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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 19-101 Updated  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
130 PM EST Tue Jan 14 2020

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

From:        Mary Mullusky  
              Chief, Water Resources Services Branch

Subject: Updated: Implementation of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)  
Changes for Flash Flood Warnings on or after February 6, 2020

Updated to correct PDD link to:

[https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD\\_OplWirelessEmergencyAlertMessages\\_forFlashFloodWarnings\\_2020.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_OplWirelessEmergencyAlertMessages_forFlashFloodWarnings_2020.pdf)

Updated implementation date to February 6, 2020 and to add 360-character messaging in English and Spanish.

Beginning on or after February 6, 2020, the National Weather Service (NWS) will issue Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) for Flash Flood Warnings (FFW) based on damage threat tags. WEAs will only be sent for FFWs with a damage threat tag of either "considerable" or "catastrophic" using the new 90- and 360-character messaging in English and Spanish. FFWs labeled with these tags are life threatening and require urgent action. Because these tags are applied to FFWs relatively rarely, this will limit the number of FFW WEAs distributed. WEAs will also be issued for Flash Flood Statements that exhibit an increase in damage threat (e.g., base [no tag] to considerable, base [no tag] to catastrophic, and considerable to catastrophic). This change will not affect key information in the FFW segment header block, including the Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) and Hydrologic VTEC (H-VTEC) strings, nor will it affect changes to the existing criteria for warning dissemination. All FFWs will still be issued and distributed via NOAA Weather Radio, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), on radio and TV broadcasts, weather.gov and through dissemination systems to our emergency managers and partners. Information about the specific changes to WEA Messages for FFWs can be found in the Product Description Document (PDD):

[https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD\\_OplWirelessEmergencyAlertMessages\\_forFlashFloodWarnings\\_2020.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_OplWirelessEmergencyAlertMessages_forFlashFloodWarnings_2020.pdf)

The characterization of the flash flood damage threat, source information and causative event, along with examples of FFWs in Impact-Based Warnings (IBW) format, are contained in the PDD:

[https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/IBWforFlashFloods\\_2019.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/IBWforFlashFloods_2019.pdf)

Based on feedback from the public survey referenced in the notice:

[https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pns19-31ffw\\_wea.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pns19-31ffw_wea.pdf) and approvals for the broader IBW effort, NWS is proceeding to implement the WEA changes for FFWs.

WEA is a joint effort between the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the wireless industry that allows emergency alerting authorities to geographically target emergency messages to mobile devices (primarily cell phones). The NWS will provide messages to WEA for hazards believed to be life threatening and that have consequences that can be mitigated or minimized by immediate action.

More information about WEA can be found at:

<https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea>

For more information, please email:

[kate.abshire@noaa.gov](mailto:kate.abshire@noaa.gov)

National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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