

Policy Clarification Regarding Implementation of New, Simplified Winter Weather Warnings and Advisories: Effective Tuesday, September 9, 2008

This clarifies changes in national policy for the issuance of WFO winter weather warnings and advisories effective September 9, 2008. The change is explained in Service Change Notice (SCN) 08-40:

http://www.weather.gov/os/notification/scn08-40winterwx_simplification.txt

This policy change was based on forecaster input, as well as input from the private weather enterprise, emergency managers and weather broadcasters. Also, it was agreed to by your Regional Public Focal Points, and the Fire and Public Weather Services Branch at NWS Headquarters. The benefits of this change will be to streamline forecaster decision making, ease coordination among adjoining CWAs, reduce the need for updates and improve the graphical presentation of hazards during rapidly changing weather events.

Specifically, the changes in products to be issued are clarified by the chart at this link:

http://www.weather.gov/os/winter/resources/wsw_ex.pdf

and are explained in the Winter Weather Advanced Weather Operations Course (AWOC) available via the DoC Learning Management System. NWSI 10-513, WFO Winter Weather Products Specification, is being updated to reflect this new policy. Also, AWIPS Build 8.3.1 will be installed beginning later this month, continuing through November. At the completion of the installation, legacy products will no longer be available in GHG.

Forecasters should take note of the following paragraph from the SCN and refer to the guidance provided below the paragraph with regard to the provision of event-specific information.

"IN ALL CASES THE SPECIFIC HAZARD INFORMATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS WILL BE CLEARLY DEPICTED IN THE FIRST LINE OF THE BODY OF THE ADVISORY OR WARNING PRODUCT IN A STANDARDIZED FORMAT."

Case 1: For *first issuances* of Winter Storm Warnings (WS.W) or Winter Weather Advisories (WW.A).

Case 2: For *follow-up issuances* to WS.W and WW.A *where changes occur in the event-specific phenomena prompting updates* (e.g., for a WS.W, heavy snow changing to heavy snow and sleet):

In both of the above cases, forecasters will specify the expected event-specific phenomena *directly in the attribution line*. This will be done for all segments of the advisory or warning. Specific guidance on the library of acceptable phrases to be used in the attribution line for this first issuance is contained in the attached Adobe "pdf" file. For example, forecasters will edit the attribution line as shown in bold italic text for a WS.W where heavy snow is expected: "THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN (WFO_NAME) HAS ISSUED A WINTER STORM WARNING **FOR HEAVY SNOW**".

Case 3: For *follow up issuances* to WS.W or WW.A *where the event-specific phenomena remains the same* (e.g., heavy snow still the driving factor):

In this case, forecasters will - at their discretion - do one of the following: (a) edit the attribution line as described for Cases 1 and 2 above (the suggested "Best Practice"), or (b) use clear writing techniques to either ensure existing language within the body text still conveys the event-specific reasoning, or to update the text if needed. Your Region may provide further guidance as to their preferred option.