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Service Change Notice 22-63 Updated
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
420 PM EDT Thu Sep 15 2022

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From: Daniel Roman, Acting Chief
 Severe, Fire, Public, and Winter Weather Services
 Branch

Subject: Updated: Changes to Fire Weather Zones for NWS Weather Forecast
 Office Albuquerque, New Mexico, Effective September 13, 2022

Updated to correct names for new Fire Weather forecast zones NMZ121: Upper Rio Grande Valley and Lower Chama River Valley and NMZ124: Sandia and Manzano Mountains which went into effect Tuesday, September 13 2022.

Effective, September 13, 2022, at 2:00 PM Mountain Daylight Time (MDT), 20:00 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS Weather Forecast Office in Albuquerque, NM (ABQ) completed changes to the Fire Weather Forecast Zones encompassing Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Taos, Colfax, Union, Mora, San Miguel, Guadalupe, Torrance, Bernalillo, Valencia, Socorro, Lincoln, Catron, and Cibola counties in northern New Mexico. All fire weather forecasts and related products will use the new zone numbers and names shown below.

These changes are intended to provide increased flexibility and improved accuracy of forecast, watch, warning, and advisory products in the fire weather program. The new zones were divided primarily to more closely align with natural topography, terrain and vegetation supported by local fire partners and national forests. This will in turn lead to more optimal issuance of fire weather products since the zones will have similar characteristics.

Fire Weather zone NMZ101 remains unchanged as the Northwest Plateau zone. Zone NMZ102, NMZ103 and NMZ104 are organized into five different zones. The new zone NMZ120 is called the North Central Mountains zone, new zone NMZ121 is called the Upper Rio Grande Valley and Lower Chama River Valley zone, new zone NMZ122 is called the Sangre de Cristo Mountain zone, zone NMZ123 is the Northeast Highlands, and zone NMZ104 is called the Northeast Plains as before. Areas from previous zones NMZ102 and NMZ103 were split up to form zones NMZ121 and NMZ122. Zone NMZ123 takes a very small area from zone NMZ104, but is otherwise unchanged.

Previous zone NMZ105 remains the same with the same area and new name of West-Central Mountains Including the Chuska Mountains. Previous zone

NMZ106 remains the same zone with the same area and name of Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Previous zones NMZ107 and NMZ108 were reorganized into three zones with the eastern portion of NMZ107 and western portion of NMZ108 creating the new zone NMZ125. Zone NMZ107 became NMZ124 and changed to the name Sandia and Manzano Mountains. A new zone, NMZ125 was created and called Central Highlands. Previous zone NMZ108 became NMZ126 with the same name of East Central Plains but is smaller in area. Previous zone NMZ109 remains the same area with a new name of West-Central Basin and Range.

Table 1: Current Fire weather zones and corresponding Universal Geographic Codes (UGC) for WFO Albuquerque.

UGC: Old Fire Weather Zone Names

- NMZ101: Northwest Plateau
- NMZ102: North Central Mountains
- NMZ103: Northeast Highlands
- NMZ104: Northeast Plains
- NMZ105: West Central Mountains
- NMZ106: Middle Rio Grande Valley
- NMZ107: Sandia and Manzano Mountains
- NMZ108: East Central Plains
- NMZ109: West Central Highlands

Table 2: New Fire weather zones and corresponding UGC effective September 13, 2022

UGC: New Fire Weather Zone Names

- NMZ101: Northwest Plateau
- NMZ104: Northeast Plains
- NMZ105: West Central Mountains
- NMZ106: Middle Rio Grande Valley
- NMZ109: West Central Basin and Range
- NMZ120: North Central Mountains
- NMZ121: Upper Rio Grande Valley and Lower Chama River Valley
- NMZ122: Sangre de Cristo Mountains
- NMZ123: Northeast Highlands
- NMZ124: Sandia and Manzano Mountains
- NMZ125: Central Highlands
- NMZ126: East Central Plains

Table 3: Primary cities included in the new fire weather zones effective September 13, 2022

UGC: Primary cities within New Zones

- NMZ120: Chama
- NMZ121: Santa Fe, Espanola, Taos
- NMZ122: Taos Ski Valley, Red River, Angel Fire
- NMZ123: Raton, Springer, Las Vegas
- NMZ124: Estancia

NMZ125: Vaughn, Clines Corners, Santa Rosa
NMZ126: Tucumcari, Clovis

Table 4: NWS products affected by the WFO Albuquerque, NM, fire weather zone changes effective September 13, 2022:

PRODUCT NAME	AWIPS ID	WMO	HEADING
FIRE WEATHER FORECAST	FWFABQ	FNUS55	KABQ
FIRE WEATHER MESSAGE	RFWABQ	WWUS85	KABQ
FIRE WEATHER POINT FORECAST	PFWABQ	FOUS54	KABQ

Users of WFO Albuquerque products must take the appropriate action to ensure systems recognize the new UGC (Z) and new zone alignments and names.

Updated fire weather zone shapefiles are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/gis/FireZones>

A graphical depiction of these changes are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/media/abq/Briefings/FireWXZoneChangeABQ.pdf> and
through and ArcGIS StoryMap:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9d3cdf9e939a44249879c7a8875c1a98f>

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

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

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