

Proposed Principles for NWS Support of Special Events

General

- A “Special Event” is 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.
- “Organizers” includes those who create, organize, and/or operate such Special Events.
- NWS has an uncompromising commitment to public safety.
- The NWS is committed to its public/private partnership and is working with America’s Weather Industry¹ to provide the Nation with optimum weather services, including services for Special Events.
- NWS personnel will respond according to NWS policy guidelines to requests for forecasting support from Special Event organizers.
- NWS personnel should refer Special Event organizers to standard NWS dissemination systems (e.g., NOAA Family of Services, 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.
- NWS partners in America’s Weather Industry may provide specialized weather support including but not limited to customized weather information, warning, weather, radar and communication devices, and/or consulting services to Special Event Organizers which are organized, structured, tailored, and packaged to help make decisions about how to plan, run, and manage Special Events for the management of the event and 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 Industry can do and refer to the NWS web site pages (<http://weather.gov/im>) that list these American Weather Industry resources.
- If a special event has been designated a “National Special Security Event” by the Department of Homeland Security (e.g., Inauguration, Democratic/Republic 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 Plan or National Response Framework (supersedes National Response Plan as of 3/22/2008) [HSPD-5, 20]. This does not exclude support from America’s Weather Industry, i.e., NWS can meet its responsibilities through cooperation with America’s Weather industry -- not just by providing the support directly -- much as was done for the Salt Lake Olympic Games.
- Responsibility for following policy on Special Events rests with NWS management at all levels.

¹ America’s Weather Industry includes 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.

What NWS Personnel Should Do:

- Publicize to Special Event Organizers 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, and the fact that enhanced support may be provided through America's Weather Industry.
- Work with the firms from America's Weather Industry chosen by Special Event Organizers to assure access to local NWS weather warnings and forecasts that affect life and property. Interaction with all such firms should be carried out in a uniform and consistent manner for similar events.
- Promptly inform emergency managers and, when urgently required for public safety, Special Event Operators, 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.
- Where appropriate, inform emergency managers when weather conditions may impact emergency management decisions during such Special Events.
- 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.
- 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 (see below).

Beyond the Scope of NWS Personnel²

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

Changing Practices

- Old Event Support Paradigm - (1996 Atlanta Olympics): NWS provides sole forecasting support for major venue/event
- Current Event Support Paradigm - (2002 Salt Lake City Olympics): Work hand-in-hand with commercial vendors to provide best mix of support for public safety (NWS) and event operations (America's Weather Industry)

² Unless required to uphold federal laws in supporting "National Special Security Events" and other National Response Plan/Framework activity (see above).