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Operations and Services

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NWS SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 10-1806, *NWS Support for Special Events*, dated July 14, 2009. Changes made to reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015.

Signed 5/25/2017
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NWS Support for Special Events

Table of Contents	Page
1 Introduction.....	3
2 Support to Special Event Organizers.....	3
3 Support to Public Safety Officials.....	4
4 Relationship to America’s Weather and Climate Industry.....	4
5 National Special Security Events.....	5
6 Outreach Activities.....	5
7 Scope.....	5
8 Responsibility.....	5
APPENDIX - References and Definitions.....	A-1
Attachment 1 – Guidance on Provision of “Special Event” Forecast Services.....	A1-1

1 Introduction - Every year, millions of Americans attend hundreds of thousands of events at tens of thousands of venues. These events include professional, amateur, and recreational sporting events of all types, outdoor festivals, and other kinds of gatherings that attract crowds large and small. When severe weather threatens the vicinity of these special events, both participants and spectators are potentially exposed to hazards such as lightning, extreme temperatures, or tornadic activity. These situations pose a special challenge to event coordinators, public safety officials, and weather service providers.

1.1 The National Weather Service (NWS) has an uncompromising commitment to public safety and works closely with public safety officials to ensure they understand the information provided in our products relating to hazardous weather. While NWS can provide support to public safety officials for special events, more specialized services are available from America’s Weather and Climate Industry (private sector providers of weather and climate services—see definition in Appendix), such as customized consulting services organized and packaged to help make decisions about how to plan and run the event.

1.2 As in the past, NWS personnel need to respond judiciously to all requests for forecasting support from organizers of special events. This directive will clarify the NWS role in the support of such special events and provide guidance for responding to requests for such support.

2 Support to Special Event Organizers - NWS personnel will respond according to NWS policy guidelines to requests for forecasting support from Special Event organizers. Attachment 1 provides additional best practices for providing appropriate services for NWS support of Special Events.

2.1 NWS personnel should refer Special Event Organizers to standard NWS dissemination systems (e.g., Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN), NOAA Weather Wire Service, NOAA Weather Radio, and NWS Internet web pages/servers) for NWS watches, advisories, warning, and short-term public forecasts which may satisfy some of their hydrometeorological information needs.

2.2 NWS personnel should inform Special Event Organizers of the various methods and sources, both public and private, where official NWS forecasts and warnings can be accessed for the benefit of the general public, including Special Event Organizers and participants. As needed, NWS personnel should describe the meanings and appropriate uses of NWS forecasts and warnings. In addition, NWS personnel should inform Special Event Organizers that enhanced support, including customized and highly localized forecasts and warnings, may be provided through America's Weather and Climate Industry.

2.3 For the most part, standard NWS products are expected to inform Special Event Organizers when weather conditions may threaten life or property during such Special Events. When urgently required for public safety, NWS personnel may also directly inform Special Event Organizers.

2.4 NWS personnel will *not*¹ provide specialized, site-specific forecasts or direct forecasting support to Special Event Organizers.

2.5 NWS personnel will *not*¹ provide specialized weather support and customized consulting services to Special Event Organizers, organized and packaged to help make decisions about how to plan, run, or manage the event.

3 Support to Public Safety Officials - Attachment 1 provides additional best practices for providing appropriate services for NWS support of Special Events.

3.1 In accordance with NWS Instruction 10-401, NWS personnel may provide a site-specific forecast upon request of any legally constituted public safety official who represents that the forecast is essential to public safety (e.g., due to the proximity of a large concentration of persons). A "public safety official" is an employee or contract agent of a government agency at any level (federal, state, local, tribal, etc.) charged with protecting the public from hazards of whatever origin or hazards influenced by weather conditions such as hazardous material releases.

3.2 NWS personnel will promptly inform emergency managers or other public safety officials when weather conditions may threaten life or property during such Special Events. For the most part, standard NWS products are expected to meet this need.

3.3 Where appropriate, NWS personnel will inform emergency managers or other public safety officials when weather conditions may impact emergency management decisions during such Special Events.

4 Relationship to America's Weather and Climate Industry - Attachment 1 provides additional best practices for providing appropriate services for NWS support of Special Events.

4.1 NWS is committed to its public/private partnership and is working with America's Weather and Climate Industry to provide the Nation with optimum weather services, including services for Special Events.

4.2 NWS partners in America's Weather and Climate Industry may provide specialized weather support to Special Event Organizers. This support may include, but is not limited to, customized weather information, warning, weather, radar and communication devices, and/or consulting services. Support by America's Weather and Climate Industry can be organized, structured, tailored, and packaged to help make decisions about how to plan and run, and manage Special

¹ Unless required to uphold federal laws in supporting "National Special Security Events" and other National Response Framework activities or when urgently required for public safety.

Events and for the management of the event, its participants and spectators. NWS personnel should refer to this statement in explaining to Special Event Organizers and emergency managers what the NWS role is and what America's Weather and Climate Industry can do, and refer to the NWS web site pages (<http://weather.gov/im>) that list these American Weather Industry resources.

4.3 NWS personnel will work with the firms from America's Weather and Climate Industry chosen by Special Event Organizers, as appropriate; to assure access to local NWS weather warnings and forecasts that affect life and property². Interaction with all such firms should be carried out in a uniform and consistent manner for similar events.

5 National Special Security Events - If a special event has been designated a "National Special Security Event" by the Department of Homeland Security (e.g., Inauguration, Democratic/Republican National Conventions, certain international summits), support by NWS is dictated by law [PDD 62; P.L. 106-544]. Likewise, full and prompt cooperation and support for an event may be required under the National Response Framework [HSPD-5, 20]. This does not exclude support from America's Weather and Climate Industry, i.e., NWS can meet its responsibilities through cooperation with America's Weather and Climate Industry — not just by providing the support directly — such as was done for the Salt Lake City Olympic Games.

6 Outreach Activities - Attachment 1 provides additional best practices for providing appropriate services for NWS support of Special Events.

6.1 NWS personnel may use Special Events as an opportunity to provide outreach and educational support highlighting our core mission to save lives and protect property. This support can take the form of staffing booths to distribute hydrometeorological preparedness and safety materials, and display and explain NWS products and services. However, NWS personnel will not provide routine weather briefings supporting the event.

6.2 NWS personnel may work with large event venue management on the implementation of NWS' StormReady® and TsunamiReady® programs.

7 Scope – The policy guidelines contained in this directive refer to support for special events which fall within any NWS service program area, including, but not limited to, public, fire weather, marine, tropical, aviation, climate, hydrology, and space weather.

8 Responsibility - Responsibility for the policy on Special Events rests with NWS management at all levels.

² After confirming the nature of the firm's support with the Special Event Organizer, guidelines in Section 2 should be followed when interacting with these firms which are acting on behalf of the Special Event Organizer.

APPENDIX - References and Definitions

Definitions (as applied in this policy directive)

America's Weather and Climate Industry - All elements of the private sector (including media, consultants, equipment providers, etc.) which provide services to the public in the areas of climate, water, and weather. The term does not exclude foreign-owned companies which provide services to the American public.

National Special Security Event (NSSE) – Major events that are considered to be nationally significant by the President – or his representative, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). NSSE designation factors include:

1. **Anticipated attendance by dignitaries** - Events which are attended by officials of the United States Government and/or foreign dignitaries also may create an independent federal interest in ensuring that the event transpires without incident and that sufficient resources are brought to bear in the event of an incident.
2. **Size of the event** - A large number of attendees and participants generally increases the security requirements. In addition, larger events are more likely to draw the attention of terrorists or other criminals, particularly those interested in employing weapons of mass destruction.
3. **Significance of the event** - Some events have historical, political and/or symbolic significance that may heighten concern about possible terrorist acts or other criminal activity.

Examples of an NSSE are: Inauguration of the President, Republican/Democratic National Convention, Super Bowl, etc.

Public Safety Official - An employee or contract agent of a government agency at any level (federal, state, local, tribal, etc.) charged with protecting the public from hazards of whatever origin or hazards influenced by weather conditions such as hazardous material releases.

Special Events - Any event, one-time or repetitive, that can expose both participants and spectators to potentially hazardous weather events. Examples include, but are not limited to: balloon races, horse races, parades, automobile races, golf tournaments, state fairs, professional/collegiate and similar sporting events, outdoor concerts, etc.

Special Event Organizer - Those who create, organize, and/or operate special events.

Attachment 1 – Guidance on Provision of “Special Event” Forecast Services

Table 1. Best practices for providing appropriate services for NWS support of Special Events

“Appropriate” Services	Services for special events that would be considered “inappropriate”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing special forecasts and direct forecasting services essential to public safety to emergency managers or other public safety officials. (NWSPD 1-10 still applies.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing special forecasts and direct forecasting services not essential to public safety (e.g., track or field conditions, etc.) • Providing special forecasts and direct forecasting services directly to special event organizers and/or participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicizing various access points (both public and private) for official NWS forecasts and warnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new forecasts not directly related to public safety (e.g. anticipated track or field conditions) (NWSPD 1-10 still applies).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing public safety officials and event organizers when weather conditions may threaten life or property during such events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting formal routine weather briefings (e.g. telecoms) to event organizers and/or participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making event organizers aware of enhanced services provided by private sector weather vendors. This includes e-mail and SMS services as noted on https://www.weather.gov/subscribe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling event organizers that they can get everything they need from NWS. • Endorsing in any way a specific private weather vendor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending private event functions (e.g. event planning meetings) to educate event organizers about mitigation of weather-related hazards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending private event functions (e.g. event planning meetings) to support event organizers’ decision making regarding conducting the event in general.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide routine support for NOAA programs (e.g., HAZMAT support, StormReady®, TsunamiReady®) relating to the venue, for example, assisting a venue operator in achieving StormReady® Supporter status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting an inspection and providing consultant information at the request of an event organizer (e.g. to aid a venue operator in facility design).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an on-site forecaster/Incident Meteorologist (IMET) at a government operated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or an Incident Command Post to address public safety issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an on-site forecaster/ Incident Meteorologist (IMET) at a government operated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or an Incident Command Post to provide advice regarding conduct of the event itself.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering general forecast or climatology questions in a media interview for the special event's locale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than in a post disaster situation, conducting a press conference or weather briefing at the event.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the event venue as a georeference in an NWS watch/warning/advisory product that would be issued under standard NWS criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing products for the event venue that would not otherwise be issued under standard NWS criteria.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of a National Special Security Event, provide special support to DHS and other Federal, state, local and tribal departments and agencies, relating to public safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing special forecasts and direct forecasting services not essential to public safety or not in support of <u>official</u> DHS operations