

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-4

OCTOBER 6, 2011

Operations and Services

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT FIRE AND OTHER INCIDENTS

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSPD 10-4, “Products and Services to Support Fire and Other Incidents,” dated September 8, 2009. Changes are: (1) In Section 5.3.d, added a Regional assistance reference to OCWWS, in cases where Regions are heavily involved in coordinating and dispatching IMETs and (2) added definition of “Incident” in Attachment 1.

1. Fire, in a natural or prescribed form, is important to the maintenance and health of most ecosystems. However, wildfire can also present an urgent threat to life and property, especially in the wildland-urban interface and those fighting fires require expert meteorological support. In addition, non-fire incidents including (but not limited to) hazardous materials spills, search and rescue operations and disaster recovery can also present immediate threats to life and property and require meteorological support. Timely and accurate fire weather forecasts and warnings spanning minutes out to months in the future are used by land and fire management agencies for planning and fire suppression purposes.
2. This directive governs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service’s (NWS) provision of products and services to its users and partners for fire and non-fire events which pose threats to life and/or property.
3. The objective of the NWS Fire Weather Program is to provide fire weather and other products and services to the fire, land management and emergency response community for the protection of life and property, promotion of firefighter and emergency responder safety, and stewardship of America’s public lands.
4. Due to the direct use of NWS Fire Weather Program Incident Meteorologist (IMET) and Spot forecast services by emergency managers using Incident Command System (ICS), the NWS Fire Weather Program is directly involved with issuing products and forecasts for fire and non-fire incidents and special events. As a result, NWS fire weather forecasters will provide products and services that achieve the mission of the NWS, which is to provide weather, water, and climate data, forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property and the enhancement

of the national economy. Guidance on provision of forecasts to special events can be found in NWSI 10-1806, “NWS Support for Special Events”. Also, guidance for appropriate issuance of Spot forecasts is found in NWSI 10-401, “Fire Weather Services Product Specification”.

5. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

5.1 The Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS) will:

- a. Establish national policies and procedures for the provision of consistent forecasts and warnings to support all incidents as described above.
- b. Consolidate, analyze, and oversee national performance and effectiveness indicators of its products and services.
- c. Provide outreach to national users to promote its products and services.
- d. Dispatch and provide operational support to NWS staff who support incidents either on-site, from their home WFO, or at Emergency Operations Centers (EOC).
- e. Configure and manage All-hazard Meteorological Response Systems (AMRS).

5.2 The Office of Science and Technology will:

- a. Plan, develop, demonstrate, and integrate scientific techniques and system capabilities for the Fire Weather Program.
- b. Formulate and maintain a Fire Weather Program research and development plan.

5.3 NWS Regional Headquarters offices will:

- a. Ensure WFOs are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill product and service obligations.
- b. Provide Fire Weather Program requirements to OCWWS.
- c. Develop supplements to procedural directives for the Fire Weather Program.
- d. Provide technical and operational assistance to OCWWS and WFOs.
- e. Provide outreach to regional users to promote products and services.
- f. Evaluate performance and effectiveness of the Fire Weather Program.
- g. Ensure WFOs, Incident Meteorologists (IMETs) and other NWS personnel comply with Fire Weather Program directives and regional supplements.

5.4 WFOs will:

- a. Provide outreach to promote products and services for their local service areas.
- b. Provide incident support forecasts and related products and services to the local service area.
- c. Provide user outreach to promote and assess the success of their Fire Weather Program.
- d. Ensure Fire Weather Program products and services supplied by the WFO are documented in appropriate Fire Weather Annual Operating Plans, and Emergency Response Plans of other jurisdictions in the County Warning Area (CWA).

5.5 The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) produce centralized guidance to support the Fire Weather Program.

5.6 The NCEP Storm Prediction Center issues forecast guidance for Day 1, Day 2 and Day 3-8 critical fire weather patterns and areas over the contiguous United States (CONUS).

6. The NWS measures the effectiveness of the Fire Weather Program using:

- a. Red Flag Warning lead time and probability of detection.
- b. OCWWS centralized National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) verification
- c. User response and feedback

7. This policy directive is supported by the references listed in Attachment 1.

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September 22, 2011

Date

Attachment 1

REFERENCES AND DEFINITIONS

Procedural Directives

Instruction 10-401, *Fire Weather Services Product Specification*

Instruction 10-402, *IMET Services to Support Fire and Other Incidents*

Instruction 10-403, *Fire Weather Services Coordination and Outreach*

Instruction 10-404, *Fire Weather Services Annual Operating Plan and Report*

Instruction 10-405, *Fire Weather Services Training and Professional Development*

Instruction 10-407, *Fire Weather Services Zone Change Process*

Definitions

Incident - An occurrence either human-caused or natural phenomenon, that requires action or support by emergency service personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources.

(Source: National Wildfire Coordinating Group Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology, November 2008)