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Public Information Statement 20-78 Updated
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
150 PM EST Tue Dec 15 2020

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

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 Branch

Subject: Updated: Soliciting comments through January 15, 2021,
 on a proposal to add polygons to Non-Weather Emergency
 Messages (NWEM) disseminated by NWS in World
 Meteorological Organization (WMO) text products

Updated to extend Public Comment Period through January 15,
2021.

The NWS is accepting comments through January 15, 2021, 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. The messages are also
conveyed 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 NWS Instruction (NWSI) 10-518, Non-
Weather Emergency Products Specification:

<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01005018curr.pdf>

The list of specific NWEMs recommended for conveyance by
broadcasters to EAS at the state and local levels is detailed in
respective state and local EAS plans.

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 software is updated.

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, as specified in NWSI 10-1701, Text Product Formats and Codes:

<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01017001curr.pdf>

The maximum number of vertices included will be 20. Normally there will be four points per line of text, as needed. The last point connects 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 no polygon is specified in the WMO product, the message will apply to the entire county.

If NWS receives positive feedback on the 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 (The site below may be temporarily out of service):

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/SDD_NWEMs_polygons_2020.pdf

Please send any comments or questions to:

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

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