

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1711

APRIL 20, 2022

**Operations and Services
Dissemination, NDSPD 10-17**

NOAA WEATHER RADIO ALL HAZARDS (NWR) SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

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

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 10-1711, "NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) Systems Management," dated November 3, 2017.

Changes were made to this document to:

- Adjust wording for clarity
- Standardize direction of management to the NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB)
- Include cellular types of circuit options
- Clarify the definition of a "Cooperator"
- Clarify the responsibilities of the NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB)
- Include the NWRWAVES software as a standard input to the NWR system
- Update the types of maintenance support options for a site
- Remove types of 'taps', allowing for a private party to get access to the NWR broadcast
- Add the National Policy designating NWR as a warning service

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NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) Systems Management

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1 Purpose of Document

This instruction describes how the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Weather Service (NWS) manages and operates the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) program and broadcast network.

2 Description

The NWR network consists of more than 1,000 very high frequency (VHF) Frequency Modulated (FM) radio broadcast stations located throughout the United States and its territories, including Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan) and American Samoa. Most NWR broadcast stations are able to transmit weather and non-weather-related emergency messages and other routine content to NWR receivers located within an approximate 40-mile radius from the transmitter tower. The broadcast provides to users advanced warning of potentially destructive and life-threatening situations, giving the listener time to protect family, home, and property. The NWR broadcast can also be used by television and radio broadcasters to activate the local Emergency Alert System (EAS).

2.1 Mission of NWR

The mission of the NWR network is to provide a continuous flow of timely weather forecasts, information, advisories, watches and warnings, as well as all-hazards (non-weather) warning information to 96 percent of the general public in the Primary Coverage Area (PCA) 99 percent of the time. The PCA is defined as the area enclosed by a received signal level contour of 8 microvolts per meter. Stations are designed to provide this level of signal at a nominal distance of 40 miles from the station. The size and shape of the PCA at each station depends on numerous factors, including the height and placement of the antenna on the tower, terrain and structures in the vicinity of the station, presence of large bodies of water in the immediate area, and transmitter output power between 5 and 1,000 watts.

Under normal circumstances, NWR disseminates timely weather forecasts and other meteorological, hydrological, and climatological information to the public. Under extreme conditions where the public is at risk due to severe weather or other natural or human-caused disasters, NWR provides alarms, specific information describing the threat(s), and recommends actions to take.

NWR receivers can be triggered to provide various types of alerting capabilities, indicating an emergency exists in the area, alerting the listener to pay particular attention to the message being broadcast. Some NWR receivers can operate in a standby mode and the volume automatically turned "ON" when a warning message is received, then return to standby with a flashing alert indicator that an alert message was received.

NWS personnel can initiate a 1050Hz Warning Alarm Tone (WAT) to alert the entire primary coverage area and Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) tones for specific portions of a primary coverage area to trigger NWR transmitters to broadcast alerts as alarms with spoken messages.

NWR tone alert receivers and especially NWR SAME-capable receivers are valuable for immediate access to weather alert information, including public gathering areas such as schools, sport complexes, and hospitals as well as public safety agencies and news media offices which assist in public alerting.

The hearing-impaired community can receive weather and hazard warnings via NWR receivers that have the capability to connect special alerting devices, such as a light, strobe lights and pillow/bed shakers. These warning devices can plug directly into a NWR receiver and activate when a warning is received; the hearing-impaired person can then seek additional information via captioned television, computer, telephone (messaging, Facebook, or application), or other sources for news and additional details about the alert or warning.

NWR is available to relay non-weather-related hazard alerts received from authorized local, regional and national emergency management agencies (see Appendix A). NWR is part of the National Response Framework managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which maintains an all-hazards approach to domestic incident response. This framework identifies the key response principle and the roles and structures required to organize a national response. NWR broadcast alerts and warnings may also be used by local television and radio broadcasters and Emergency Managers as the primary activator of the local Federal Communications Commission (FCC) EAS.

2.2 Components of NWR

Although NWS established a few transmitters in 1954, NWR was originally established as a broadcast network in the early 1970s. The number of discrete frequencies has grown from the original three to seven between 162.400 MHz to 162.550 MHz; allowing the NWR network to expand from 100 stations in the 1970s to more than 1,000 in 2008.

Each NWR transmitter station is remotely programmed from one of more than 120 local Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs). Some of these are denoted as Weather Service Offices (WSOs). Each station consists of a radio frequency (RF) transmitter and an antenna interconnected with coaxial cable. A Broadcast Message Handler (BMH) delivers audio programming at the WFO by means of a telecommunication link to the transmitter. Telecommunication links include ultra-high frequency (UHF) radio sets, private microwave networks, cellular or hard-wired Internet Protocol (IP) connections, and/or commercial telephone circuits. The type of communication method depends on local circumstances. The WFO may use a combination of these types of communications. The BMH capability located at each WFO is an integrated Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) processing application feeding a digital-to-analog interface. BMH is designed to prepare, store, schedule, and simultaneously deliver unique audio programs to each station transmitter. Each BMH provides a text-to-synthesized voice conversion of the message and an NWR SAME alert tones used to trigger SAME capable receivers for severe weather and other life-threatening hazardous events in specific portions of the primary coverage area.

Since the network has been in service since the 1970s, station equipment configurations vary from station to station. Transmitters at each station vary in type, manufacturer, configuration (single or with back-up), and power output. Antennas vary according to area needs and are

generally omnidirectional. In some cases, antennas may be directional to avoid causing interference, to increase the signal level in a certain area, or to comply with the station operating license issued by the Interdepartmental Radio Advisory Committee of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Most stations have emergency power available. Station facilities are owned by private companies, non-profit groups, individuals, or government organizations and are either leased or donated to the NWS. Maintenance and logistics are provided through numerous means including NWS Electronics Technicians (ETs), the current NWR National Maintenance Contract (NMC), regional and local maintenance contracts, or facility owner technicians.

3 Organizational Responsibilities

This section describes the responsibilities of the NWS Headquarters (WSH), Regional Headquarters, WFOs, and maintenance groups for NWR.

3.1 NWS Weather Service Headquarters (WSH)

The NOAA Assistant Administrator (AA) for Weather Services has overall responsibility for the NWR program.

3.2 Office of Dissemination (DIS)

DIS provides staff assistance to the NOAA AA for Weather Services for NWR program management and configuration control. DIS provides program and financial management, operational, engineering and communications support for NWR. DIS oversees the maintenance of the NWR antennas, transmitters, and network, as well as manages NWS telecommunication circuits, and provides WSH support for any commercial telecommunications services required by NWR.

3.2.1 Dissemination Systems Branch (DSB)

DSB has overall responsibility for the following:

1. Manages the entire NWR program and transmitter network. This includes managing the expansion/contraction of the overall network, financial oversight of NWR operations and maintenance, operating a national website for NWR program information and site broadcast coverage, and maintaining a national station database to manage the configuration for each NWR station.
2. Provides contract management for the NWR transmitter acquisition contracts and the NMC. The designated NMC manager is the focal point for technical management of the NMC and also manages all inquiries, issues, and assistance concerning NWR and NMC contracts. The NMC manager works with NWS regions, WFO technicians, and contractors to verify that transmitter equipment specified under the NMC are maintained to NWS standards and operational requirements.
3. Provides engineering and technical support for NWR equipment, systems and stations; including the BMH audio interface, telecommunications equipment and types, transition to and operations of Internet Protocol (IP)-based telecommunications, and ancillary

station components for remote monitoring. This technical support includes upgrades in technology, monitoring systems, and changes to system and broadcast communications.

4. Maintains configuration management for the components of the NWR system located at the federally owned, cooperator owned, or leased site with any additional equipment located at the WFO's location. This includes tracking component locations, establishing change management for replacement components within the network, relocating sites as needed, and retirement of unserviceable, logistically unsupportable or obsolete parts, equipment, or systems.
5. Acts as the technical and system management liaison with NWR stakeholders which include, NWS WSH, Regional Headquarters, WFO NWR focal points, equipment manufacturers, other government agencies, and user communities. Liaison responsibilities will be accomplished by the NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB). The DIS/DSB is responsible for the NWR network, communications with the regions, cooperators, patrons, state and local governments, and for any resulting programmatic issues. The DIS/DSB coordinates with the regional focal points to assist with station maintenance, relocation, configuration changes, and the addition/removal of stations to the network.
6. Provides outreach and reference for government agencies, private organizations, and to the public regarding NWR through the NWR webpages located at <https://www.weather.gov/nwr/>.
7. Supports frequency management of all NWR transmitters and telecommunications links through the NTIA.
8. Provides service requirements and instructions for NWR broadcast content and procedural instructions as described in [NWS Instruction \(NWSI\) 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#).
9. Provides requirements and technical specification for NWR SAME as described in [NWSI 10-1712, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) Specific Area Message Encoding \(SAME\)](#).
10. Documents procedures for NWR system corrective and preventative maintenance requirements and establish procedures for conducting maintenance as described in [NWSI 30-2107, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Maintenance](#).

3.2.2 Office of Observations – Services Branch (OBS32)

The Office of Observations and Services Branch provides the NWS Engineering Maintenance Reporting System (EMRS) to track and report maintenance on NWR equipment and tracks broadcast outages of the operational NWR transmitters.

3.2.3 Office of Central Processing (OCP)

OCP manages and supports the hardware and software baselines for All-Hazards Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) Enhanced Software (NWRWAVES) and the BMH running at each WFO

which together prepares, schedules, originates, and controls the broadcast content and broadcast signal running to each of the NWR transmitters.

3.3 Regional Headquarters

Each Regional Headquarters office is responsible for the program content of NWR within its area of responsibility in accordance with DIS/DSB direction and approved policies, procedures, and instructions. Each office is also manages NWR transmitter site relocations, expansion/reductions, and upgrade efforts. Each office communicates with DIS/DSB and keeps WSH up-to-date on these activities. The Regional Headquarters coordinates with the WFOs and WSOs regarding problems or operational changes and forwards to NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB) any network, system maintenance, or end-user problems that cannot be resolved at the local or regional levels. The Regional Headquarters office maintains all NWS-owned transmitters that are not covered by the NMC. The Regional Headquarters office will maintain documentation concerning the designated focal point(s) for the region, local NWR maintenance contractors, WFOs, and non-NWS stations (station managers and any other personnel designated as NWR focal points for those stations to whom service calls may be initiated on a normal and emergency basis).

3.3.1 Regional Telecommunications Task Managers (RTMs)

RTMs acquire and manage the NWR telecommunications service used in their respective regions.

3.3.2 Regional NWR Focal Points

Regional NWR focal points coordinate and manage the NWR radio frequencies within their respective areas of responsibility. This includes timely submission of coverage assessments and inter-modulation studies for new stations, and submission of Requests for Frequency Assignments (RFA) to the NTIA. Prior to submission, regional focal points coordinate with other NWR regional focal points when stations are in close proximity to common regional borders. Regional focal points will resolve interference problems with other radio sites; including coordination with counterparts in Canada or Mexico (as necessary) and in accordance with the established International Telecommunication Union (ITU) guidelines and the policies and agreements signed by the Department of Commerce (NOAA and NWS inclusive) and the Department of State.

The regional focal point initiates a NWR change request proposals for NWR station additions, relocations, decommissions, or configuration changes at a site. The proposal identifies the type of station, recurring and non-recurring costs with responsibilities, justification, factors for consideration, and special circumstances. The regional focal point submits the change request to the NWR Configuration Manager for review and approval/rejection of the change to the system. These proposed changes must be approved prior to implementing changes.

A NWR change request template is available by contacting the NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB).

3.4 Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) / Weather Service Offices (WSOs)

WFOs, which include WSOs, are responsible for the daily operations and quality control of the NWR broadcast and are the main interface with the external end-user community. The requisite office will notify the national maintenance contractor of transmitter system outages (if the station is maintained by the NMC) or notify the regional maintenance contractor or local NWS maintenance staff, as appropriate. The requisite office will also report outages as referred to in [NWSI 30-2107, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) Maintenance](#).

WFOs support relocations, removals, or expansion and upgrade activities in their areas. Each WFO designates an NWR focal point. The local focal point ensures all NWR network equipment assigned to their office by their region headquarters office is maintained in operational readiness according to established NWS policy, standards, instructions and NWR operational requirements. WFO/WSO local focal points will routinely monitor NWR stations, equipment, broadcast coverage, and contractor performance for quality assurance, reporting any inconsistencies or problems to the regional focal point and DIS/DSB.

The WFO focal point coordinates and observes NMC work as directed by the regional and national NWR focal points and the NMC Contracting Officer Representative (COR). The WFO focal point will report back any discrepancies or issues as a result of NMC maintenance or emergency response.

The local focal point monitors and assists, as necessary, all NWR stations and the respective contractors (if any) to ensure proper operation and maintenance of the NWR network and compliance with respective contracts or Memorandums of Agreement (MOA).

Monitoring the site broadcast may be performed through remote testing using developmental and/or operational systems or listeners who report when the transmitter is not operational, random or scheduled station inspections, or in conjunction with maintenance activities. The local focal point reports all findings and issues to the regional NWR focal point. If an NWR station goes off the air, the local focal point communicates the outage, coordinates assistance (if any) for the repair, and reports to the respective NWR focal points regarding the reason for the outage and how it was resolved.

3.5 Regional, State, and Local NWR Maintenance Contractors

Specific work requirements by regional, state, and local contractors should be detailed within specific contracts. One copy of each current regional, state, and/or local NWR maintenance contract (including all subsequent updates, changes, addendums and modifications) should be sent to the national DIS/DSB. The respective CORs must keep the regional NWR focal point aware of all logistics and maintenance issues. The regional focal point assists the responsible COR to resolve any emergency or issue concerning NWR operations or maintenance within their region.

3.6 Non-NWS Owned, Operated, and Maintained NWR Station Support

Maintaining transmitters not owned or operated by NWS, is the responsibility of the NWR transmitter station owner. The technical Point of Contact (POC) for the station manages the

maintenance for the site and coordinates with the WFO or regional NWR focal point for all NWR network, station, and equipment related issues, including testing. Technical POC information such as NWR station identification/station name, first and last name, e-mail, contact telephone and emergency telephone numbers should be collected for all non-NWS owned sites and maintained at Regional Headquarters. The regional NWR focal point should update this contact information and submit updates to this information to DIS/DSB.

4 Broadcast Service Area

A broadcast service area for NWR transmitters is defined in [NWSI 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#), for the purpose of this document, the broadcast service area is the specified transmitter PCA for each transmitter station. Coverage maps can be found on the NWR website at <https://www.weather.gov/nwr/Maps>.

5 Weather Products and Information

Information broadcast to the public is selected and prioritized based on the weather needs of the people in the service area, in accordance with the guidelines established in [NWSI 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#), and other applicable instructions.

5.1 Severe Weather Conditions

During severe weather, NWS personnel will, as required, interrupt the routine weather broadcasts and substitute warning messages or initiate live broadcasts. NWS personnel may also activate 1050Hz WAT and SAME coded messages within the PCA.

5.2 Non-Weather-Related Emergency and Hazard Warnings

Messages concerning non-weather-related emergencies and “all-hazards” type public warnings will be provided by authorized local, state, and federal officials to the WFO or WSH, as appropriate for dissemination. These messages and the means for their dissemination will comply with in [NWSI 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#), [NWSI 10-1712, Specific Area Message Encoding](#) and [NWSI 10-518, Non-Weather Emergency Products Specification](#).

5.3 Access to the NWR Broadcast

The NWR broadcast is available free of charge to any device capable of receiving the available NWR radio frequencies. Activation of the device for any alerts sent to the device from the NWR broadcast depends on the strength of the signal at the device’s location. The NWS is not responsible for any devices which receive and process alerts broadcast by NWR that may not be configured properly to alert or set to the proper frequency for that area.

6 NWR Maintenance

6.1 Authority

The NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB) performs a staff function within WSH, acting with authority delegated from the AA for Weather Services. DIS/DSB provides direction, assistance, resources, and other support to the regions as addressed in [NWSPD 30-21, System Maintenance](#).

WSH and the Regional Headquarters manage the overall NWR site and network maintenance program.

6.2 Transmitters

NWR transmitters are serviced under one of four types of maintenance support: by NWS government personnel; the NMC; a state/local maintenance contract; or private maintenance contractors.

1. Maintenance on NWR transmitters is the responsibility of the local WFO with support, as required, from Regional Maintenance Specialists.
2. The NMC is available for routine, corrective, and emergency maintenance services on NWR transmitters contracted by the NWS. NWR transmitters maintained by the NMC are specifically identified in the maintenance contract.
3. NWS regions may contract for some of their NWR transmitters for maintenance through state or local entities, with the approval of DIS/DSB.
4. Maintenance activities for non-NWS owned transmitters are the responsibility of the private NWR transmitter station owner.

7 Cooperators

The NWR network funded by the federal government was completed in the early 1980s. Upgrades to site equipment and transmitters and the addition of NWR stations over the years increased the network to over 1,000 sites. NWS encourages partners such as local community organizations, state, city, or county government(s), and private companies to become a NWR cooperator by sponsoring and funding the installation, operation and/or maintenance of NWR stations to expand service to their community. The NWS will assist in the analysis necessary for the siting the NWR transmitter. The NWS will obtain a license for the transmitter system and, if necessary, a license for a radio link between the NWS programming office and the transmitter. The license(s) remains the property of the NWS. The Cooperator agrees to provide all information required by the NWS for the license application. Licenses will be canceled upon termination of any agreement. Information on establishing a private NWR station is available from DIS/DSB or the Regional Director at any of the NWS Regional Headquarters. A Broadcast Service Agreement will be established between the NWS and the Cooperator and is subject to NOAA legal review.

Should a Cooperator wish to turn over a transmitter to the NWS at a later date, they can achieve that in different ways, depending on the type of transmitter being donated and the need for the current location. DIS/DSB will advise NWS personnel and assist in identifying the proper processes and forms to assist the Cooperator.

Agreements for Access to NWR Audio Output

Private and public television and radio stations and other organizations can have access to the signal delivered by NWR. Such an arrangement is mutually beneficial and is encouraged. The station gets a high-quality signal and the NWS has a means of disseminating broadcast material

even when the normal communications links and/or transmitters are out of service. Regional Headquarters have the authority to approve and execute agreements allowing users to obtain access to NWR audio output. Copies of signed agreements will be kept on file at the Regional Headquarters and appropriate WFOs, with a copy being forwarded to the DIS/DSB.

8 Notice of Station Outage

There are two types of outages: planned and unplanned.

8.1 Planned Outages

For planned broadcast outages and suspension of broadcasts, public notification procedures and rules for broadcast suspension due to radio interference are described in [NWSI 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#). For help addressing interference issues, the regional headquarters may contact the NWR Program Office (DIS/DSB).

8.2 Unplanned Outages

When NWR equipment is taken off the air for reasons other than planned maintenance or an unplanned outage occurs, weather and non-weather-related emergency information will be available to television and radio media via various NWS satellite streams and on NWS websites.

8.3 Internal NWS Notifications

Two types of notifications must be reported.

8.3.1 Outages

WFOs must report all outages to the Regional Headquarters and DIS/DSB as quickly as time allows. Submit all unplanned outages using the Unscheduled Outage System (USOS), and report critical outages as instructed in [NWSI 30-2112, Reporting Systems Equipment and Communications Outages](#).

8.3.2 Broadcast Suspension

WFOs must report all broadcast suspensions to Regional Headquarters and the DIS/DSB, as soon as possible as described in [NWSI 10-1710, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) Dissemination](#).

9 NOAA's Weather Radio All Hazards Logo

The NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards logo is a graphic with the words “All Hazards” printed above the acronym “NOAA”. Centered below the acronym “NOAA” is the product name, “Weather Radio”. Centered below the product name, “Weather Radio”, is the agency name, “NOAA’s National Weather Service.” Detailed information on the logo, its significance, and conditions and restrictions on its use at: https://www.weather.gov/nwr/allhazards_logo_info.



APPENDIX A - National Policy for the Use of Telecommunications to Warn the General Public

This Appendix includes the January 13, 1975, Policy Statement titled, "National Policy for the Use of Telecommunications to Warn the General Public" from the Office of Telecommunications Policy, Executive Office of the President, which designated NWR as "the only Federally sponsored radio transmission of warning information to receivers optionally available to the general public."

OFFICE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

January 13, 1975

NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO WARN THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Policy Statement

In November 1971, the Federal Government completed a review of national policies and programs for use of telecommunications to provide the American public with warning of an enemy attack or of natural disasters. It was established at that time, in a statement of national policy respecting home warning systems, that the acquisition and use of any warning receiver should be a voluntary decision by each citizen. Studies conducted since 1971 now have led the Government to update and reaffirm that policy.

It now has been established that in addition to the voluntary use of a warning receiver, the public interest would be served best by a single, Government operated system for warning citizens in their homes of enemy attack or natural disasters. In this regard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio will be the only Federally sponsored radio transmission of warning information to receivers optionally available to the general public.

The 1971 OTP policy statement committed the Federal Government to pursuing a program that would "establish a rapid, reliable warning capability, and ... bring the cost of a warning receiver within the reach of every American citizen." To this end, a series of tests and studies were initiated to explore several proposed home warning systems and market demands for home receivers. During 1974, the results of these studies were reviewed by the Warning Steering Committee, an interagency group chaired by the Office of Telecommunications Policy, and including representatives of NOAA, the Defense Civil



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Preparedness Agency (DCPA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Office of Preparedness (OP), and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

The studies focused primarily on two alternative home warning systems. The first is the Decision Information Distribution System (DIDS) of the Department of Defense. Designed originally for enemy attack warning, its scope could be expanded to include warning citizens of natural disasters. The system is in the experimental stage. The second system is the National Weather Service's (NWS) VHF/FM Tone Alert System. (The NWS is an agency of NOAA.) This system already is operational for weather forecasting, and incorporates a special tone alert signal permitting receivers to be activated automatically if desired by the owner.

After analyzing these studies, OTP concluded that the NOAA system is the choice for priority expansion and will serve as the single national home warning system. The reasons for this are:

(1) It provides routine daily weather services, tailored to local areas, thereby enhancing the marketability of receivers;

(2) Federal investment required to complete coverage of most populated areas will be much less than the investment required to complete the DIDS transmitting system, and can be accomplished much sooner; and

(3) Inexpensive commercial receivers for this system are already on the market.

The development of alternative systems, if allowed to continue unchecked, could result not only in a needless proliferation of home warning systems but could also effectively split the market for receivers because of different technologies, which, in turn, might keep the cost of receivers so high as to be a serious obstacle to widespread voluntary purchase. Therefore, in order to avoid duplication, public confusion and unnecessary future financial



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burden on the public (as consumers and taxpayers), the NOAA Weather Radio will be the only Federally sponsored radio transmission of warning information to receivers optionally available to the general public. Other systems such as the Decision Information Distribution System (DIDS) should no longer be considered candidates for this function.

The market demand studies for home receivers indicated that many citizens would voluntarily purchase receivers capable of receiving home warning (if one were available), but that the total number of households with such receivers would not -- for the foreseeable future -- constitute a majority of the population. Therefore, this policy recognizes that Government operated home warning systems, with purchase of the receiver on a voluntary basis, can only supplement other existing warning systems.

The Warning Steering Committee, chaired by the Office of Telecommunications Policy, will coordinate efforts for the use of telecommunications for warning dissemination to attain a consolidated national warning capability. In support of this effort, NOAA and DCPA will develop necessary plans to use the NOAA Weather Radio as a supplementary attack warning system, and will further develop plans and procedures to incorporate the civil defense siren systems into the consolidated warning system, as well as to maximize the provision of warning information to radio and television stations.



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Included also is a June 11, 2002, letter from the Federal Emergency Management Agency affirming the use of NWR for all-hazard warning to the public.



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

June 11, 2002

John J. Kelly, Jr.
Director
National Weather Service
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric
Administration
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am writing to express my support for using National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio for civil emergency messages involving all hazards, not just weather-related ones. Through NOAA weather radio, we have a capability in place that can help save lives. We owe it to the public, as stewards of public safety and of tax dollars, to make maximum use of that capability.

In fact, this Agency already relies on the National Weather Service (NWS) for all-hazard warning to the public. Under Emergency Support Function #2 of the Federal Response Plan, a responsibility of NWS is to "Provide public dissemination of critical pre- and post-event information over the all-hazards National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio (NWR) system, the NOAA Weather Wire Service, and the Emergency Managers' Weather Information Network (EMWIN)." This is part and parcel of authority granted to the President under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and delegated to the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to "utilize ... any other Federal communications system for the purpose of providing warning to governmental authorities and the civilian population in areas endangered by disasters" (42 USC 5132 (c)). Under Title VI of the same Act, it is within the FEMA Director's authority to "make appropriate provision for necessary emergency preparedness communications and for dissemination of warnings to the civilian population of a hazard." (42 USC 5196(d)).

I believe use of NOAA weather radio for all-hazard warning to the public is consistent with the Federal Response Plan, the FEMA warning-related authorities I have cited, and good government. As a coordinator of Federal preparedness and response efforts, I support your initiatives to ensure NOAA weather radio is an all-hazard warning system, and I will gladly work with you to integrate your initiatives into our overall preparedness and response program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe M. Allbaugh", is written over a horizontal line.

Joe M. Allbaugh
Director