

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE 10-505**

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**Operations and Services**

**Public Weather Services, NWSPD 10-5**

**PUBLIC ZONE CHANGE PROCESS**

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

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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:** This directive supersedes NWSI 10-505, “Public Zone Change Process,” dated October 10, 2017. This directive incorporates the following change:

1. Section 3.0 - Change bimonthly Public (and Fire) zone name, number and boundary changes to quarterly implementation occurring during the first full week of January, April, July and October.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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Director

Analyze, Forecast and Support Office

2/22/2018 \_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Public Zone Change Process**

<b><u>Table of Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
1 Introduction.....	3
2 Types of Zone Map and Zone Listing Changes.....	3
2.1 Corrections for Errors on Zone Maps and/or in Zone Listings.....	3
2.2 Realignment/Reconfiguration.....	3
2.3 Zone/County/WFO Name, Code or ID Alterations.....	3
3 Request Procedures and Levels of Approval.....	3
3.1 Corrections for Errors on Zone Maps and/or in Zone Listings.....	3
3.2 Realignment/Reconfiguration.....	3
3.3 Name, Code, or Identification Changes.....	4
4 Regional Headquarters Responsibility.....	4
5 NWS Headquarters Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
5.1 Analyze, Forecast and Support Office (AFSO).....	4
5.2 Office of Science and Technology Integration (STI).....	5
5.3 Office of Central Processing (CP).....	5
5.3.1 CP Zone Listing Change Procedure.....	5
5.3.2 CP Zone Map Change Procedure.....	5

## **1 Introduction**

This procedural instruction describes the process for requesting, coordinating and implementing changes to public zone maps and zone listing files in the National Weather Service (NWS) Directives System (NDS).

## **2 Types of Zone Map and Zone Listing Changes**

Three different types of zone map and zone listing changes are described below.

### **2.1 Corrections for Errors on Zone Maps and/or in Zone Listings**

These changes are necessary to correct errors in names and area designators, numbers, codes, identifications (ID) and indicators (WFO/county pointers on maps), or any errors of omission.

### **2.2 Realignment/Reconfiguration**

Realignment and reconfiguration changes involve the movement of current zone boundaries, and/or the creation of new zones.

### **2.3 Zone/County/WFO Name, Code or ID Alterations**

These changes result from a justifiable need to modify a Weather Forecast Office (WFO) name or ID; zone or county name; or zone or Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code.

## **3 Request Procedures and Levels of Approval**

Follow the procedures below to submit requests and gain approval for zone map and listing changes. Public (and Fire) zone name, number and boundary changes will be processed for quarterly implementation occurring during the first full week of January, April, July and in October. In addition, Public zone and/or boundary changes for, Eastern Region (ER), Pacific Region (PR), Southern Region (SR) or Western Region (WR) which impact adjacent Marine zones and the National Hurricane Center's Tropical Cyclone Watch/Warning products (TCVs) will not be implemented during tropical storm season (June 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup>). Exceptions to the above implementation guidelines may be made based upon operational necessity and the approval of the Chief of the Severe, Fire, Public, and Winter Weather Services Branch (AFS21) in the Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office (AFSO).

### **3.1 Corrections for Errors on Zone Maps and/or in Zone Listings**

All requests for revisions due to errors found on zone maps and/or in zone listings are submitted to the respective regional Meteorological Services Division (MSD) Chief (or regional equivalent). The MSD Chief (or regional equivalent) verifies the error(s), and forwards the correction request to AFS21. AFS21 coordinates the zone map and/or listing corrections process to ensure timely and proper execution.

### **3.2 Realignment/Reconfiguration**

Requests for realignment/reconfiguration are submitted to the respective regional MSD Chief (or regional equivalent) after preliminary coordination with users. Requests will contain written justification for the change. A clearly labeled map depicting the realignment/reconfiguration

should be included. The MSD Chief (or regional equivalent) evaluates the request. If supported, the entire request package should be forwarded to AFS21. Approval for such requests is granted by the AFS21 Branch Chief upon the recommendation of the designated AFS21 focal point. If AFS21 and the requesting NWS Region/Weather Forecast Office 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 zone(s).

Note: If a zone number is retired, the final Zone Forecast Product issuance should indicate it will be the final forecast issuance for that zone and provide a URL for more information, e.g.:

“THIS ZONE FORECAST HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED. PLEASE SEE <URL to WFO homepage> FOR CURRENT FORECAST, OR <URL TO SCN...>.”

### **3.3 Name, Code, or Identification Changes**

Requests for revisions to zone or WFO name, zone or FIPS code, or WFO ID are submitted to the respective Regional MSD Chief (or regional equivalent). Requests will contain written justification for the change. If necessary for clarification, a clearly labeled map depicting the name, code, or ID change should be included. The MSD Chief (or regional equivalent) evaluates the request. If supported, the requested changes should be forwarded to AFS21. Approval for such requests is granted by the AFS21 Branch Chief upon the recommendation of the designated AFS21 focal point.

## **4 Regional Headquarters Responsibility**

NWS regional headquarters are the points of contact for all change requests received from their respective NWS field offices. The MSD Chief (or regional equivalent) is responsible for reviewing requests (e.g., ensuring sound reasoning and adequate justification) and coordinating their submission to AFS21. If an approved change requires public notification, regional headquarters should either create and submit a draft Service Change Notice (SCN) to AFS21, or coordinate the WFO submission of a draft SCN to AFS21. In addition to AFS21 administrative processing time, advance lead times for user notification is located in [NWSI 10-1805, National Service Change and Technical Implementation Notices](#).

## **5 NWS Headquarters Roles and Responsibilities**

The NWS Headquarters offices involved with the public zone change process are: the AFSO, the Office of Science and Technology Integration (STI), and the Office of Central Processing (CP).

### **5.1 Analyze, Forecast and Support Office (AFSO)**

The Severe, Fire, Public and Winter Services Branch, AFS21, within AFS has the responsibility to ensure zone maps and zone listings are updated as necessary. AFS21 has the final approving authority for all public zone related changes and subsequent updates to [NWSM 10-507, Public Geographic Areas of Responsibility](#). AFS21 will respond to zone change requests from regional headquarters within two weeks of receipt, and has oversight responsibility for the overall zone change process. AFS21 will coordinate with affected offices within NWS Headquarters (e.g., public zone changes affecting adjacent marine coastal waters will be coordinated with the Marine, Tropical, and Tsunami Services Branch, AFS26), regional headquarters, and, depending

upon the required changes, may communicate directly with involved WFOs. Specifically, AFS21, in coordination with the Digital and Graphical Information Support Branch, AFS13, is responsible for the following:

- a. Evaluating and approving public zone change requests.
- b. Coordinating the details of all zone related changes (e.g., zone numbers, maps, impacts) with the NWS Headquarters affected entities.
- c. Coordinate with the requesting WFO to ensure the revised shapefiles are correct before posting to the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) Map Database Catalog.
- d. Processing the public zone change SCN - ensuring technical accuracy, correct syntax, and format; determining appropriate user notification lead time; approving final draft; and submitting to [notify@nws.noaa.gov](mailto:notify@nws.noaa.gov) for dissemination.
- e. Maintaining accurate records of all zone map and listing changes.
- f. Ensuring that [NWSM 10-507, Public Geographic Areas of Responsibility](#) is updated in a timely manner to accurately reflect the latest changes.

## **5.2 Office of Science and Technology Integration (STI)**

STI has the responsibility to modify the Geographic Information System (GIS) map shapefiles. After modification, the shapefiles are posted to the NOAA1 server for testing by the WFO on AWIPS. If no errors are found, the revised shapefiles are posted to the AWIPS Map Database Catalog for public access, and replaced on the NOAA1 secure server if necessary. STI transmits a notice via AWIPSINFO indicating that the revised zone map has been posted to the AWIPS Map Database Catalog, and transmits a “notification of change” e-mail to CP and the designated focal point in AFS13.

## **5.3 Office of Central Processing (CP)**

CP is responsible for assessing web impacts of public zone changes and relaying information on any potential issues to AFS21. In addition, CP is responsible for coordinating any necessary modifications to ensure web interfaces and linkages reflect the most current zone configurations. CP is also responsible for tasking individuals with specific assignments to make the required zone map and/or zone listing changes.

### **5.3.1 CP Zone Listing Change Procedure**

CP modifies the zone listing files using standard NWS word processing software. The revised files are attached to an e-mail and sent to AFS21 for review. Once approved, CP posts the modified zone listing files to the appointed server in (.PDF) format.

### **5.3.2 CP Zone Map Change Procedure**

CP uses GIS compatible software to make the zone map revisions. Once approved, CP posts the updated maps to the appointed server in (.JPG) and (.PDF) formats for viewing and printing. Clearly label all zone maps with the date of the most recent revision. A “notification of map posting” e-mail is then sent to the designated focal point in AFS13, and the Management and Organization Division of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO3).