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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 21-22
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
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To: Subscribers:
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From: Michelle Hawkins, Chief
Severe, Fire, Public, and Winter Weather Services
Branch

Subject: Enhanced features of the text-based NWS Severe Thunderstorm Warning
and Special Weather Statement products implemented on or around
April 28, 2021

Effective on or around April 28, 2021, the NWS will implement new and enhanced features in the text products of the Severe Thunderstorm Warning (SVR) and the Special Weather Statement (SPS) for instances of sub-severe convective events. Although there are changes in both products that require different levels of attention by end users, NWS will operationally enable them at the same time across all NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO).

The primary addition to SVRs will be the new damage threat categories, as part of the Impact-Based Warning (IBW) coded tags, at the bottom of the product. Depending on the selection of wind and/or hail values in the warning, SVRs will now be assigned one of three threat-level categories. The lowest-end category will not receive a damage threat IBW tag. These coded threat tags will appear below the double ampersand and just below the supplemental polygon location and storm motion information portion of the alphanumeric/text product.

The container in SVRs for the damage threat categories is the "THUNDERSTORM DAMAGE THREAT" IBW coded tag. The tag for the upper two categories for SVRs will be set to either "CONSIDERABLE" or "DESTRUCTIVE," depending on hail size and/or wind magnitude. The highest-level category would appear in the tag line, even if both categories apply through the selected value of either wind or hail. The base-level SVRs will not invoke the damage threat tag and will only display the wind and hail amounts as they appear in the current operational product. SVRs that contain either of the damage threat tags would be based on the following minimum trigger criteria:

CONSIDERABLE...1.75 inch diameter hail (golf ball-sized) and/or 70 mph thunderstorm

winds.

DESTRUCTIVE...2.75 inch diameter hail (baseball-sized) and/or 80 mph thunderstorm winds.

NWS will also incorporate all changes to the SVR in the Severe Weather Statement (SVS), which serves as the official update/follow-up alphanumeric product for SVRs.

SVRs containing the DESTRUCTIVE tag will be recommended to activate a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) to mobile devices through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS). This added capability is aimed at promoting instant and immediate life preservation actions for this level of hail and/or wind threat. A WEA message would be activated for any SVR, whether in the initial issuance or in any update SVS that carries the DESTRUCTIVE tag. This full activation capability should be activated at some point after the April 28, 2021, implementation of the change to SVRs. NWS will send out this change to WEA messages as a separate Service Change Notice that describes the different messages for wind and hail threats.

Users can find additional minor changes to the other IBW tags in the SVR in the Product Description Document, particularly for the wind and hail tags. These changes also will be made to the pertinent tags in the TOR and the sub-severe Special Weather Statement (SPS).

Examples of the Impact-Based Warning (IBW) categories for the Severe Thunderstorm Warning (SVR) are contained in the document linked below:

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_Opl_SevereThunderstormWarningCategories_2021.pdf

The Public Information Statement (20-49) describing these changes is online at:

https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pns20-49severe_thunderstorm_IBW.pdf

The primary change to the SPS for sub-severe convective thunderstorm events is the complete reformatting of the text product into the IBW format. As it does with convective warnings, the IBW format separates out key information about the threat(s), including the threat type(s), source of the information, and general impacts from the threat(s) into bulleted sections titled HAZARD, SOURCE, and IMPACT. This format also reiterates the impact information succinctly, at the end of the text product, using parsable coded tag lines. Formatting of the IBW tags section will follow the new changes to the SVR IBW tags (linked in this notice), not the current operational version.

Additionally, WFOs that currently use the subheadline of "Significant Weather Advisory" will revert to a generic headline that succinctly describes a strong storm/line of strong storms that will impact certain counties/parishes through the valid time of the statement. Currently, all WFOs do not use this subheadline operationally. This change will baseline the use of headlines in this product.

The SPS will also include two new basis phenomena of landspouts (weaker tornado-like funnels) and waterspouts, which occur exclusively over closed, non-marine zoned inland lakes. NWS is making no changes to the SPS format or issuance criteria for other weather hazards or general usage.

Examples of the IBW-formatted Special Weather Statements are contained in the document, linked below:

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/Sub_Severe_SPS_Examples_2021.pdf

The Public Information Statement (20-53) describing these changes is online at:

https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdf2/pns20-53impact-based_sps.pdf

Please send additional comments/questions on these changes to:

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NWS Severe Weather Services Program Manager.

National Public Information Statements are online at:

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

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