

Experimental Beach Hazards Statement

Part 1 – Mission Connection

a. **Product Description** – The Experimental Beach Hazards Statement (BHS) informs beach goers and local authorities to a multitude of hazards including, but not limited to: rip currents (or other types of dangerous currents in the surf zone), unusually cold water temperatures, potential for lightning along the beach/shoreline, or unusual surf/wave conditions which do not meet advisory criteria. In coordination with other agencies (as needed), the product may also inform users of various types of environmental hazards (e.g. chemical spills, harmful algal blooms, high bacteria levels in the water, or potentially hazardous marine wildlife which may be impacting the area).

The BHS is an Informational Statement which is used to describe hazards that do not meet Advisory, Watch, or Warning criteria, as well as hazards that do not have Advisory, Watch, or Warning criteria (e.g. rip currents, oil spill).

The Experimental BHS provides additional, more targeted information to its customers and partners on hazards along beach/coastal areas and immediate adjacent waters in a single statement. All hazards will not necessarily apply to all NWS coastal offices, as each office has unique criteria for their area of responsibility.

b. **Purpose** – The purpose of the Experimental Beach Hazards Statement is to improve NWS services along beach/coastal areas and their associated surf zones by providing information on unique hazards in a single concise statement.

c. **Audience** – The primary audience is those who are participating in recreational activities in the beach/coastal areas and surf zone and decision makers responsible for the safety of the people in those areas. Tourists and visitors involved in these types of activities will be the ones most likely to be caught off guard by unusual beach/surf zone hazards.

d. **Presentation Format** –

Webpages:

The Experimental Beach Hazards Statement is highlighted in turquoise (same color as rip current statement) on the NWS Watch, Warning Advisory map at:

<http://www.weather.gov>

1. **Feedback Method** – Comments regarding the BHS can be sent to the following survey through December 31, 2014 :

weather.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=CHMBHS

Comments may also be provided to:

Wayne Presnell

1325 East West Hwy

SSMC 2, Room 13143

Silver Spring, MD 20910

(301) 713-1677 x 103

Wayne.Presnell@noaa.gov

Part II – Technical Description

a. **Format and Science Basis** – A Beach Hazards Statement is issued when a WFO expects or is informed of hazardous conditions that are affecting beach/coastal/shoreline areas and adjacent surf zone waters. The BHS is not a routine issuance and the information will be for hazards which are considered unusual and/or a WFO has no other effective way of disseminating information about these hazards. The Beach Hazards Statement is not a warning, watch or advisory. The information in the statement may be for hazards that are weather related (e.g. lightning), wave related, (e.g. rip currents), environment related (e.g. harmful algal blooms), or for unusual events such as marine debris.

VTEC – The event code is BH.S (Beach Hazards Statement) and is used within the Coastal Hazard Message (CFW) product.

Format - Bullet style. Bullets focus on Hazard(s), Timing, Location and Potential Impacts (in that order). Other bullet titles can be added if necessary.

Mass News Disseminator - The MND reads Coastal Hazards Message.

Headline(s) - Beach Hazard Statement in effect for (Hazard) <timeframe>. WFOs will have the option to edit the headline (s). Offices can manually add a headline to clarify the hazard and risk.

Criteria for Issuance - Ideally, the BHS is used for beach/surf zone hazards that are considered unusual, hazards that the NWS has no watch, warnings, advisories for or the local WFO has no effective way of disseminating information on a particular hazard. *Ultimately, it will be the WFO's discretion to determine the type of hazards the BHS should be used for in their area of responsibility.* The vision for the BHS is that it can be used for many types of beach/coastal and surf zone hazards.

Connection to Watches, Warnings, and Advisories – The BHS should not be used to replace any watches, warnings, or advisories or as an update statement to watches, warnings, or advisories.

Use for Events Beyond the NWS Area of Expertise - If the BHS is used for an event beyond the expertise of the NWS, coordination with the appropriate source is necessary and the source must be listed and credited within the statement. If available, contact information of the source should be included in the BHS.

b. Product Availability – As needed. General outlook time period is 12-24 hours however; the BHS may be used as an outlook further out in time if forecaster confidence is high or threat is widespread.

c. Additional Information – None.