

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE 10-1603  
JUNE 19, 2018**

**Operations & Services  
Performance NWSPD 10-16**

**OPERATIONAL READINESS AND SIGNIFICANT EVENT REPORTING**

---

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

---

**OPR:** W/COO12 (M. Sowko)

**Certified by:** W/COO1 (C. Woods)

**Type of Issuance:** Routine

---

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:** This directive supersedes NWSI 10-1603, “Significant Event Reporting” dated January 6, 2003. Changes made reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015.

Additional changes include:

1. This directive combines the material found in the current versions of NWSI 10-2204, NWSI 10-1603, and NWSI 10-2004. The title of the directive is expanded to reflect the consolidation of these three directives.
2. The establishment of significant event reporting definitions.
3. Development of significant event reporting content and criteria.
4. Simplification and streamlining of the reporting process.

Signed

June 5, 2018

---

John D. Murphy  
Chief Operating Officer

Date

## Operational and Significant Event Reporting

### Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Significant Event Definitions.....	1
2.1 Significant Damage:.....	1
2.2 Major Impacts To Public Infrastructure:.....	2
3. Reportable Events .....	2
4. Outlooks for Significant Events.....	2
5. Additional NWSOC Reportable Events.....	2
6. Reporting Process .....	3
7. Report Content .....	3
8. Protection of Records.....	4

### 1. Introduction

The NWS Operations Center (NWSOC), NWS Regional Offices and/or formalized Regional Operations Centers (ROCs), National Centers and other operational units throughout the agency meet the evolving needs of NWS partners and stakeholders and support agency readiness by proactively collaborating and facilitating the exchange of critical information. Effective messaging begins with the establishment of consistent reporting criteria and messaging processes, particularly between the regional offices and the NWSOC.

### 2. Significant Event Definitions

#### 2.1 Significant Damage:

At least one of the following due to a hydro-meteorological event:

- Significant damage to a well-known structure
- Significant damage to numerous homes or other substantial buildings
- Natural damage on a large scale (e.g., several square miles of a forest flattened, or thousands of acres of crops destroyed)

## **2.2 Major Impacts to Public Infrastructure:**

At least one of the following due to a hydro-meteorological event:

- Telecommunications or power outages affecting a significant portion of a population
- Closure of a major highway or a vital thoroughfare
- Major airport closure
- Evacuation or closure of numerous offices, stores, and/or government facilities
- Community evacuated

## **3. Reportable Events**

Field offices will notify their ROC using any process acceptable to the ROC. The ROC will provide a report of that information to the NWSOC. Reports are required when any one (or more) of the following occurs as a result of a hydro-meteorological event:

- One or more deaths that are directly related to the event
- Five or more injuries that are directly related to the event
- Significant damage or major impacts to public infrastructure (definition above)

Additionally, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) centers should send a report to the NWSOC as early as possible following a high impact event that is related to the center's area of forecast expertise. The report will summarize the event, its impacts, and the forecast services and/or Impact-based Decision Support Services (IDSS) provided by the center.

\*See table "Reporting Criteria" for specific, reportable hazards and events.

## **4. Outlooks for Significant Events**

ROCs will send a report to the NWSOC when a hydro-meteorological event is forecast that could result in significant damage or major impacts to public infrastructure as previously defined. Similarly, an NCEP center, corresponding to its area of expertise, should send a report to the NWSOC and to the affected ROC when the center determines with reasonable certainty that a significant event (as defined above) will occur.

## **5. Additional NWSOC Reportable Events**

Other events NWSOC will report to NOAA and NWS Senior Leadership include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Predicted or observed solar events S3/G3 or above
- Any measurable tsunami

- Tropical cyclone formation/upgrade
- Damage to NWS facilities
  - NWSOC will obtain through the appropriate ROC to report the following:
    - Impacts to NWS staff
    - Cause and extent of damage; percent of building remaining habitable
    - Estimated date and time when facility will be available for occupancy
    - Amount and type of equipment damaged and repairable, damaged beyond economical repair, or lost/destroyed.

## 6. Reporting Process

When conditions as defined previously are met, a ROC and/or National Center will prepare a Regional Significant Event Report or Significant Event Outlook, or its equivalent, for submission to the NWSOC.

Reports will be sent via email to: [nws.opscenter@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.opscenter@noaa.gov) with a cc: to any appropriate party at the local or regional level as determined by the sender. NWSOC will either forward the report or will use the input as source material to produce deliverables used to inform numerous internal and external stakeholders. NWSOC stakeholders include, but are not limited to, NOAA/NWS executives, NWS portfolio directors, and other recipients appropriate to the incident type. These recipients can include:

- NOAA FEMA liaison
- NWS FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) meteorologists
- Fire weather program leads and managers (for wildfire related incidents)
- SPC management (for severe and fire weather incidents)
- NWS Forensics Services Program Lead (for all accident-related incidents)
- WPC management for hydrologic related incidents
- National Water Center for riverine flooding
- AWC and NAMs for aviation-related incidents or for forecast events that could impact domestic airspace
- Other offices and entities deemed appropriate for an event by NWSOC

## 7. Report Content

The following will be included in a Significant Event Report/Outlook:

- Event name and location(s) affected
- Reporting office's contact information

- Date and time of the report (local time)
- Date and time of the incident (local time)
- Event description, including applicable items listed in “Reportable Events”
- IDSS provision to core and deep relationship core partners:
  - Support to member of the emergency management community, government partners who require close coordination with NWS, or members of the electronic media
- Key activities undertaken or known decisions by core and deep relationship core partners in response to NWS IDSS
- Performance metrics
- NWS systems preparedness activities and/or known issues with NWS systems that may affect NWS performance of mission related to the event

## **8. Protection of Records**

For reporting of incidents that involve aircraft accidents, major marine incidents, or a surface-based transportation incident, a NWS office will follow the guidance in NWSI 10-2003 (Records Retention) to determine what records need to be secured for potential investigation or litigation purposes.

**Reporting Criteria**

Incident	Reporting Criteria (if <i>any</i> )
<p>Tornado / Severe Weather</p> <p>Hydrologic Events: Flooding / Flash Flooding Dam/Levee Failure / Ice Jams</p> <p>Strong Winds (non- thunderstorm) Tropical Events</p> <p>Winter Weather</p> <p>Rip Currents, High Surf, Coastal Flooding</p> <p>Extreme Heat, Extreme Cold, Wind Chill</p> <p>Lightning</p> <p>Wildfire</p> <p>Tsunami</p> <p><i>Weather-related</i> surface-based transportation incident (rail, subway, highway, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 or more fatalities</li> <li>● 5 or more serious injuries</li> <li>● Significant damage, or major impacts to public infrastructure as defined by 10-1603</li> </ul>
<p>Aircraft Accident <i>(involving airline/air taxi/air charter)</i></p> <p>Major Marine Incident</p>	<p>Report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weather-related, <i>and any</i> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 or more fatalities</li> <li>○ 5 or more serious injuries</li> <li>○ Involve notable public figure(s)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>NWS Forensics Program requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For aircraft accidents: The local WFO will contact AOMC and request ASOS archive (regardless if weather is suspected to be the cause) if the ASOS</li> </ul>

	<p>is within 25NM of the incident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For marine accidents: The local WFO will download the data for the last 12 hours from the closest marine observation to the accident. The wind and wave data may be obtained from buoys, C-Mans, and/or any platform available at the time of the accident.</li> </ul> <p>These data should be retained at the issuing office for at least 30 days, except when instructed otherwise by the Forensic Services Program Lead.</p>
<p>Airport Closure (weather-related)</p>	<p>Report airport closures that meet the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weather-related</li> <li>● Closed via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)</li> <li>● Reported to the FAA ATCSCC</li> <li>● Have impact on the National Airspace</li> </ul> <p>Aviation Weather Center NAMs will monitor and report these closures IAW Para. 5. During NAM non-working hours, the AWC Lead will report airport closures as their shift duties allow.</p>
<p>Volcanic Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any volcanic eruption</li> <li>● Impactful volcanic ashfall as determined by the reporting ROC</li> <li>● Lahars (volcanic induced debris flows)</li> </ul>
<p>Hazardous Materials Incident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Issuance of a Civil Emergency Message</li> <li>● Support to Interagency Modeling and Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC)</li> <li>● Any request for HYSPLIT support</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant engagement with, or services provided to, core partners or stakeholders e.g. OR&amp;R, EPA, USCG, etc.</li> </ul>
Direct Request for Onsite Decision Support Services to government officials	<p>Use NWSOC Deployment tracking mechanism</p> <p>(Any onsite IDSS provided (whether scheduled or event-driven) consisting of a full shift OR to a particularly noteworthy partner and/or all SEAR 1 events)</p>
Direct Request for NWS participation in incident investigation (NTSB, US Coast Guard)	Forensics Service Manager will report any request for NWS staff involvement or interviews
NWS Personnel Incident, Injury, Work Related Illness (See NOAA Handbook 209-40)	<a href="#">Hyperlink to NOAA Handbook reporting</a>
<p>Extended Equipment or Systems Degradation/Outage at an NWS facility OR Mission-related interruption/incident</p> <p><i>Note: Information flow (NWSOC ⇔ ROCs)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any damage or outage that degrades a NWS facility’s ability to provide mission essential functions lasting at least 6 hours, or shorter if the incident will degrade WWAs or receive negative feedback from core partners or the public.</li> <li>• Any Continuity of Operations Plan activation</li> <li>• Inadvertent Product Release resulting in EAS activation <i>or</i> that results in negative media.</li> </ul>
Storm Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activation of a Quick Response Team</li> </ul>
NWS Facility Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major damage to an NWS facility.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any civil disturbance impacting NWS employees or facilities</li> </ul>