

CHAPTER 2

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING FEDERAL AGENCIES

2.1. General. The Department of Commerce (DOC), through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is charged with the overall responsibility to implement a responsive, effective national tropical cyclone warning service. Many local, state, and Federal agencies play a vital role in this system; their cooperative efforts help ensure that necessary preparedness actions are taken to minimize loss of life and destruction of property. The joint participation by the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) with the DOC brings to bear those Federal resources considered essential for storm detection and accurate forecasting. This cooperative effort has proven to be a cost-effective, highly responsive endeavor to meet national requirements for tropical cyclone warning information.

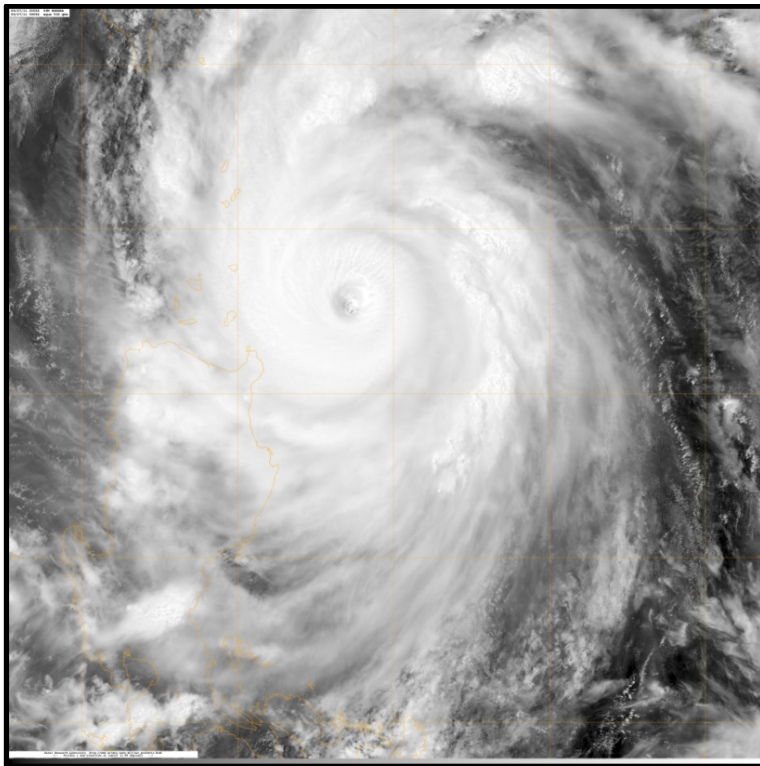


Figure 2-1. Super Typhoon Songda, May 27, 2011.

Credit: DOD/Naval Research Laboratory - Monterey/Marine Meteorology Division

2.2. DOC Responsibilities.

2.2.1. Forecasting and Warning Services. The DOC will provide timely dissemination of forecasts, warnings, and all significant information regarding tropical and subtropical cyclones to the appropriate agencies, marine and aviation interests, and the general public.

2.2.2. Support to DOD. Through NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), the DOC will:

- Consult, as necessary, with the DOD regarding their day-to-day requirements for forecast/advisory services and attempt to meet these requirements within the capabilities of the tropical cyclone warning service.
- Provide, through the National Hurricane Center (NHC), the coordinated DOC requirements for weather reconnaissance and other meteorological data to be acquired by the DOD on tropical or subtropical cyclones and disturbances.
- Provide facilities, administrative support, and the means to disseminate meteorological data for the Chief, Aerial Reconnaissance Coordination, All Hurricanes (CARCAH) as agreed to by the DOC and DOD.
- Provide the DOD with basic meteorological information, warnings, forecasts, and associated prognostic reasoning concerning location, intensity, and forecast movement of tropical and subtropical cyclones in the following maritime areas, including the adjacent states and possessions of the United States:
 - Atlantic Ocean (north of the equator including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico). Advisories are the responsibility of the Director, NHC, Miami, FL. The NHC will consult with the Fleet Weather Center, Norfolk, VA, prior to issuing initial and final advisories and prior to issuing any advisory that indicates a significant change in forecast of intensity or track from the previous advisory. Exchange of information is encouraged on subsequent warnings when significant changes are made or otherwise required.
 - Eastern Pacific Ocean (north of the equator and east of 140°W). Advisories are the responsibility of the Director, NHC, Miami, FL. The NHC will consult with the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC), Pearl Harbor, HI, prior to issuing initial and final advisories and prior to issuing any advisory that indicates a significant change in forecast of intensity or track from the previous advisory. Exchange of information is encouraged on subsequent warnings when significant changes are made or otherwise required.
 - Central Pacific Ocean (north of the equator between 140°W and 180°). Advisories are the responsibility of the Director, Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC), Honolulu, HI. In addition to the main Hawaiian Islands, CPHC also issues watches and warnings for Johnston Atoll, Midway, and the northwest Hawaiian Islands. The CPHC will consult with JTWC prior to issuing initial and final advisories and prior to issuing any advisory that indicates a significant change in forecast of intensity or track from the previous advisory. Exchange of information is encouraged on subsequent warnings when significant changes are made or otherwise required.
 - West Pacific Ocean (Guam and Micronesia). Public advisories are prepared by the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) Guam, using the tropical cyclone forecasts/advisories prepared by JTWC as guidance. WFO Guam issues watches and warnings for all tropical cyclones affecting the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

2.2.3. Post Analysis of Tropical Cyclones. The DOC, through NWS, will conduct an

annual post analysis for all tropical cyclones in the Atlantic and the Pacific regions east of 180° and prepare an annual hurricane report for issue to interested agencies.

2.2.4. Environmental Satellite Systems. The National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS) will:

- Operate DOC environmental satellite systems capable of providing coverage of meteorological conditions in the tropics during the tropical cyclone season, and monitor and interpret DOC satellite imagery.
- Obtain, as necessary, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) research and development satellite data and Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) data for NWS operational use and to comply with NHC and CPHC satellite data requirements.
- Provide surveillance support with fixes and/or intensity estimates to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC), NHC, and CPHC through analysis of all available satellite imagery.

2.2.5. Data Buoy Systems. Through the National Data Buoy Center (NDBC), the DOC will, subject to available funding, develop, deploy, and operate environmental data buoy systems and automated coastal stations to support the data requirements of NHC and CPHC.

2.2.6. Weather Reconnaissance. Through the NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), DOC will provide weather reconnaissance flights, including synoptic surveillance, as specified in Chapter 5, unless relieved of these responsibilities by the Administrator of NOAA.

2.3. DOD Responsibilities. The DOD will:

- Disseminate significant meteorological information on tropical and subtropical cyclones to the NWS in a timely manner.
- Provide NHC and CPHC current DOD requirements for tropical and subtropical cyclone advisories.
- Meet DOC requirements for aircraft reconnaissance and other special observations as agreed to by DOD and DOC (see Appendix F).
- Provide at NHC a 24-hour aircraft operations interface—Chief, Aerial Reconnaissance Coordination, All Hurricanes (CARCAH).
- Designate CARCAH as the liaison to NHC. CARCAH will serve as NHC's point of contact to request special DOD observations in support of this plan (e.g., additional upper-air observations).
- Provide weather reconnaissance data monitor services to evaluate and disseminate reconnaissance reports.
- Provide surveillance support with fixes and/or intensity estimates to the Central Pacific Hurricane Center through analysis of available satellite imagery. The support is provided by the 17th Operational Weather Squadron Meteorological Satellite Operations (SATOPS) Flight (17 OWS/WXJ), Joint Typhoon Warning Center, Pearl Harbor, HI, and is focused on the Indian Ocean and the Central, South, and Northwest Pacific Ocean.
- Western Pacific Ocean (north of the equator): Provide NWS with basic meteorological information, forecasts, and associated prognostic reasoning, concerning location, intensity,

wind distribution, and forecast movement of tropical cyclones for the Northwest Pacific west of 180°. JTWC will consult with WFO Guam regarding all tropical cyclones affecting Micronesia and Guam. Consultation will occur prior to issuing initial and final advisories and prior to issuing any advisory that indicates a significant change in forecast intensity or track from the previous advisory.

- Initiate, monitor, and update satellite invest areas on the tropical cyclone satellite websites provided by the Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center (FNMOC) and the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), Monterey, California. NHC and CPHC will coordinate with JTWC on the initiation of desired invest areas and will provide JTWC numbers for invest areas as required.
- Deploy, through the Naval Oceanographic Office (NAVOCEANO), drifting data buoys in support of the Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMLANTFLT) requirements.
- Consider the Tropical Cyclone Plan of the Day (TCPOD) as a request for assistance (RFA) from NOAA.
- At a minimum, maintain situation awareness of hurricane hunter operational missions conducted in applicable combatant command areas of responsibility.

2.4. DOT and DHS Responsibilities.

2.4.1. Information Dissemination. The DOT will provide NWS with timely dissemination of significant information received regarding tropical and subtropical cyclones.

2.4.2. Flight Assistance. Through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the DOT will provide air traffic control, communications, and flight assistance services.

2.4.3. U. S. Coast Guard. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will provide the following through the U.S. Coast Guard:

- Personnel, vessel, and communications support to the NDBC for development, deployment, and operation of moored environmental data buoy systems.
- Surface observations to NWS from selected coastal facilities and vessels.
- Communications circuits for relay of weather observations to NWS in selected areas.
- Coastal broadcast facilities at selected locations for tropical storm or hurricane forecasts and warnings.

2.5. Annual Liaison with Other Nations.

2.5.1. The DOD, DOC, and DOT will cooperate in arranging an annual trip to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico area to carry out a continuing and effective liaison with the directors of meteorological services, air traffic control agencies, and disaster preparedness agencies of nations in those areas, regarding the provision of tropical cyclone warning services. Due to the international importance of this mission, the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and NHC will jointly plan and execute this mission annually. The NHC will coordinate with the meteorological services in the countries to be visited.

2.5.2. This annual liaison trip is known as the Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour (CHAT). It takes place in the United States Southern and Northern Command's area of

responsibility and supports their mission of promoting stability, collective security, and defending U.S. regional interests. The WC-130 aircraft flown by the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (53rd WRS) “Hurricane Hunters” is the most visible symbol of this awareness program; it serves as an educational platform and as a media focus for both dignitaries and the local populace. Tours of the aircraft demonstrate the critical partnership between DOD and NOAA during the preparation of a tropical cyclone forecast. The CHAT increases public awareness of the hurricane threat and serves to recognize and strengthen national and international teamwork for storm warning and emergency response.

2.5.3. This diplomatic mission is unique in character and purpose. This joint AFRC and NOAA mission demonstrates the concerted U.S. effort to execute its hurricane program and illustrates the importance the U.S. places on hurricane forecasting, tracking, and warning. The CHAT helps communicate the U.S. responsibilities in the region and it highlights the vital roles of NOAA and 53rd WRS. The media’s role is to document the trip and promote the hurricane preparedness message, thus providing visibility to this important outreach activity both nationally and internationally.

2.5.4. The synergy created by all participants traveling together on the 53rd WRS WC-130 aircraft is essential to efficiently accomplishing the overall objectives of the mission while exercising fiscal responsibility. AFRC will fly the mission and issue invitational travel orders (ITO) on a noninterference, non-reimbursable basis for: the Director of the National Hurricane Center (NHC) of the National Weather Service (NWS) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC); the NHC Hurricane Warning Program staff, NWS staff, other U.S. officials, and the media.

2.6. Air Traffic Control/Flight Operations Coordination. The operations officers of the principal flying units, the Manager, Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC), Warrenton, VA, and the assistant managers for traffic management or assistant manager for military operations, as appropriate, at key Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC) will maintain a close working relationship on a continuing basis to ensure mission success under actual tropical storm conditions. This will involve visits to each other's facilities, familiarization flights, and telephone and electronic communications to improve the understanding of each other's requirements and capabilities.

2.6.1. Gulf of Mexico Weather Reconnaissance. The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron and the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center operations officers will maintain a close working relationship with the ATCSCC, the ARTCCs, and the Fleet Aerial Control and Surveillance Facility (FACSFAC) for the coordination of weather reconnaissance flights in the Gulf of Mexico and over the Caribbean Sea in particular, and in the United States in general. The operations officers will:

- Request the assistance of the appropriate ARTCC/FACSFAC in support of the National Hurricane Operations Plan.
- Provide the current operations officer's name and telephone number to the appropriate ARTCC and FACSFAC.
- Publish the unit's telephone numbers [Defense Switched Network (DSN)/Commercial].

2.6.2. Air Traffic Control Assistance. The ATCSCC, appropriate ARTCCs, and FACSFAC will maintain a close working relationship with the weather reconnaissance units and provide airspace and air traffic control assistance to the extent possible. Those organizations will:

- Provide the current names and telephone numbers of points of contact to the flying units.
- Publish telephone numbers (DSN/Commercial).