

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-404

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Operations and Services

Products and Services to Support Fire and Other Incidents, NWSPD 10-4

FIRE WEATHER SERVICES ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN AND REPORT

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

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Certified by: W/AFS2 (S. Bieda)

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 10-404, “*Fire Weather Services Annual Operating Plan and Report*,” dated April 13, 2018.

1. Changed Certifier to S. Bieda.
2. Section 2.2: Removed the word “verification” to improve naming accuracy.

January 27, 2023

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Date

Analyze, Forecast and Support Office

Fire Weather Services Annual Operating Plan and Report

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1. Fire Weather Annual Operating Plan

1.1 Description and Responsibilities.

Each National Weather Service (NWS) Weather Forecast Office (WFO) with a fire weather program will prepare and keep current a Fire Weather Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the WFO’s fire weather service area. States or Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs) may coordinate a state or integrated area AOP with several WFOs in lieu of individual WFO AOPs. The plan should be developed with the users annually prior to the fire season and revised as necessary. When multiple WFOs are involved in producing a geographic or state AOP, Regional Headquarters will appoint a NWS AOP team leader from one of the WFOs or Regional Headquarters to coordinate the NWS effort. This AOP team leader should be at the WFO management or regional program manager level and should be the NWS signatory to the AOP.

WFOs will: (a) reference the location of the AOP in the Station Duty Manual (SDM); (b) date the plan, each revision, and any amended pages, and; (c) provide a link to a web-based version of the AOP in the fire weather section of the local WFO website. Any version accessible to the general public may be edited to remove confidential information (e.g., names, WFO unlisted phone numbers, etc.). WFOs will also either furnish a hard copy or provide a link to a printable web-based version of the AOP, along with any revisions and amendments, to the following:

- a. National Fire Weather Program Manager
- b. Regional Fire Weather Program Manager
- c. Adjacent fire weather offices
- d. All concerned users

WFOs will retain each annual edition and all subsequent amendments of the AOP for five years.

A national-scale AOP (National AOP) is also coordinated between the Predictive Services Unit at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) and the Analyze, Forecast and Support Office (AFSO) NWS Fire Weather Program. The National AOP details national operational practices and service procedures. The National AOP content development will involve not only NIFC, but also the National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO) and all NWS Regional Program

Managers. The National AOP will neither replace nor inhibit production of local, geographic or state AOPs. Instead, it will serve to clarify national scale operational procedures and complement localized AOP operational guidance. Examples of National AOP topics include overall program descriptions, general Incident Meteorologist (IMET) dispatch procedures, communication protocols and national-level Agreement maintenance.

The National AOP may be found on the national fire weather web page under the “Admin” section: <http://www.weather.gov/fire>.

1.2 Format and Content

WFOs will ensure AOPs contain the required elements listed in Appendix A. Elements listed in Appendix A follow required elements found in the *Interagency Agreement for Meteorological and Other Technical Services*.

2. Annual Report

2.1 Description and Responsibilities

Every WFO that issues non-routine fire weather products during their fire weather season (e.g., spot forecasts, Fire Weather Watches, Red Flag Warnings) will produce an annual report summarizing fire support in their area of responsibility. WFOs should disseminate the Annual Report to the same entities as the AOP. Annual Reports should summarize the calendar year activities. The WFO's Regional Headquarters will determine the due date of the Annual Report. The regional statistics are due to the National Fire Weather Program Manager no later than March 1st.

The National Fire Weather Operations Coordinator (NFWOC) will also annually coordinate operational Fire Weather Watch/Red Flag Warning issuance criteria to promote watch/warning program consistency across fire weather zone responsibility areas. The NFWOC will collect criteria across WFOs through examination of active AOPs and/or direct contact with NWS Regions. Local variance in criteria is acceptable, based on local land management needs and fire weather fuel types. However, the NFWOC will coordinate with NWS Regions and local WFOs to suggest criteria amendments, if there are apparent criteria inconsistencies resulting in potential fire zone boundary gaps and unnecessary discontinuities. The NFWOC will provide the annual criteria summary in the annual IMET report.

2.2 Format and Content

The following items should be included in the Annual Report:

- a. Number of spot forecasts issued (itemized by wildfires, prescribed burns, and others)
- b. Number of fire or fire weather related courses taught or attended
- c. Red Flag event verification
 - (1) Number of Fire Weather Watches issued
 - (2) Number of Red Flag Warnings issued
 - (3) Probability of Detection (POD), False Alarm Rate (FAR), Critical Success Index (CSI) and Average Lead Time of Red Flag Warnings
- d. Number of IMET dispatches
- e. Number of IMET dispatch days

Details on the format and inclusion of other optional data in the Annual Report are left to the discretion of each Regional Headquarters. Details on Fire Weather verification are located in [NWS Instruction \(NWSI\) 10-1601](#).

At the completion of the calendar year, the NFWOC will release a national annual report. The report provides a national, annual review of fire weather forecast operations, IMET statistics, historical trends and other statistics assessing the previous year's operational activities.

APPENDIX A

Suggested Elements for Inclusion in Regional and Local Annual Operating Plans

1. An explanation of shared responsibilities of all participants including, but not limited to; weather briefings, training, research, and product/service verification.
2. Procedures for documenting, monitoring and evaluating fire weather products, briefings and services delivered.
3. Methods for monitoring and evaluating advances in science and technology.
4. Methods for efficient means for technology transfer.
5. Where appropriate, provision for participation in fire weather research, development and application activities.
6. An explanation of shared meteorological methodologies and procedures.
7. Generalized or specific schedules of weather briefings and conference calls with GACCs, NIFC, Multi-Agency Coordination Groups, WFOs and IMETs.
8. A listing of website links to both NWS and Predictive Services products.
9. An outline of participation in Interagency groups.
10. A comprehensive contact list of all who participated in the development of the AOP.