

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-5***  
***APRIL 23, 2024***

***Operations and Services***

***PUBLIC WEATHER SERVICES***

**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <https://www.weather.gov/directives/>

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**Type of Issuance:** Routine

***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This directive supersedes NWSPD 10-5, *Public Weather Services*, dated February 6, 2018. The following additional revisions were made to this directive:

- 1) Addition of NWSI 10-105, *National Weather Service Zone Change Process* and removal of 10-505, *Public Zone Change Process*, which has been rescinded.
- 2) Addition of public weather services definition in Section 1 to encompass the Public, Severe, and Winter Weather Services Programs.
- 3) Replace all references to “Public Weather Services Program” with “public weather services” for consistency.
- 4) Section 2, update link to NWS Policy Directive 1-10, [\*Managing the Provision of Environmental Information\*](#).
- 5) Section 3.1 added “increase awareness of public weather hazards and safety” to bullet c “Provide outreach to national users to promote public weather services”.
- 6) Section 3.2 added abbreviation for the Office of Science and Technology Integration (OSTI).
- 7) Section 3.2 bullets were added for consistency of format and added bullet b “Oversee collaborative and applied research and development activities in coordination with other NWS units, NOAA line offices, and the research community.”
- 8) Section 3.4 added abbreviation for The Office of Planning and Programming for Service Delivery (OPPSD)
- 9) Section 3.4 moved bullet b to Section 3.8 and removed bullet c.
- 10) Section 3.5 and Section 3.6 added Weather Service Offices (WSOs).
- 11) Addition of Office of Dissemination, Office of Central Processing, and Office of Observations responsibilities in Sections 3.8 – 3.10
- 12) Section 4 added high wind and updated directives link.
- 13) Appendix A, removed Glossary of Terms.

1. As the Nation grows, more segments of society are becoming increasingly dependent upon information concerning weather- and weather-related hazards such as tornadoes, high winds, winter storms, heat, cold, and air quality. Timely and accurate weather forecasts and warnings are used by the public for critical decision-making and personal planning purposes. This directive governs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Weather Service's (NWS') provision of public weather services to its users and partners and provides the framework for the public weather service, which encompass the NWS Public, Severe, and Winter Weather Services Programs.
2. The objectives of the public weather services are to provide public weather forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property, and to provide weather information for the Nation's economic well-being. Public weather services are established in accordance with NWS Policy Directive 1-10, [Managing the Provision of Environmental Information](#).
3. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:
  - 3.1 The Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office (AFSO) will:
    - a. Establish national policies and procedures for the provision of consistent NWS public forecast and warning services based on public weather requirements.
    - b. Consolidate, analyze, and oversee national performance and effectiveness indicators of public weather services.
    - c. Provide outreach to national users to promote public weather services and increase awareness of public weather hazards and safety.
  - 3.2 The Office of Science and Technology Integration (OSTI) will:
    - a. Plan, develop, demonstrate, and integrate scientific techniques and system capabilities for the public weather services.
    - b. Oversee collaborative and applied research and development activities in coordination with other NWS units, NOAA line offices, and the research community.
  - 3.3 The Office of the Assistant Chief Information Officer will:
    - a. Provide oversight for Information Technology (IT) security systems that support the public weather services. This includes compliance through Assessment & Authorization (A&A) security activities.
    - b. Ensure that NWS IT Operational Systems are implementing and conducting all IT security tasks, as stipulated in NWSPD 60-7, Information Technology Security Policy, in support of the public weather services.
  - 3.4 The Office of Planning and Programming for Service Delivery (OPPSD) will provide systems engineering, facilities engineering, and logistical services to sustain operational weather systems that support the public weather services.
  - 3.5 National Weather Service regional headquarters offices will:
    - a. Ensure NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) and Weather Service Offices

- (WSOs) are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill the public weather services.
- b. Provide technical and operational assistance.
  - c. Provide public weather requirements to AFSO.
  - d. Develop supplements to procedural directives.
  - e. Ensure WFOs/WSOs comply with public weather services directives and regional supplements.
  - f. Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the public weather services.
  - g. Review WFO/WSO geographic areas of responsibility in their region to improve the effectiveness and balance of warning and forecast assignments.

**3.6** WFOs/WSOs will:

- a. Provide decision-makers with detailed, accurate, timely, and reliable weather decision support services, particularly in association with high-impact events.
- b. Provide public weather warnings, forecasts, statements, summaries, and related products for local service areas in compliance with the public weather services directives and regional supplements.
- c. Ensure public weather products are timely, accurate, and meteorologically consistent with surrounding WFOs/WSOs.
- d. Provide outreach to users to promote and assess the success of their public weather services.

**3.7** The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) will produce guidance, outlook, and discussion products to support the public weather services.

**3.8** The Office of Dissemination (DIS) within OPPSD will:

- a. Ensure through program planning, that policy, procedures and backup systems are in place to sustain dissemination system operational capabilities to support the public weather services.
- b. Procure, manage, operate, and supply software, communications networks and data support for operational systems essential to the dissemination of public warnings, forecasts, guidance, and observational data.
- c. Plan, develop, and implement the NWS National Geographic Information System (GIS) Viewer (the “Viewer”) application capabilities, including creating Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) compliant web services from public weather services.

**3.9** The Office of Central Processing (CP) within OPPSD will:

- a. Provide system engineering, software management, facilities engineering, communications, maintenance, and logistical services to sustain operational systems supporting the public weather services.
- b. Provide real-time operational support and maintenance for nationally-delivered public weather services applications.

**3.10** The Office of Observations (OBS) within OPPSD will:

- a. Provide policies, procedures, and standards for acquiring, collecting, monitoring,

and disseminating observations and related data in support of public weather services.

- b. Work strategically to optimize observation networks necessary to deliver public weather forecast services for the Nation.

4. The NWS measures the effectiveness of the public weather services through a verification process. Verification is accomplished by comparing: (a) routine forecasts to observations, and (b) severe weather (e.g., tornado, severe thunderstorm, winter storm, high wind, etc.) watches and warnings to officially certified severe weather events. Additionally, the NWS utilizes assessments of high impact events and customer satisfaction feedback to evaluate program effectiveness. For more information on verification and evaluation processes, refer to policy and procedural directives in the NWS Directives System 10-16 Performance series at <https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/010.php>.

5. Procedural directives are listed under references in Appendix A and will be issued to implement this policy as needed and determined by the Director of the Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office.

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Kenneth E. Graham  
Assistant Administrator  
for Weather Services

Date

**Appendix A**

**REFERENCES**

*References*

- NWSI [10-501 WFO Statements, Summaries, Tables Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-502 National Statements, Summaries, Tables Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-503 WFO Public Weather Forecast Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-504 National Public Weather Forecast Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-507 Public Geographic Areas of Responsibility](#)
- NWSI [10-511 WFO Severe Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-512 National Severe Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-513 WFO Winter Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-514 National Winter Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-515 WFO Non-Precipitation Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-516 National Non-Precipitation Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-517 Multi-Purpose Weather Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-519 WFO Air Quality Products Specification](#)
- NWSI [10-105 National Weather Service Zone Change Process](#)