

NOUS41 KWBC 301430  
PNSWSH

Public Information Statement 20-78  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
1030 AM EDT Fri Oct 30 2020

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
              -NOAAPort  
              Other NWS partners and NWS employees

From:         Douglas C. Young  
              Chief, Digital and Graphical Information Support  
              Branch

Subject:      Soliciting comments through December 15, 2020, on a  
              proposal to add polygons to Non-Weather Emergency  
              Messages (NWEMs) disseminated by NWS in World  
              Meteorological Organization (WMO) text products

The NWS is accepting comments through December 15, 2020, on a  
proposal to add polygons to NWEMs disseminated via WMO text  
products when polygons are provided by civil alerting  
authorities.

The NWS supports alerting authorities by relaying NWEMs via NOAA  
Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) and the Emergency Alert System  
(EAS). These messages provide the public with time-critical life  
or property-saving emergency information. NWS also conveys these  
messages on NOAA Weather Wire Service, the Emergency Managers  
Weather Information Network (EMWIN) and the NOAAPort/Satellite  
Broadcast Network. Examples of NWEMs include the Civil Emergency  
Message and Evacuation Immediate. The complete list of state and  
local NWEMs is provided in the link below for Non-Weather  
Emergency Products Specification:

[NWS Instruction \(NWSI\) 10-518](#)

State and local EAS plans detail the specific NWEMs recommended  
for conveyance by broadcasters to EAS at the state and local  
levels.

Today, NWS disseminates and broadcasts NWEMs over NWR and EAS on  
a whole (entire)-county basis. As a first step towards a broader  
NWS goal to reduce the geographical over alerting of NWEMs, NWS  
is proposing to incorporate polygons--when provided by alerting

authorities--into WMO-formatted NWEMs. This change will provide third party information providers and decision makers with the exact boundaries associated with NWEMs. When alerting authorities provide the NWS with polygons, NWS would phase in the use of polygons in WMO products as NWS is able to update its software.

The proposed change supports NWS dissemination of some NWEMs via NWR and EAS using Partial County Alerting in the future. NWS will provide additional information on this NWR initiative in a future Public Information Statement.

The Initial Operating Capability (IOC) requirements for adding polygons to NWEMs will follow the existing NWS requirements for adding polygons to other NWS WMO products. These requirements are specified in [NWSI 10-1701](#), *Text Product Formats and Codes*:

- The maximum number of vertices included will be 20
- Normally, there will be four points per line of text, as needed
- The last point will connect back to the first point
- Coded pairs will identify the latitude and longitude of a single point, in degrees and hundredths

The addition of polygons to NWEM WMO text products would occur in a phased implementation, with IOC for those NWEMs received by NWS from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

In conjunction with the proposal to incorporate polygons in text NWEMs, if the WMO product does not specify a polygon, then the message applies to the entire county.

If NWS receives positive feedback on this proposal to expand the WMO product format of NWEMs to include polygons, the implementation date for adding polygons and transitioning to mixed case will be dependent on NWS national software change schedules. Any changes will be preceded by a Service Change Notice.

For examples of current and proposed products and additional details, please see the Service Description Document (SDD) at: [https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/SDD\\_NWEMs\\_polygons\\_2020.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/SDD_NWEMs_polygons_2020.pdf)

Please send any comments or questions to:

Tim Schott  
Meteorologist, NWS Dissemination Services

NWS Headquarters  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
301-427-9336  
[Timothy.Schott@noaa.gov](mailto:Timothy.Schott@noaa.gov)

NWS Public Information Statements are online at:  
<https://www.weather.gov/notification>

NNNN