

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-17
MARCH 25, 2022

Operations and Services
DISSEMINATION

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSPD10-17, "Dissemination," dated September 19, 2017. Changes were made to the date, OPR, and inclusion of NWSI 10-1723, "NWS/NCEP NCO-Managed System Change Process for IDP" to the Glossary of Terms.

1. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Weather Service (NWS) produces weather, water, and climate forecasts, warnings, and supporting data. This suite of information forms a national database and infrastructure that can be used by any entity in the United States and throughout the global community. This policy directive governs the dissemination of the NWS information suite and the relay of emergency information.

2. NWS delivers critical life and property saving products and data directly to users and makes available information through various government-operated systems, its partners in the media and private sector, and types of mobile and social media.

2.1 NWS also relays non-weather-related emergency information following the "all hazards" concept. Government authorities external to NWS that provide information to the NWS for delivery by NWS dissemination systems must, except during unanticipated situations, execute and adhere to requirements detailed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and NWS. That MOA defines the conditions for use of NWS systems in collecting and disseminating non-weather hazard messages.

2.2 NWS disseminates its information suite in various formats and a variety of ways (e.g., satellite broadcast, NOAA Weather Radio, Internet, and mobile devices) appropriate to user needs in an equitable and open manner according to the [Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 \(5 U.S.C. 552\)](#) and Office of Management and Budget [Circular No. A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources"](#) (61 Fed. Reg. 6428, Feb. 20, 1996). As such, the NWS (a) will not establish or agree to permit others to establish on its behalf, exclusive, restricted, or other distribution arrangements interfering with availability to all on a timely and equitable basis; (b) will not establish restrictions or regulations, including the charging of fees or royalties, on the reuse, resale, or re-dissemination of NWS information by

private entities; and (c) will only set user charges for information, where appropriate, at a level sufficient to recover the cost of dissemination. All NWS data and products are "essential" within the meaning of the [World Meteorological Organization's \(WMO\) Resolution No. 40 \(CgXII\)](#).

3. This policy directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

3.1 The Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office (AFSO) provides policy and instructions on the content and format of NWS information.

3.2 The Office of Dissemination (DIS) manages the dissemination portfolio as a part of enterprise portfolio management, and is responsible for establishing dissemination portfolio requirements and strategy, tracking dissemination programs, projects, and initiatives using the NWS Governance process. DIS coordinates with the WMO on data codes, formats and telecommunications policy. DIS is also responsible for the evaluation of emerging technologies (e.g., Software-defined networking) for possible use to support NWS dissemination.

3.3 The Engineering Standards Division (ESD) evaluated end-to-end mission readiness. The office provides end-to-end system engineering oversight across all NWS offices, assess risks from a systems engineering perspective, and supports subordinate offices in following and applying consistent engineering standards and processes, project management, and system

3.4 The Office of Science and Technology Integration (STI) directs research and development for new systems as well as for improving current systems and developing new systems.

3.5 The National Centers for Environmental Prediction's (NCEP's) Central Operations (NCO) manages dissemination systems, including engineering, maintenance, logistics, financial management, and user support on a priority-based 24x7 basis.

3.6 NCEP's NCO provides timely, around-the-clock dissemination of regionally and nationally scaled NWS information through operational production methods and provides education outreach to users and partners. NCO recommends requirements to NWSH, provides technical assistance to its National Centers, oversees dissemination outreach efforts, addresses user concerns relating to NCO products, and evaluates its dissemination performance and effectiveness.

3.7 The Office of Communications (COMS) manages the use of social media as a means of disseminating NWS information and the evaluation of emerging technologies/tools that can be applied in the social media arena.

3.8 Regional Headquarters offices ensure the field offices are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill dissemination responsibilities. They recommend requirements to NWS Headquarters (NWSH), ensure dissemination policies are compatible across regional boundaries, provide technical assistance to field offices, oversee regional dissemination outreach efforts, coordinate and address user requests and concerns within their region, manage upgrades or

expansions of dissemination systems in coordination with NWSH, ensure dissemination systems are properly maintained and operational, and evaluate performance and effectiveness of dissemination within their region.

3.9 NWS field offices, including the National Data Buoy Center, provide timely, around-the-clock dissemination of NWS information and appropriate externally-originated emergency messages for their areas. They also provide educational outreach to users and partners. Additionally, they collect information on user needs and send these to NWSH through administrative channels.

4. NWS will determine the effectiveness of the various NWS dissemination systems. The NWS will provide users with performance measures and limitations of these systems. Where standard evaluation tools are available, NWS will determine whether the performance meets NWS mission.

5. The attached References and Glossary of Terms in Attachment 1 provides additional background information.

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Attachment 1: REFERENCES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Procedural Directives

Instruction 10-1701, *Text Product Formats and Codes*
Instruction 10-1702, *Universal Geographic Code*
Instruction 10-1703, *Valid Time Event Code*
Instruction 10-1704, *Complementary Dissemination Services*
Instruction 10-1708, *All-Hazards Emergency Message Collection System (Hazcollect)*
Instruction 10-1710, *NOAA Weather Radio Dissemination*
Instruction 10-1711, *NOAA Weather Radio System Management*
Instruction 10-1712, *Specific Area Message Encoding*
Instruction 10-1715, *NOAA Weather Wire Service Dissemination*
Instruction 10-1716, *NOAA Weather Wire Service System Management*
Instruction 10-1721, *International Satellite Communications System Management*
Instruction 10-1722, *Instant Messaging (IM) Communication*
Instruction 10-1723, *NWS/NCEP NCO Managed System Change Process for IDP*

Terms

All Hazards Concept – The dissemination of non-weather-related emergency messages from external authorities, in addition to NWS information. These emergency messages include both natural events, such as earthquakes and volcanic activity, and technological events such as chemical or biological releases, oil spills, or nuclear incidents.

User – An individual, government agency, or other entity that obtains and applies NWS water, weather, and climate information and services.

Partner – A company, corporation, vendor, agency, university, etc., that collaborates with the NWS in the collection or distribution of weather information and services.

Public – The people of a parish, county, state, commonwealth, territory, region or tribal nation.