

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-407

MARCH 28, 2014

Operations and Services

Products and Services to Support Fire and Other Incidents, NWSPD 10-4

FIRE WEATHER SERVICES ZONE CHANGE PROCESS

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>

OPR: W/OS22 (H. Hockenberry)

Certified by: W/OS22 (E. Jacks)

Type of Issuance: Routine.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

This directive supersedes NWSI 10-407, “Fire Weather Services Zone Change Process” dated September 29, 2011. The following revisions were made to this instruction: (1) In section 3.1, added a section describing the coordination process between WFOs and servicing Regional Headquarters to assure web services are coordinated ahead of service change effective dates. (2) In section 3.2; inserted language requiring re-numbering of significant zone boundary or name realignment changes. (3) In section 3.2; added examples of Service Change Notices.

-signed-

March 14, 2014

Christopher S. Strager
Acting Director, Office of Climate,
Water, and Weather Services

Date

Fire Weather Services Zone Change Process

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1. Introduction. This procedural instruction describes the process for requesting, coordinating and implementing changes to fire weather zone maps and zone listing files in the National Weather Service (NWS) Directives System (NDS). World Wide Web (WWW) links to fire weather zone maps and listing files are also provided (section 5).

2. Types of Fire Weather Zone Map and Zone Listing Changes. Three different types of fire weather zone map and zone listing changes are described below.

2.1 Corrections for Errors on Fire Weather Zone Maps and in Zone Listings. These changes are necessary to correct errors, or errors of omission, found on fire weather zone maps and in fire weather zone listings.

2.2 Changes to Fire Weather Zone Boundaries. Realignment and reconfiguration changes involve the movement, creation, or deletion of fire weather zone boundaries.

2.3 Changes to Fire Weather Zone Names/Codes/WFO IDs. These changes result from any justifiable need to modify a zone name, zone number, or associated Weather Forecast Office (WFO) ID.

3. Change Request Procedures and Levels of Approval. As specified in NWSI 10-505, Public Zone Change Process, section 3.0, fire zone name, number and boundary changes will be processed for bi-monthly implementation during the first full week of February, April, June, August, October, and December only. Exceptions to the above implementation guidelines may be made based upon operational necessity and the approval of the Chief, Fire and Public Weather Services Branch (W/OS22) in the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS).

3.1 WFO Responsibility. Each WFO is responsible for initiating change requests for fire weather zones in its area of responsibility. Change requests will be submitted to the respective Regional Fire Weather Program Manager after coordinating with users/partners. Fire Weather zone change proposals are considered at the request of users or at the request of the WFO to improve fire weather services. If the request comes from users, the WFO documents how the WFO received the request for change and how the proposed change addresses the user request. If the change request originates at the WFO, the WFO documents that users have agreed to the proposal and how the change will improve fire weather services. In each case, the documentation will be submitted to the OCWWS National Fire Weather Program Managers as part of the change documentation package.

For errors on fire weather zone maps or listings, the change request will include the specific error(s) and proposed correction. For changes to fire weather zone boundaries, zone names, zone numbers, or associated WFO name or ID, the change request will include a written justification for the change. If necessary for clarification, include a map depicting the change.

The WFO making the fire weather zone change(s), along with the Regional Office, ensures both the local and regional webmasters are aware of the effective date that any new fire weather zone shapefiles will go into effect. This should be done at least 30 days in advance and helps ensure that all web-based fire weather applications are transitioned smoothly.

3.2 NWS Regional Headquarters Responsibility. NWS regional headquarters are the points of contact for all change requests from their respective WFOs. The Regional Fire Weather Program Manager and Meteorological Service Division (MSD) Chief (or equivalents) are responsible for reviewing requests and verifying/correcting any errors.

Specifically, the Regional Fire Weather Program Manager and MSD Chief are responsible for the following:

- a. Coordinating the details of all fire weather zone related changes with other affected NWS offices;
- b. Ensuring that a stand-alone and properly formatted Public Information Statement (PNS) Service Change Notice (SCN) (see NWSI 10-1805, *National Service Change and Technical Implementation Notices*) is submitted to the National Fire Weather Program Manager.

A SCN checklist may be found at the following link:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/fire/ZoneSCNChecklist.doc>

In a manner similar to NWSI 10-505, *Public Zone Change Process*, section 3.2, if W/OS22 and the requesting NWS Region/WFO deem the realignment/reconfiguration to be significant, (e.g., a large spatial shift, or a modification affecting the zone climatology, population center, or major geographical feature), they will collaborate with the affected WFO(s) to uniquely rename and or renumber the affected fire weather zone(s).

W/OS22 will work with the affected WFO(s) and the Fire Agency Weather Information Management System (WIMS) help desk, to identify potential impacts to the WIMS database and station numbering scheme. Should the external user impact be significant and without a mitigation remedy (such as a significant impact to the National Fire Danger Rating System outputs), W/OS22 will consider maintaining the pre-existing zone numbers. However, this will be the exceptional event and not the standard operating practice.

Upon his/her approval, the MSD Chief forwards the change request documentation and (if necessary) adjusted shape files to the OCWWS National Fire Weather Program Manager.

If the zone change requires public notification, the regional MSD also submits a draft PNS SCN to the National Fire Weather Program Manager. Refer to NWSI 10-1805, *National Service Change and Technical Implementation Notices*, for change notice requirements.

Examples of Service Changes Notices are online at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/OS/NOTIF.HTM>

4. NWS Headquarters Roles and Responsibilities. The NWS Headquarters offices that are involved with the fire weather zone change process include: OCWWS, the NWS Office of Science and Technology (OST), and the NWS Office of Operational Systems (OOS).

4.1 Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS). OCWWS has the responsibility to ensure fire weather zone maps and listings are updated as necessary, and is the final approving authority for all fire weather zone related changes and subsequent updates. OCWWS generally responds to zone change requests from regional headquarters within two weeks of receipt.

The National Fire Weather Program Manager is the NWS Headquarters focal point for the overall zone change process. The program manager coordinates with several offices within NWS Headquarters, regional headquarters, and depending upon the required changes, may correspond with involved WFOs. Specifically, the program manager is responsible for the following:

- a. Coordinating the details of all fire weather zone related changes with other NWS Headquarters elements;
- b. Ensuring that any changes made by other NWS Headquarters elements are timely, accurate, and correctly formatted;
- c. Maintaining accurate records of all fire weather zone maps and listing changes;
- d. Processing the PNS SCN submitted by the appropriate regional headquarters, and making sure these issuances are distributed to NWS users within the specified time frame; and
- e. Ensuring that all updates to maps and listings are posted, and as up-to-date as feasible.

4.2 Office of Science and Technology (OST). OST has the responsibility to modify the Geographic Information System (GIS) map shapefile. The revised shapefile is posted to the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) Map Database Catalog for public access, placed on the NOAA1 secure server, and converted to a border point file. OST transmits a notice via AWIPSINFO listserver indicating that the revised fire weather zone map has been posted to the AWIPS Map Database Catalog, and transmits a “notification of change” e-mail to OOS and the National Fire Weather Program Manager in OCWWS.

4.3 Office of Operational Systems (OOS). OOS is responsible for tasking individuals with specific assignments to make the required fire weather zone map and/or zone listing changes.

4.3.1 OOS Zone Listing Change Procedure. OOS modifies the zone listing files using standard NWS word processing software. The revised files are attached to an e-mail and sent to the National Fire Weather Program Manager in OCWWS for review. Once approved, OOS posts the modified fire weather zone listing files to the appointed server in (.PDF) format.

4.3.2 OOS Zone Map Change Procedure. OOS uses GIS-compatible software to make the fire weather zone map revisions. Once approved, OOS posts the updated maps to the appointed server in (.JPG) and (.PDF) formats for viewing and printing. All zone maps are clearly labeled with the date of the most recent revision. A “notification of map posting” e-mail is then sent to the National Fire Weather Program Manager in OCWWS, and the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO/CAO) focal point.

5. Links to Fire Weather Zone Maps and Listings. Maps and text listings of fire weather zones are available through the Management Information Retrieval System (MIRS) website.

5.1 Fire Weather Zone Maps. Fire weather zone maps are arranged alphabetically by state. Fire weather zone numbers are displayed and can be cross-referenced by the fire weather zone listings in section 5.2. Access the maps at:

http://weather.gov/mirs/public/prods/maps/firezones_list.htm

5.2 Fire Weather Zone Listings. Fire weather zone listing files are arranged alphabetically by state and provide zone-related information (i.e., associated state, fire weather zone number, fire weather zone name, and WFO name and identification). Access the zone listings at:

<http://www.weather.gov/mirs/public/prods/reports/firezone.htm>