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Operations and Services

Service Outreach NWSPD 10-18

WARNING COORDINATION AND HAZARD AWARENESS

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWS Instruction 10-1801, “*Warning Coordination and Hazard Awareness*,” dated December 23, 2004. Changes were made to reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015.

The following revisions were made:

1. Integrated still valid content of NWS Instruction 10-1803, Service Outreach and Feedback, which has been rescinded. This includes survey procedures and the Paperwork Reduction Act.
2. Integrated content on drills/exercises and State Liaison Offices to better address the following Regional Supplements: Central Region Supplement 07-2004; Eastern Region Supplement 14-2004; Western Region Supplement 8-2004; and Eastern Region Supplement 02-2010.
3. Added Service Coordination Hydrologists (SCH) as appropriate throughout the document.
4. Updated language, NWSI cross-references and Web links throughout.

Signed _____

4/4/2018

Andrew D. Stern

Date

Director

Analyze, Forecast and Support Office

Warning Coordination and Hazard Awareness

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1. Objective

The objective of the Warning Coordination and Hazard Awareness (WCHA) program is to ensure that the overall warning system is effective. The goal of an effective warning system is to maximize the number of people who take appropriate and timely action to minimize injury, death, and property damage due to hazards such as severe weather and flooding. In other words, the goal of a warning is to provide sufficient time for people to get out of harm's way. Appropriate, timely, protective behavior is the desired outcome. Therefore, actions must be taken to ensure that people receive consistent warning messages from multiple trusted sources. This takes an integrated team approach.

2. Background

Appendix A defines what social scientists term “the integrated warning system.” The National Weather Service (NWS) works with partners in the hazards community to develop an effective integrated warning system. Social scientists define the hazards community as:

- Federal, tribal, state, and local government agencies
- Emergency managers and first responders
- America's Weather and Climate Industry, most notably the media
- Non-government organizations, such as the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#)
- SKYWARN® weather spotters, amateur radio groups, [Citizens Corps](#) and other volunteers

The WCHA program involves working with our partners to:

- Create a viable integrated warning system
- Support the consistent delivery of hazards information to the public
- Support preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities as outlined in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) [National Response Framework](#), and [Federal Interagency Operational Plans](#), and similar tribal, state and local plans

The types of interactions and activities the NWS uses to engage with partners as part of the WCHA program will vary based on the types of partners involved. For example, interactions with NWS core and deep relationship core partners (e.g., media, emergency managers) may focus on warning, dissemination and response activities related to Impact-based Decision Support Services. Activities with general partners/the public (e.g., volunteers, Citizens Corps) may focus on outreach, education and preparedness.

3. Development and Maintenance

Successful WCHA begins with analysis of the hazards that can impact communities and determining their vulnerability. Successful WCHA also depends on NWS operational readiness and the at-risk population's overall preparedness.

3.1 Hazards Risk Assessment

NWS staff should be familiar with the climatology and the weather, hydrological, and potential manmade hazards in their areas of responsibility. The Science and Operations Officer (SOO) and the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) in Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) and National Centers, and the Development and Operations Hydrologist (DOH) and Service

Coordination Hydrologist (SCH) in River Forecast Centers (RFCs), should educate operational staff on specific hazard risk areas through local training activities. This includes Weather Service Office (WSO) staff where appropriate. Any reference to “field office” in this instruction includes WFOs, RFCs, WSOs and National Centers.

3.2 WCM/SCH Role

WCMs and SCHs are the leads for NWS WCHA activities. The roles of the WCM and SCH can vary based on the hazards, needs of partners and staff capabilities. In general, the WCMs and SCHs should do the following:

- Guide and manage a planned, coordinated, and effective WCHA program
 - Build and sustain working relationships with partners
 - Seek out and identify weather, water, and climate impacts and decision thresholds in coordination with partners
 - Collaborate with social science partners who can help make our services more effective
 - Facilitate the participation in emergency exercises and workshops integrating weather-, water-, and climate-related scenarios
 - Integrate emerging communication technologies and information delivery services such as social media and NWSChat ([NWSI 10-722, *Instant Messaging \(IM\) Communication*](#))
 - Help maintain necessary traditional dissemination systems ([NWSI 10-1704, *Complementary Dissemination Services*](#))
- Effectively and efficiently evaluate field office operations and document impacts of environmental events
 - Lead customer service efforts
 - Lead assessments following high-impact events
 - Participate in post-event review meetings with partners
 - Lead and/or participate in damage surveys in accordance with [NWSI 10-1604, *Post-Storm Data Acquisition*](#)
 - Assist Local, State, Tribal and Federal officials in the disaster declaration process
- Lead field office outreach, education, and preparedness programs
 - Lead outreach and education initiatives including [seasonal safety campaigns](#)
 - Coordinate multi-agency public education programs to promote awareness of [weather, water and climate hazards](#), and the use/interpretation of NWS products and information
 - Lead [Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador](#), [StormReady](#), [TsunamiReady](#), and [SKYWARN® weather spotter](#) implementation
- Ensure operational readiness of staff through excises and drills
 - In conjunction with the SOO/DOH, organize internal drills and exercises
 - Coordinate office participation in partner exercises

- Assist in professional development and administrative duties, with a focus on developing and maintaining a workforce skilled in providing decision support
 - As a member of the management team, assist in personnel decisions
 - Identify training and professional development opportunities
 - Provide input to awards and other forms of recognition for team members
- Foster a skilled WCM/SCH community, and integrate operational staff into those efforts
 - Communicate with your peers to share experiences, locally developed resources and to promote best practices
 - Mentor operational staff in the WCM/SCH program through delegation, coaching and training.
 - Assist in the training and management of programmatic focal points
- Promote a sustainable work life environment with [diversity and inclusion](#) as a guiding principle
 - Proactively recruit qualified individuals at all levels whose diverse backgrounds, experience, education, and skills will advance the NWS mission
 - Strengthen field office team members engagement to cultivate an inclusive culture
 - Build a work environment that maximizes individual and collective potential and productivity

[NWS Instruction 10-911, River Forecast Center Operations](#) provides additional details on the SCH and RFC role.

3.3 NWS Readiness

As per [NWSPD 10-22, Readiness](#), NWS readiness is defined as the ability of the NWS to effectively deliver its products and services without delay. This is essential for successful WCHA. Station management in each NWS field office is responsible for ensuring the readiness of office systems and staff through operational readiness checks and internal seasonal drills.

3.3.1 Internal Drills and Exercises

Conducting drills and exercises helps ensure NWS field office team members are proficient in the operational response to extreme hydrometeorological events and other emergencies. Variability in station programs and hazard frequency dictates the need for flexibility in the type and scope of office drills. Drills can combine multiple hazards and situations (e.g., performed in combination with other NWS offices) for efficiency. Drills should utilize tools such as the Weather Event Simulator (WES) as appropriate ([NWSI 20-101, Use of the Weather Event Simulator](#)). Each NWS field office, at the discretion of the Regional Headquarters, Meteorologist in Charge (MIC)/Hydrologist in Charge (HIC)/Official in Charge (OIC) or designee, can conduct the following drills each year as appropriate:

- Severe Convection
 - Tornado
 - High Winds
 - Derecho
 - Hail
 - Lightning

- Flash Flood and Flood
 - Convective/Extreme Rainfall
 - Riverine
 - Dam Break
 - Levee Failure
 - Snowmelt Runoff
 - Ice Jam
 - Coastal
 - Glacier Dammed Lakes/Glacial Outburst Floods (Jökulhlaups)
- Tropical Cyclone
 - Storm Surge
 - Extreme Winds
 - Extreme Rainfall/Inland Flooding
- Winter Storm
 - Blizzard
 - Ice Storm
 - Lake Effect
 - Snow Squall
- Extratropical Cyclone/Frontal High Wind
- Dust Storm
- Special Marine Warning
- Wildfire
- Tsunami
- Extreme Temperatures and Wind Chill
- Dense Fog
- Freeze/Frost
- Space Weather
- Non-Weather Emergency
- Hazardous Material Release/Spill
- Aircraft or Marine Accident
- Continuity of Service and Backup ([NWSI 10-104, Preparation in Advance of or During Disasters or Major Weather Emergencies](#)) and Continuity of Operations ([NWSI 10-2202, Continuity of Operations \(COOP\)](#))
 - Office Evacuation
 - Shelter-In-Place
 - Power Failure
 - Communications Failure
 - Equipment Failure
 - Service Backup
 - Hazard Drill (e.g., Earthquake, Fire, Tornado, Flood)

3.3.2 Prevention of Inadvertent Test Messages

Station management in each NWS field office is responsible for ensuring that test messages used in internal drills are appropriately formatted and not disseminated via operational systems. The inadvertent release of test messages can have a detrimental impact on WCHA with the hazards

community. The use of the WES is encouraged as it helps reduce this risk. Offices must ensure that drill participants include multiple "TEST" wording in all practice products and emphasize compliance with section 7 of [NWS Directive 10-1701, Text Product Formats and Codes](#).

3.4 Community Preparedness

Within each office's area of responsibility, the WCM/SCH with assistance from field office team members, manages activities to raise the hazard community's awareness and preparedness for weather, water, and climate related hazards. The [Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador](#), [StormReady](#), [TsunamiReady](#) and [seasonal safety campaign](#) initiatives are designed to assist with this outreach effort. Office team members should be involved in outreach activities to share workload, and to maximize partner contact and training.

3.4.1 Hazard and Vulnerability Analyses

The WCM/SCH should work with partners to help them identify the hazards for which they should prepare for and the at-risk population who are vulnerable to specific hazards. The local hazard and vulnerability analyses should specify the local decision maker's critical action thresholds. Knowledge of these thresholds helps local officials make better response decisions.

3.4.2 Coordinating Integrated Warning System Roles within the Hazards Community

WCMs should meet with partners to help them define their role in the integrated warning system and to support the consistent delivery of critical information to the public. Trust and credibility are key components of effective WCHA with the hazards community. In collaboration with these partners, the NWS identifies critical information requirements; and in turn, our partners improve their understanding and use of NWS products and services.

3.4.3 Developing and Maintaining Reliable Dissemination and Communications Systems

Information sharing between the NWS and members of the hazards community is critical for an effective warning program. WCMs should make the promotion and expansion of dissemination and communication systems a high priority. WCMs should assist and coordinate with the NWS Office of Dissemination, to ensure existing systems are properly tested and maintained. The NWS should discuss with its partners ways to reach at-risk segments of the population by expanding innovative dissemination methods.

WCMs develop partnerships to link to local and state communication systems for the automated sharing of critical information. WCMs should explore resource sharing with local Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) amateur radio clubs. WCMs should also promote existing dissemination systems including: FEMA's Integrated Public Warning and Alert System (IPAWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR) All Hazards, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), NWSChat (users limited to NWS core partners), Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN), NOAA Weather Wire Service (NWWS), FEMA's National Warning System (NAWAS), and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA).

3.4.4 Obtaining Reliable and Adequate Ground Truth Reports

Timely and reliable observations from trained volunteers are a key element in the warning decision-making process. Spotter reports can confirm hazardous weather and flooding detected by

NWS technologies and enhances the situational awareness of the operational response. WCMs work with local authorities and emergency managers to organize, recruit, train, and maintain spotter networks at the county/parish and local level ([NWSI 10-1807, *The SKYWARN® Weather Spotter Program*](#)).

3.4.5 Improving Partner Response

Partner response is enhanced when they know how best to use NWS products and when drills and exercises are conducted to test operational readiness. NWS offices should conduct training sessions for hazards community members so they know how to use NWS services and, for NWS core partners, how to integrate them into their decision processes. NWS also partners with [FEMA's Emergency Management Institute](#) to offer professional courses to emergency managers and first responders.

Before each hazardous weather season, NWS offices should conduct local and statewide drills with partners as appropriate. Drills should test all aspects of the warning system from detection and warning, through communication, to response. The NWS encourages the media to disseminate test warnings as appropriate. Refer to section 7 of [NWSI 10-1701, *Text Product Formats and Codes*](#) for instruction on formatting test products. NWS offices should also encourage local organizations, such as emergency operations centers and school districts, to test their [emergency operations plans](#).

3.4.6 Improving Public Response

NWS offices should promote [public awareness campaigns](#) to inform citizens of potential threats and what safety actions to take if a warning is received or severe weather is observed. NWS offices should encourage households, businesses, critical care facilities, places of worship and local communities to develop preparedness plans for identified risks, incorporating practices promoted jointly by NWS, FEMA, and other partners.

3.4.7 Hazard Mitigation

Property losses to natural hazards are reduced when states, communities, private sector, and the public locate and build with consideration for the hazards in their areas. NWS offices work with tribal, state, and local officials, non-government organizations, and America's Weather and Climate Industry to provide weather, water, and climate information to assist those building disaster resilient communities.

4. Partnerships

It is imperative that the hazards community work with NWS offices to maintain a viable integrated warning system. Because the job is too big for a single organization to accomplish, the key to success is to create and maintain effective working partnerships among the hazards community toward a common goal. NWS offices should lead efforts within the hazards community to create and enhance partnerships for spotter networks, data collection, dissemination and communication, partner and public education, hazard awareness and preparedness material development and distribution, and mitigation activities.

4.1 State/Territorial Liaison Offices

At Regional Headquarters discretion, certain WFOs will be designated as State Liaison Offices (SLOs) that will serve as the primary point-of-contact between state offices and the NWS. Typically, this main contact will be the WFO whose area of responsibility includes the state capital. In U.S. insular areas, the SLO may be called the Territorial Liaison Office (TLO) or similar.

The SLO serves as the NWS lead for WCHA activities with their respective state's emergency management agency/department, other state departments, and elected state government officials. This should include the coordination of hydrometeorological decision support from all WFOs/RFCs that provide services to counties/parishes of the respective state. The SLO designation provides consistent and coordinated services to state governments across the U.S.

It is at the discretion of SLO/TLO's MIC/OIC, or their designee, to determine who of their WFO team members will serve as the leads with the various state agencies (e.g., WCM liaisons with the state emergency management agency/department, Senior Service Hydrologist (SSH) liaisons with state flood control/dam managers, etc.). Appendix B contains NWS SLO/TLO designations as determined by the respective Regional Headquarters.

5. Partner and Public Feedback

Partner and public feedback regarding NWS products and services is critical. It enables the NWS to constantly improve our services/products, respond to changing needs of partners, design and create new products and services, and to routinely evaluate effectiveness. An excellent time to gather information on our services is following significant events. WCMs/SCHs should contact affected partners to see if NWS services met expectations in accordance with the After Action Review guidance in Appendices A and B of [NWSI 10-1606, Service Assessment](#). Results underscore best practices and identify service improvement opportunities.

As noted in Appendix C, there are Federal government limitations on how the NWS can obtain feedback from partners and the public.

5.1 The Paperwork Reduction Act

The [Paperwork Reduction Act \(PRA\) of 1995](#) requires that all Federal agencies get clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before surveying partners and other users or collecting information from the public. The statute defines "collection of information" broadly. It covers any identical questions posed to ten or more members of the public, whether voluntary or mandatory, whether written, electronic, or oral. Items that are covered under the PRA include: partners and other user surveys; web surveys; federal surveys sent to state, territorial, local, and tribal governments; application forms; and focus groups using predetermined scripts.

Areas exempt from PRA regulations include: employee conferences; complaint systems; suggestion systems; town halls; listening sessions; and other meetings with users (driven by an agenda rather than "questions"). These conversations are either one-on-one or structured so loosely that the questions are not "identical" within the meaning of the PRA.

If a field or headquarters office determines that a survey is the best way to acquire the information it needs to provide optimum services, a request will be submitted to the [Performance and Evaluation Branch \(PEB\)](#), Operations Division, Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) at the NWS Headquarters. PEB staff will assist with the request and, if appropriate, forward a survey

request to the appropriate NOAA officials. If NOAA approval is granted, they will submit the request to OMB for clearance.

Appendix C contains additional information about the PRA as well as alternative methods for collecting information. Offices are encouraged to post a copy of Appendix C in their Station Duty Manual for reference.

5.2 External Survey Inquiries Directed at NWS

WCMs/SCHs are the NWS leads for customer service requests including external inquiries to participate in surveys (e.g., academic sector social science researcher targeting WCMs/WFOs). WCMs/SCHs are empowered to make their own determinations on the participation of external surveys considering factors such as workload, staffing levels, etc. External surveys of operational field office team members will only be done on voluntary basis and at the discretion of the MIC/HIC/OIC/National Center director or their designee.

External survey inquiries of more than one field office (e.g., multiple WCMs) will be forwarded to the Regional Headquarters, National WCM and the NWS Headquarters Social Science Program Manager for coordination and potential clearance. While the NWS supports academic and other researchers as able, the operational NWS mission is the highest priority.

6. References and Documentation

WFOs/RFCs/National Centers should maintain references which reflect the state of the hazards community in their area of responsibility. References should provide operational continuity and a guide for new personnel. WFOs/RFCs/National Centers should maintain and update appropriate maps, lists of key contacts, and the operational status of each organization. Refer to [NWSI 10-1804, *Outreach and Education Reporting Requirements*](#) for documenting activities that support WCHA in the NWS Outreach and Education Event System (NOEES).

In addition to sharing best practices via the NOEES, NWS field offices should submit articles for both the [NWS Insider](#) and the externally focused [Aware Report](#). The *Aware Report* highlights NWS services and individual office best practices. Send articles for the *Aware Report* to the Analyze Forecast Support (AFS) Decision Support Integration Branch (AFS12). Encourage partners to draft articles for the *Aware Report* illustrating how they collaborate with the NWS and use NWS information.

Internal office drills completed at NWS field offices may be logged in NOEES and should be reported to the Regional Headquarters as appropriate. External drills done with partners during the past fiscal year will be reported annually by the WCM/SCH via the NOEES (using the exercise/drill option for “event type” on the long form).

APPENDIX A - The Integrated Warning System

The integrated warning system was first developed by social scientists doing research on warning systems (Mileti and Sorenson, J.H., 1990, [Communication of Emergency Public Warnings—A Social Science Perspective and State-of-the-Art Assessment](#), Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee).

There are three critical elements required to reduce or eliminate the impact on people and property from any hazard. First is the ability to forecast, detect and warn. Second, clearly communicate information about the event to those at risk in a timely and understandable manner. Third, those at risk must take appropriate action, often in a predetermined or learned manner. These three elements of the integrated warning program are of equal importance. If any one element fails, the warning program fails.

- Forecast, Detection and Warning. This element includes the traditional NWS role of examining data and forecasting a significant weather, water, or climate event. Detection considers the data from remote sensing devices such as radar and satellite; on-site observing devices, such as river and rain gauges and automated flood warning systems; and eyewitness reports. Warning of the hazard, whether by strict meteorological criteria or impact, is accomplished via multiple and redundant dissemination platforms to maximize public alerting of the affected area.
- Communication and Information Dissemination. Communication is complete only after the information is received and understood.
- Public Response. The warning message by itself does not stimulate an immediate protective response. Normally, people in a warned area will first assess their personal risk. The additional information required before they take action depends on the content and clarity of the initial message and the credibility of the issuing organization. The potential for individuals to act will be markedly increased if they are provided information to assist them in properly defining their risk. Consistent messages from multiple credible sources serve to enhance personal risk assessment.

APPENDIX B – NWS State/Territorial Liaison Office Designations

NWS Eastern Region

In or Near State Capital:

State Capital

MA - Boston
 NC - Raleigh
 NY - Albany
 SC - Columbia
 WV - Charleston

SLO

WFO Norton, MA (BOX)
 WFO Raleigh, NC (RAH)
 WFO Albany, NY (ALY)
 WFO Columbia, SC (CAE)
 WFO Charleston, WV (RLX)

Not Near State Capital:

State Capital

CT - Hartford
 DE - Dover
 MD -Annapolis
 ME - Augusta
 NH - Concord
 NJ - Trenton
 OH - Columbus
 PA - Harrisburg
 RI - Providence
 VA - Richmond
 VT - Montpelier

SLO

WFO Norton, MA (BOX)
 WFO Mt Holly, NJ (PHI)
 WFO Sterling, VA (LWX)
 WFO Gray, ME (GYX)
 WFO Norton, MA (BOX)
 WFO Mt. Holly, NJ (PHI)
 WFO Wilmington, OH (ILN)
 WFO State College, PA (CTP)
 WFO Norton, MA (BOX)
 WFO Wakefield, VA (AKQ)
 WFO Burlington, VT (BTV)

NWS Southern Region

The SLO is the WFO whose area of responsibility includes the state capital.

State/Territorial Capital

AL - Montgomery
 AR - Little Rock
 FL - Tallahassee
 GA - Atlanta
 LA - Baton Rouge
 MS – Jackson
 NM - Sante Fe
 OK - Oklahoma City
 PR - San Juan
 TN - Nashville
 TX - Austin
 VI - Charlotte Amalie

SLO/TLO

WFO Birmingham, AL (BMX)
 WFO Little Rock, AR (LZK)
 WFO Tallahassee, FL (TAE)
 WFO Peachtree City, GA (FFC)
 WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA (LIX)
 WFO Jackson, MS (JAN)
 WFO Albuquerque, NM (ABQ)
 WFO Norman, OK (OUN)
 WFO San Juan, PR (SJU)
 WFO Nashville, TN (OHX)
 WFO Austin/San Antonio, TX (EWX)
 WFO San Juan, PR (SJU)

NWS Central Region

The SLO is the WFO whose area of responsibility includes the state capital.

<u>State Capital</u>	<u>SLO</u>
CO - Denver	WFO Boulder, CO (BOU)
IA - Des Moines	WFO Des Moines, IA (DMX)
IL - Springfield	WFO Lincoln, IL (ILX)
IN - Indianapolis	WFO Indianapolis, IN (IND)
KS - Topeka	WFO Topeka, KS (RLX)
KY - Frankfort	WFO Louisville, KY (LMK)
MI - Lansing	WFO Grand Rapids, MI (GRR)
MN - Saint Paul	WFO Twin Cities, MN (MPX)
MO - Jefferson City	WFO St. Louis, MO (LSX)
ND - Bismarck	WFO Bismarck, ND (BIS)
NE - Lincoln	WFO Omaha, NE (OAX)
SD - Pierre	WFO Aberdeen, SD (ABR)
WI - Madison	WFO Milwaukee, WI (MKX)
WY - Cheyenne	WFO Cheyenne, WY (CYS)

NWS Western Region

The SLO is the WFO whose area of responsibility includes the state capital.

<u>State Capital</u>	<u>SLO</u>
AZ - Phoenix	WFO Phoenix, AZ (PHX)
CA - Sacramento (Northern and Central)	WFO Sacramento, CA (STO)*
CA (Southern)	WFO Los Angeles, CA (LOX)**
ID - Boise	WFO Boise, ID (BOI)
MT - Helena	WFO Great Falls, MT (TFX)
NV- Carson City	WFO Reno, NV (REV)
OR - Salem	WFO Portland, OR (PQR)
UT - Salt Lake City	WFO Salt Lake City, UT (SLC)
WA - Olympia	WFO Seattle/Tacoma, WA (SEW)

* Northern and Central California SLO is defined as the sum of the areas of responsibility for WFOs Eureka, Sacramento, San Francisco Bay Area, Hanford, and the California portions of the WFOs Medford and Reno.

** Southern California SLO is defined as the remainder of California from that defined above.

NWS Pacific Region

<u>State/Territorial Capital</u>	<u>SLO/TLO</u>
HI - Honolulu	WFO Honolulu, HI (HFO)
GU - Hagåtña	WFO Tiyan, Guam (GUM)
AS - Pago Pago (American Samoa)	WSO Pago Pago, AS (PPG)
FM - Palikir (Micronesia)	WSO Pohnpei, FM (TTP)
MP - Saipan (Northern Mariana Islands)	WFO Tiyan, Guam (GUM)
MH - Majuro (Marshall Islands)	WSO Majuro, MH (KMR)
PW - Koror (Palau)	WSO Koror, PW (TKR)

NWS Alaska Region

<u>State Capital</u>	<u>SLO</u>
AK - Juneau	WFO Juneau, AK (AJK)
	WFO Anchorage, AK (AFC)***

*** In Alaska WFOs Juneau and Anchorage both serve as the SLO according to the WCHA need. While the Governor's Mansion is in Juneau most state agencies are headquartered in and around Anchorage including the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

APPENDIX C – Collecting Partner and Public Feedback

The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) generally requires agencies to get OMB clearance before requesting facts or opinions from ten or more persons by the use of standard questions. This holds true regardless of whether the information is gathered by the use of forms, a web site, phone or personal interviews, and about any other method; regardless of whether responses are mandatory or voluntary; and regardless of whether the agency or a contractor does the actual collecting of information. Clearance is needed when a rule contains an information requirement, regardless of the number of people affected.

There are a few ways you can gather information without needing PRA clearance.

Quick Response Surveys - The [NWS Performance Management web page](#), under reference “Evaluation”, provides a set of “Quick Response Surveys”, pertaining to specific hazards, which have been created and received OMB approval so that they can be used to receive public feedback on the effectiveness, understanding, and level of satisfaction after a local high impact weather event. These surveys can be used to collect information in a face to face format or via email as long as the OMB Control Number 0648-0342 is displayed.

Public Meetings - No clearance is needed if attendees at a public meeting are just asked to comment or give suggestions on the program or subject in question. General discussions and listening sessions about programs and goals present no problem. If, however, the group is gathered for the purpose of having attendees respond to a specific set of formatted questions, then the PRA does apply.

Solicitations for General Comments - No clearance is needed if you offer the public the opportunity to make comments or suggestions, so long as you do not ask specific questions other than self-identification (name, address, e-mail). Many web sites, for instance, offer a box or email address for people to give comments, and that does not violate the PRA.

If a planned survey is subject to the PRA clearance process, the normal clearance process can be lengthy, two to four months on average. Clearances for information requirements in proposed rules actually take less time, about two months. A special fast-track review process is available for certain types of user surveys. Information about these processes can be found at NOAA’s PRA web site at: http://www.cio.noaa.gov/services_programs/pr.html.

Any OMB clearance for an information collection only applies to the specific circumstances described in the clearance request. A survey approved for one office, for instance, cannot be used by other offices without going back to OMB. This restriction even applies to questions in NOAA’s “generic” user survey clearance.

Questions should be directed to the to the [Performance and Evaluation Branch](#), Operations Division, Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) at NWS Headquarters.