

# Weather Bureau/National Weather Service History in Alaska

Location	Type	Years	Details
<b>Anchorage</b>	WBO WBAS DFO WBFO WBMO WSFO WSO WSCMO WFO RFC CWSU HQ	1929-present	<p>The first Weather Bureau office in Anchorage was established 7/1/1929 on 4th Ave. It moved to Merrill Field in 1943, where rawinsonde observations began in June 1946. The office was moved to the new Anchorage International Airport 11/1/1953. A forecast office was established in July 1964, and moved off the airport grounds in November 1968; a separate meteorological observatory remained at the airport, while another office provided international flight documentation and briefings. The WSMO was contracted out in October 1980.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Alaska RFC</a> was established in 1971; river forecasts had been issued by the Alaska Regional HQ for a few years before. It was co-located with the Anchorage WSFO and the regional HQ. It was located at the Hill Building and the Federal Building downtown, before moving to near the airport in 1995. In 1997, the office assumed responsibility for the Pacific Region as well, and was renamed the Alaska-Pacific RFC in 2000.</p> <p>A Center Weather Service Unit operates out off the Air Route Traffic Control Center, while a separate Alaska Aviation Weather Unit is co-located with the local WFO.</p>
<b>Annette</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1947-present	The Weather Bureau opened an Airways Station in July 1947, initially taking surface observations but assuming upper-air observations at the end of the year.
<b>Barrow</b>	WBO WBAS WSO	1920-present	The first Weather Bureau building in Barrow was opened September 1920, but was severely damaged in a fire 12/19/1924. Upper-air observations began in 1940. The site was upgraded to a first-order station in 1941.
<b>Barter Island</b>	WBAS WSO WSCMO	1956-1988	A Weather Bureau Airport Station was established in December 1956, taking over from the Air Weather Service. Surface and upper-air observations were taken. The station became a NWS Contract Meteorological Observatory in 1982, then closed at the end of 1988.
<b>Bethel</b>	WBO WBAS WSO	1923-present	A second-order Weather Bureau station was operational from 1923 to 1942, then upgraded to a first-order station.
<b>Bettles</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1968-1976	The Weather Bureau opened an airport station in Bettles in May 1968, operating overnight while the FAA took observations during the day. The FAA took over full-time by 1976.
<b>Cold Bay</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1954-present	The Weather Bureau took over weather operations at the former Thornborough AFB in July 1954. Upper air observations began in August 1955.
<b>Cordova</b>	WBAS	1945-1964	A Weather Bureau Airport Station was established in September 1945, taking over operations from the Air Force. Responsibility was transferred to the FAA 11/15/1964, and the WBAS was closed.

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<b>Big Delta</b>	WBO WSO	1968-1971	The Weather Bureau opened an office at the FAA Flight Service Station at Fort Greely in December 1968, operating overnights while the FAA was responsible during the day. The office was closed in the early 1970's.
<b>Fairbanks</b>	WBO WBAS DFO WSO WSFO WFO WSCMO	1929-present	A Weather Bureau office opened 7/15/1929 in the Horseshoe Building in downtown Fairbanks, with complete weather and climate observations starting November 1929. The office moved to the new Courthouse building, one block away, in July 1933. The first radiosonde observation was made 5/24/1933. Weather observations increased to 24 hours per day and radiosondes increased to twice a day in March 1941. In July, 1942, all forecasting and observation observations were moved to the Army's Ladd Field. In July, 1943, observations were moved to nearby Weeks Field, and all forecast operations moved to weeks field the following summer. Observations were moved to the new Fairbanks International Airport, four miles southwest of town, on 8/22/1951 and forecast operations were moved there in early October. In 1953, most forecast operations were transferred to Anchorage and Fairbanks became a standard WBAS. By the late 1960s, a small number of meteorologists were assigned to Fairbanks in support of fire weather and air pollution forecasting. In April, 1974, following the passage of legislation to remove all legal obstacles to construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, Fairbanks was reestablished as a WSFO, with forecast and observation functions at the Fairbanks International Airport. In late 1977, forecast operations moved to the new Federal Building and Courthouse in downtown Fairbanks, while surface and upper air observations remained at the airport. The first (and only) WSR-88D radar in Interior Alaska was installed on Pedro Dome, 20 miles northeast of Fairbanks in the summer of 1993. In 1998, forecast operations moved to the new International Arctic Research Center building on the University of Alaska campus. In September, 1999, responsibility for ASOS augmentation at the airport was transferred to a contractor with FAA administration. NWS staff continued to launch RAOBS from the airport until March, 2006, when this was transferred to a contractor with NWS administration. The WFO resumed upper air observations in the fall of 2012.
<b>Farewell</b>	WBAS WSO	1967-1971	The Weather Bureau established an office at the FAA Flight Service Station in 1967, operating 16 hours a day. In 1970, it was reduced to a single shift on weekends, then closed in 1971.
<b>Gambell</b>	WB/UA	1942-1953	An upper air station was established in Gambell in 1942.
<b>Gulkana</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1967-1971	A WBAS was opened at the Gulkana FSS station in July 1967, primarily operating during the overnight hours. It was replaced by an Automated Meteorological Observing Station in 1971.
<b>Homer</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1967-present	The Weather Bureau established an office at the Homer FSS in 1967, operating primarily overnight during the week. Weekend shifts were added in 1971.
<b>Iliamna</b>	WBAS WBO	1967-1970	The Weather Bureau established joint operations with the Flight Service Station in Iliamna in April 1967, operating two shifts a day. Operations were fully assumed by the FSS in May 1970.

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<b>Juneau</b>	WBO DFO HQ WSFO WFO	1917-present	The Weather Bureau began issuing forecasts for Juneau in 1917, then expanded the forecasts to Fairbanks and the Tanana Valley. In May 1919, Juneau was established as the district forecast office for the state. A regional headquarters office was opened in 1941, then moved to Anchorage in the mid 1940's.
<b>Ketchikan</b>	WBO	1940-1947	The Weather Bureau assumed operations of the Ketchikan station from cooperative observers in September 1940. At the end of 1947, the Weather Bureau office was closed.
<b>King Salmon</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1955-present	The Air Force turned over surface weather operations to the Weather Bureau in November 1955, with upper-air observations transferred in December 1955. The Air Force resumed taking observations in 1975, and the NWS office was operated 1 shift a day. The NWS resumed observations when the Air Force base was closed in 1993.
<b>Kodiak</b>	WSO	1973-present	A National Weather Service office was established in January 1973, assuming operations from the U.S. Navy. Surface and upper air observations were taken.
<b>Kotzebue</b>	WBAS WSO	1942-present	The Weather Bureau took over for the Signal Corps at Kotzebue in October 1942. The station began 16 hour per day operations in 1971, with the Flight Service Station taking observations during the remainder of the day.
<b>McGrath</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1942-present	The Weather Bureau opened an airport station at the McGrath Airport in April 1942, and began radiosonde observations in 1946. The station remains in operation today. Routine radiosonde observations began in October 1954.
<b>Minchumina</b>	WBO	1967-1969	This station operated briefly in the late 1960's in support of fire weather forecasting.
<b>Nome</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1930-present	A second-order station was established in Nome in 1916, then upgraded to a first-order station 8/1/1930. It originally was in the city of Nome, then relocated to the airport 3/1/1946.
<b>Northway</b>	WBAS	1942-1957	A Weather Bureau Airport Station opened in October 1942, taking over for the Air Force. Upper-air observations were transferred to the Cold Bay office in June 1955, with the station operating 16 to 20 hours a day afterward. The office was closed in July 1957.
<b><u>Palmer</u></b>	TWC	1973-present	The Palmer Observatory was established in 1967 as part of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. It was transferred to the NWS in 1973 and renamed the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. Its area of responsibility was expanded to include the west coast of Canada and the United States in 1982. Operations were further expanded in 1996 to include any Pacific tsunami that may affect these areas, and it was renamed the West Coast & Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. Around 2005, further expansion in operation was done to include the U.S. Gulf Coast, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and the Atlantic coasts of the U.S. and Canada.
<b>Saint Paul</b>	WBO WBAS	1945-present	The Weather Bureau took over operations of the St. Paul Island station from the Army. Upper-air observations were added in 1947, when the

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	WSO		station was moved to the airport.
<b>Sheyma</b>	WBO WBAS WSO	1960-1973	The Weather Bureau took over operations of the Sheyma station from the Navy Weather Service in 1960. The Air Force, which had earlier operated the station, resumed responsibilities at the beginning of 1974.
<b>Summit (Cantwell)</b>	WBAS WSO	1968-1976	This station started as a joint operation with the FAA, and was separated in 1970. The station was closed after an automated station took over in October 1976.
<b>Talkeetna</b>	WBAS WSO WSCMO	1966-1991?	This station was established for a joint operation with the FAA, which had been handling the observations for several years prior. The NWS portion became a contract meteorological observatory in 1980.
<b>Tanana</b>	WBAS	1968-1969	A joint Weather Bureau/FSS operation began in May 1968, with the Weather Bureau operating overnights on weekdays. The FSS assumed full operations when the Weather Bureau office was "temporarily" closed in July 1969, but the office was never reopened.
<b>Umiat</b>	WBAS	1947-1952	Joint operations with the CAA were conducted from 1947 to 1952, with only a couple Weather Bureau employees involved. The station became a part time CAA station in 1952.
<b>Unalakleet</b>	WBAS WSO	1967-1990	Joint Weather Bureau/FSS operations began in 1967, with the Weather Bureau operating evening and overnight on weekdays, and 24 hours on weekends. By 1973, the station operated days throughout the week, and evenings on the weeknights. An Automated Meteorological Observation System was installed around 1976, which took observations when the weather office was closed. The office itself was closed in March 1990.
<b>Valdez</b>	WSO DCO	1972-present	The NWS established an office in downtown Valdez in October 1972 to take aviation observations for 8 hours a day on weekdays. This was expanded to 16 hours a day on weekdays and 8 hours weekends, beginning in January 1975, with an additional weekend shift added in July of that year. A full 24 hour a day operation was established in March 1977 when the office was moved to the Coast Guard building.
<b>Yakutat</b>	WBAS WBO WSO	1948-present	The U.S. Army transferred weather operations in Yakutat to the Weather Bureau in June 1948. Upper air observations began in the mid 1950's.