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Service Change Notice 19-87
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
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To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

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

Subject: NWS WFO Dissemination of Blue Alerts Begins on or after January 7, 2020

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) authorized a new Emergency Alert System (EAS) Event Code of BLU for Blue Alerts via Report and Order 17-170 issued December 14, 2017. Blue Alerts are issued by state and territory (hereafter referenced as state) and local officials to warn the public when there is actionable information related to a law enforcement officer who is missing, seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, or when there is an imminent credible threat to an officer.

Each state has unique EAS policies and procedures. As with all Non-Weather Emergency Messages, if the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) and state broadcasters association choose to convey Blue Alerts to the EAS, state and local officials may request the NWS to convey these messages across NWS systems.

Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) will have the capability to convey Blue Alerts using the following set of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) text products with unique Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) Identifiers and WMO Headings:

https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/ref/blue_rc_ids.pdf

For those states in which Blue Alerts will be conveyed, NWS partners and users should take action to update their databases with the appropriate AWIPS Identifiers and WMO Headings.

Blue Alerts will also be disseminated over NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR); if Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) tones accompany the message dissemination, the SAME Event Code will be BLU.

WFOs can only convey Blue Alerts after they have first coordinated with their respective SECC and broadcasters associations and after updated software is in place at the WFO. According to the current NWS software implementation schedule, the ability of WFOs to convey Blue Alerts using the BLU EAS Event Code will gradually phase in across WFOs from January through April 2020.

NWS emphasizes the assignment of AWIPS Identifiers and WMO Headings for a given office does not necessarily mean the office will convey Blue Alerts. Further information on these state decisions may be obtained from a state's SECC.

If you have any questions regarding the NWS plans to convey Blue Alerts, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

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

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