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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
**NEWS**

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**NEW MARINE NOAA WEATHER RADIO TRANSMITTER  
SERVES TAMPA BAY AND ADJACENT COASTAL WATERS**

Mariners in Tampa Bay and the waters off the west central coast of Florida may now receive NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) transmissions dedicated to marine watches and warnings. Co-sponsored by NOAA National Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), the new transmitter is located in Largo (Pinellas County) and is linked directly to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office in Ruskin. NOAA is an agency of the Department of Commerce.

Operating at a frequency of 162.450 Megahertz (MHz), the transmitter is equipped with a directional antenna to spread the signal over water instead of land. The Weather Forecast Office (WFO) will provide 24-hour forecasts and warnings for the Tampa Bay area and coastal waters out to 60 nautical miles.

“This is great news for the area's commercial fishermen, recreational boaters and people aboard the ships coming in and out of this major port,” said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator. “Since the signal reaches further into the often turbulent Gulf of Mexico, it significantly increases our ability to reach mariners directly with the warnings.”

The Port of Tampa is Florida's largest seaport handling nearly half of all the seaborne cargo that passes through the state. That is more than the combined tonnage for Florida's other 13 deepwater seaports. It is also ranked as the twelfth largest cargo port in the nation and is a major port for the rapidly expanding cruise industry. Nearly 125,000 recreational and commercial fishing boats are registered in the three counties (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee) surrounding Tampa Bay.

“Not only does the new marine-based NOAA Weather Radio have a longer range, but its programming cycle will be shorter allowing us to broadcast forecasts more frequently,” said Ira Brenner, meteorologist-in charge of WFO Ruskin. “Whether they are on the water for commercial or recreational purposes, this vital service will help mariners make safer choices.”

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In addition to the weather forecasts, watches and warnings, the new transmitter will be used by NOAA Fisheries to broadcast fishery closures; marine public service announcements; and, information on fishery management, meetings and regulations.

Roy Crabtree, NOAA administrator of NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region, believes the new station represents a new generation of broadcasting for NOAA Fisheries and the NWS. The broadcast signal from the transmitter is compatible with the NOAA weather radio receivers already in place on most vessels.

“The goal of our broadcasts is to provide timely information on marine weather and fisheries resources so that boaters have a safe and enjoyable experience on the water,” said Crabtree. “We hope our broadcasts will also encourage our listeners to become stewards of the marine environment by protecting and conserving its valuable resources like endangered sea turtles and mammals.”

Broadcasts include information necessary to comply with marine regulations, to report violations of regulations to federal and state enforcement agencies, and to contribute to ongoing management programs by attending public meetings on proposed regulatory changes.

The NOAA Weather Radio network has more than 870 stations, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and U.S. Pacific Territories. Weather radios come in many sizes, with a variety of functions and costs. Some receivers automatically sound an alarm and turn themselves on if a severe weather warning is broadcast and can be programmed to warn for weather and civil emergencies in only your county.

Most NOAA Weather Radio receivers are either battery-operated portables or AC-powered desktop models with battery backup. Some scanners, HAM radios, CB radios, short wave receivers and AM/FM radios also are capable of receiving NOAA Weather Radio transmissions. Weather radios can be purchased at many electronics stores.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. NOAA Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr>