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Operations and Services

Surface Observing (Land), NWSI 10-1301

REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This supplement supersedes Regional Operations Manual Letter (ROML) P-03-99, dated 5/21/99, filed with B-90 and C-41.

Signed by _____   March 18, 2003
R. J. LaDouce   Date
Director, Pacific Region

Table of Contents: Page

1.   Purpose.   The purpose of this supplement is to summarize instructions for taking special upper-air and synoptic observations in support of severe weather and/or special requests in the Pacific Region.

2.   Authority to take Special Observations.   Special upper-air or synoptic observations from Pacific Region first and second-order stations shall be taken when requested from forecast centers listed in section 3. All stations will make maximum effort to meet such requests, scheduling overtime as needed.

3.   Requests from Forecast Centers.

a. JTWC Pearl Harbor.   Although the Japanese Meteorological Agency (JMA) has tropical cyclone warning responsibility for the northwest North Pacific west of 180th meridian, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC), also issues tropical cyclone forecasts for the same area utilizing one-minute wind speeds for U.S. interests. The JTWC may request thru WFO Guam, special upper-air and synoptic observation support from any Weather Forecast Office (WFO) or Weather Service Office (WSO in that area.

JTWC will telephone requests to WFO Guam. The MIC or Senior Forecaster will place a telephone call and/or prepare a request message to the Micronesian WSOs from which specials are desired. Information copies will be addressed to PRH.

All stations are obligated to take specials and to pass along requests for specials from second-order stations, except in emergency conditions such as an extreme shortage of staff or hazardous weather. Specials will be started when requested by WFO Guam and continued at the intervals specified until word to discontinue is received.

Requested special synoptic and extra upper-air observations at 0600Z and 1800Z will be provided on a non-reimbursable basis in accordance with the following criteria:

(1) The data is required for operational tropical cyclone forecasting/warning purposes.

(2) A tropical cyclone warning has been issued for Micronesia or a formation alert on a tropical disturbance is in effect and data from the selected station will directly enhance forecasting.

(3) The special observations must be requested by station, date, and time, i.e., requesting message may not be on an "until further notice" basis. Additionally, not more than eight consecutive upper-air observations at 6-hour intervals will be made at a station. Therefore, such requests should anticipate the likelihood of a greater need for extra soundings within 72 hours.

(4) All upper-air observations taken at primary synoptic times (0000 and 1200 UTC) will be processed completely. Upper-air observations taken at 0600 and 1800 UTC will be coded only up to and including 100 Millibars (mbs), and use "10159" as the appropriate reason for termination in the upper-air observation message for the 0600 and 1800Z observations.

(5) Transmit the coded upper-air messages as-soon-as possible.

b. CPHC/WFO Honolulu: The Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) may request special upper-air observations from WSO Pago Pago and Data Collection Office's (DCO's) Hilo and Lihue. CPHC/WFO Honolulu will send requests for special observations by message or telephone to the stations concerned with an informational copy to PRH. Stations are expected to respond to such requests under the same conditions as specified in section 3.

c. Regional Specialized Meteorological Center (RSMC) Nadi. The RSMC Nadi, Fiji has tropical cyclone forecast/warning responsibility for a large segment of the South Pacific (120W to 160E) which includes American Samoa. Nadi may request special upper-air observations from WSO Pago Pago. The request from Nadi will be transmitted directly to the WSO. The WSO will notify WFO Honolulu with information copy to PRH of the request. The WSO will respond to the request under the same conditions specified in section 3.

4. Special Requests from other Agencies. Requests received from other agencies will be referred to PRH for approval.

5. <u>Specials Initiated Locally.</u>

     a. <u>Upper-Air Observations.</u> Upper-air stations are authorized to increase their program to six-hourly whenever a tropical cyclone is known to be within <u>300 nautical miles</u> of the station, <u>regardless</u> of whether specials have been requested under the provisions of section 3.

     b. <u>Special Surface Synoptic Observations.</u> MICs/OICs may request additional three and six-hourly synoptic observations from second-order stations under the WSOs supervision whenever there is reason to suspect that a tropical cyclone or other severe weather is developing or moving into the WSO's area of responsibility. Hourly observations are authorized when a tropical cyclone is near an observing station but not at the risk of observer safety.

6. <u>Extending Hours of Operation.</u> WSOs/DCOs operating less than 24-hours daily are authorized to extend station operating hours as necessary to comply with sections 3 or 5.

7. <u>Transmission of Special Observations.</u> Special observations should be transmitted using the standard communication headers/protocol over regularly used communication channels. FAX or long distance telephone calls may be used when normal telecommunication channels are out of order.