

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-12

SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

Operations and Services

DROUGHT SERVICES

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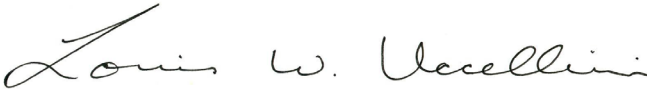
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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This policy directive supersedes NWSPD 10-12, "DROUGHT SERVICES," updated October 19, 2017. This directive has been updated by the inclusion of authorities and responsibilities of the Office of Water Prediction.

1. This directive governs the National Weather Service's (NWS) provision of drought services to its partners and other users. As the Nation grows, more segments of society are becoming increasingly vulnerable to drought. All kinds of drought are of concern to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) NWS and its partners and users, including meteorological drought, agricultural drought, and hydrologic drought. (See Attachment 1). Timely and accurate drought information spanning the present out to months in the future is becoming more critical to decision making processes which affect all citizens.
2. The objectives of the NWS Drought Services Program are to provide drought information and forecasts to protect life and property and enhance the Nation's economic well-being.
3. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:
 - a. The Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office (AFSO) will:
 - i. Establish national policies and procedures for the provision of consistent NWS drought services.
 - ii. Conduct meteorological, hydrologic, climate, training, performance and awareness, and observing service programs which support drought operations and services.
 - iii. Consolidate, analyze, and oversee national performance and effectiveness indicators of drought services.
 - iv. Provide outreach to national users to promote drought services.
 - v. Ensure NWS products and services contribute to National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) efforts and goals.
 - b. The Office of Water Prediction (OWP) will:

- i. Operationally support and deliver science-based, integrated, consistent, timely, reliable and accurate water resources monitoring, prediction and diagnostic information.
 - ii. Deliver a set of water resource-related decision support services for NWS core partners that facilitate decision-making associated with water supply planning and events ranging from flash floods to drought.
- c. NWS regional headquarters will:
 - i. Ensure weather forecast offices (WFO) and river forecast centers (RFC) are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill the Drought Services Program obligations within their region.
 - ii. Provide drought-related requirements to AFSO.
 - iii. Develop supplements to procedural directives for the Drought Services Program.
 - iv. Provide technical and operational support to WFOs and RFCs.
 - v. Oversee drought services outreach efforts.
 - vi. Evaluate performance and effectiveness of drought services within their region.
 - vii. Ensure WFOs and RFCs comply with Drought Services Program directives and regional supplements.
 - viii. Sustain and enhance collaboration within the Drought Services Program as part of an effort to enhance collaborative processes throughout the NWS. Specifically:
 - 1. Encourage collaboration among WFOs, RFCs, and the U.S. Drought Monitor author team (which includes the Climate Prediction Center (CPC)) in the production of the weekly U.S. Drought Monitor (see NWSI 10-1202, Section 3 (<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01012002curr.pdf>)).
 - 2. Encourage collaboration among WFOs, RFCs, and CPC in the production of the Monthly and Seasonal U.S. Drought Outlooks (see NWSI 10-1202, Section 5).
 - 3. Encourage collaboration among neighboring WFOs and RFCs toward the use of consistent language and messaging on drought and in the production of Drought Information Statements (see NWSI 10-1201 (<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01012001curr.pdf>)).
- d. The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) will:
 - i. Provide meteorological forecast guidance serving as input to the drought forecasting process for all time scales.
 - ii. Prepare graphical and digital products for the Nation which integrates hydrometeorological information produced by WFOs and RFCs.
- e. RFCs will:
 - i. Conduct hydrologic modeling and forecast operations for rivers, reservoirs, and lakes in large, multi-state areas of responsibility.

- ii. Produce extended-range hydrologic information and forecast products, such as water supply forecasts, which are used in NWS drought products and contribute to the U.S. Drought Monitor and U.S. Drought Outlooks.
- f. WFOs will:
- i. Participate in NWS drought analysis, monitoring, and prediction activities, including collaboration on the U.S. Drought Monitor and U.S. Drought Outlooks.
 - ii. Provide drought outlook products for their local service areas as well as various routine climate products which can be used in assessing drought severity and rapid drought development (“flash drought”).
 - iii. Serve as the local interface with partners and other users for drought information.
1. This policy directive is supported by the glossary of terms in Attachment 1. Instructional directives are listed under References in Attachment 1.



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Date

2. Attachment 1

3. REFERENCES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

References

Instruction 10-1201 *WFO Drought Products Specification*
Instruction 10-1202 *National Drought Products*

Glossary of Terms

Drought Services Program - The collective activities undertaken by NWS headquarters, regional headquarters, and field offices (i.e., RFCs, WFOs, and the NCEP) to support and provide drought-related services in the form of forecasts, outlooks, and associated products for the Nation.

Meteorological Drought - An excessive degree of dryness over a period of time in comparison to some “normal” or average amount. There are many criteria for meteorological drought.

Agricultural Drought - An adverse crop response which is usually associated with limited soil moisture and/or the inability of plants to meet the potential transpiration demands of the atmosphere.

Hydrologic Drought - A prolonged period of below-normal precipitation causing deficiencies in water supply, as measured by below-normal stream flow, lake and reservoir levels, groundwater levels, and depleted deep soil moisture content.

Note: Another type of drought that is often mentioned is socioeconomic drought, which encompasses impacts that may or may not be associated with those listed previously.