

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE EASTERN REGION SUPPLEMENT 09-2004
APPLICABLE TO NWSI 10-911
September 2, 2014

Operations and Services
Hydrologic Services Program, NWSPD 10-9
River Forecast Center Operations, NWSI 10-911

EASTERN REGION RIVER FORECAST CENTER (RFC) 24 HOUR OPERATIONS

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OPR: W/ER2x2 (A. Matte)
Type of Issuance: Routine

Certified by: W/ER2 (G. McKillop)

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This supplement supersedes Eastern Region Supplement ERS 09-2004, "Eastern Region River Forecast Center (RFC) 24 Hour Operations", dated April 7, 2004. The following revisions were made to this supplement:

1. Section 1 – Simplified purpose by eliminating reference to defining additional operational requirements during 24 hour operation.
2. Section 2 – Added reference to snowmelt.
3. Section 3 – Summarized criteria for beginning, continuing, or ending RFC 24 operations and eliminated tabular format (Table A).
4. Section 4 – Removed table (Table B) of RFC and WFO activities required during 24 hour operations.
5. Added new Section 4 on notification requirements for 24 hour operations.

<signed>
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August 19, 2014
Date

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1. Purpose. The purpose of this Supplement is to define the criteria under which River Forecast Centers (RFCs) shall extend their operations to 24 hours per day.

2. Background. NWS Instruction 10-911 *River Forecast Center Operations* states that RFC Forecast Services will be provided nominally 16 hours per day and 7 days a week. RFCs will extend to 24-hour operations during widespread precipitation, snowmelt, and flood situations.

3. Criteria for Beginning, Continuing, or Ending RFC 24 Hour Operations. Good judgment should also allow for exceptions to these general rules.

a. Criteria for RFCs to begin 24 hour operation are:

RFC forecast points are expected to go above flood stage or are already above flood stage and are expected to rise. (#1)

Wide spread convective rainfall events when areal precipitation and/or snowmelt will be sufficient to produce more than localized effects.

Weather Forecast Office (WFO) requests support during significant flood forecast and warning operations.

b. Criteria for RFCs to continue 24 hour coverage are:

RFC forecast points are above flood stage and are expected to rise.

Major flooding is occurring at any RFC forecast point. (#2)

c. Criteria for RFCs to end 24 hour coverage are:

RFC forecast points have crested or are at steady minor flooding levels and precipitation or snow melt forecasts are insufficient to return the river to a rising state. (#3)

Major flooding should not be occurring at any RFC forecast point. (#2)

The decision to begin, continue or end 24 hour RFC support should be reached through coordination between the RFC and WFO. The final decision of 24 hour RFC operations rests with the HIC, HIC designee, or senior hydrologist in consultation with the MIC or lead forecaster at the WFO whose hydrologic service area is impacted.

If WFOs have a concern that they will need assistance from the RFCs outside of normal RFC hours, they should contact the RFC to discuss the situation with them *prior* to RFC closing time, whenever possible. RFCs will establish and maintain after hours contact procedures to ensure that after hour requests for support reach designated RFC management staff in a timely manner.

4. Notification of 24 Hour Operations. Upon 1) initiation of 24 hour coverage and 2) upon returning to normal operations, RFCs will notify Eastern Region Headquarters (ERH), associated WFOs, and adjacent RFCs.

Notification to ERH will be made via e-mail to the Regional Operations Center's email address which can be found in ERS 04-2004 *Eastern Region Headquarters Significant Event/Emergency Notification Requirements and Procedures*.

Notification to WFOs and adjacent RFCs will be made via Hydrometeorological Coordination Message (HCM). Additional notification through other available means (12Planet, phone, email, etc.) is optional.

NOTES:

(#1) This criteria should not apply to slower rising rivers that would take several days to crest, but is intended to cover the overnight period when the RFC is normally closed.

(#2) Major flooding includes: "Extensive inundation and damage - many primary roads and bridges closed - many people may be evacuated." (See NWS Manual 10-950, "Definitions and General Terminology")

(#3) For example, during spring snow melt flooding conditions, some rivers may rise to minor flooding levels and stay there for 5-6 weeks. In this situation, close monitoring is required since small amounts of rain may be sufficient to turn the situation around, but not necessarily on a 24 hour basis.