 09-2005, issued December 27, 2005, applicable with NWSI 20-103. The primary changes from policies contained in the previous Supplement are:

References to Scientific Services Division have been changed to Science and Technology Services Division.

Approval authority (signature) for all travel authorizations associated with attendance at scientific meetings and conferences must be obtained from Southern Region Headquarters (SRH) prior to participation.

Section 3.1 has been updated to clarify the procedure for obtaining support for participation in the meeting of a professional society.

_____/s/_____ February 27, 2008

Bill Proenza
Director, Southern Region

Date

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1. Introduction. Southern Region employees are encouraged to participate in meetings and conferences of the American Meteorological Society, the National Weather Association, and similar organizations as a means for exchanging information, ideas and knowledge. Many employees serve on boards and committees, and many more participate by sharing results of their local studies or applied research through papers and posters at meetings. Such activities have obvious benefits for both individuals and the National Weather Service. Participation furthers an employee’s professional development, and it ensures the National Weather Service remains at the forefront of science and technology applications. Supervisors should adopt a resourceful policy in permitting employees to actively participate.

To the extent possible, Southern Region will provide support for travel and other costs associated with participation in meetings of the professional societies, including publication costs for papers in preprint volumes and more formal (reviewed) journal publications. Expenses incurred as a result of participating in such meetings and conferences are treated as travel expenses and are defined in the NOAA Travel Handbook. The purpose of this supplement is to define related regional policies.

2. Authorization for participation in scientific conferences. Organizers of scientific and technical conferences generally issue “A Call for Papers” months prior to a conference. Employees should deal directly with the conference organizers when submitting abstracts for consideration for inclusion in the conference. ***Copies of abstracts must first be submitted for clearance to the Science and Technology Services Division at SRH.*** (Southern Region Supplement 06-2007 explains the procedure to be followed for payment of any abstract submission fee.) It should be understood that even if an individual is invited by the organizers to participate, submitting an abstract or taking other action to become involved in a conference typically occurs months before the actual date of the meeting. Also, submitted abstracts may or may not be accepted for presentation. This means it is difficult to forecast well in advance (and budget for) the level of participation by employees at conferences. As a result, there can be no guarantee funds will be available to support participation by all who wish to be involved. Nevertheless, every effort will be made to provide the necessary support.

Southern Region employees must obtain authorization from SRH prior to participating in scientific conferences and related meetings. This requirement is necessitated because regional funding may be involved (see Section 3), and special regulations regarding group travel may also be involved. The submission of an abstract to the Science and Technology Services Division at SRH will be considered a

request for authorization. Others requesting authorization should contact the Science and Technology Services Division.

3. Funding for participation. Employees attending scientific conferences for the purpose of presenting papers or posters, serving on committees or panels, or receiving awards will be considered to be *actively* involved in the meeting. Otherwise, for the purposes of the following sections of this supplement, it will be assumed the employee is attending the conference for *training*.

The following policies will generally apply in regard to support for participation in scientific or technical conferences. Section 4 deals specifically with registration fees.

- a) Funds permitting, the Regional Director will provide support for travel, lodging, per diem, and registration costs for individuals who are *actively* participating.
- b) It may be necessary for the Regional Director to restrict support to only one such meeting per individual per fiscal year, and to only one individual per office per meeting, in which case local office funds may be used to support attendance by an individual to more than one meeting per fiscal year, or more than one individual per office per meeting.
- c) If a responsible individual at the Southern Region or NWS Headquarters, or another office/agency, requests or directs an individual (through his or her supervisor) to participate in such a meeting, then it will be assumed the requesting official will be responsible for funding that individual's participation. That understanding should be made clear at the time the direction is given.
- d) If an individual is attending such a meeting in *training* status (that is, not actively participating), then it is assumed his or her supervisor will provide support in the same manner as for other training activities not funded regionally or nationally. (Note that employees may be permitted to attend conferences on official time, but at their own expense, as allowed by applicable federal travel regulations.)

Possible exceptions to the above general policies must be discussed by supervisors with the Regional Director or the Deputy Director well in advance of the conference.

3.1 Charge codes. Assuming funds for participation in a scientific conference are being provided by the Southern Region, the *organization code* used for all costs associated with participation will be that code which designates the traveler's official duty location. Travel authorizations and vouchers should therefore be processed locally. *Task Codes* will be provided each year by the SRH Administrative Management Division for specific conferences.

If funds for participation are to be provided by a NWS Headquarters office or other entity, then follow instructions provided by that organization.

4. Registration fees.

4.1 Registration Fee paid in advance. The registration fee should be paid in advance, using the government purchase card. The accounting codes will be those given above in Section 3.

4.2 Registration Fee paid at time of meeting. The registration fee should be paid in advance, using the government purchase card. In certain cases, this is not possible and the registration fee must be paid at the time of attendance. If, for some unforeseen reason, the registration fee was not paid in advance, the registration fee may be paid with a travel card. If a vendor will not accept a credit card payment, the options are to pay with a personal check or cash. The employee will be reimbursed when the travel voucher is filed, provided the registration fee has been noted on the travel authorization, and the expense claimed on the travel voucher. Participants should ensure that a receipt is obtained to confirm payment of any registration fee.

If personal funds are used, submit form SF1164 in Travel Manager, using Local Voucher. The SF1164 should be submitted in addition to the travel voucher.