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Public Information Statement, Comments Requested
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
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From: Mark Tew
 Chief, Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch

Subject: Extending the Comment Period for the Beach Hazards Statement
through December 31, 2014

NWS has extended the comment period on its experimental Beach Hazards Statement through December 31, 2014. The current test offices (Table 1) will continue to test the Beach Hazards Statement using the two options (described below) from 2013. Tables 2 and 3 indicate which option offices are testing. For information on last year's test, refer to Service Change Notice 13-33:

https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdfs/scn13-33bhs_expansion.pdf

The Beach Hazard Statement provides beachgoers and local authorities with significant information related to hazards, actual or potential, which do not meet NWS Advisory or Warning criteria. This includes, but are not limited to:

Dangerous currents in the surf zone
Unusual surf/wave conditions not meeting advisory criteria
Unusual water temperatures
Unusual weather conditions along the beach that do not meet advisory criteria.

Rip Current Statements inform beachgoers of the potential and risk level for rip currents.

Coastal Flood Statements inform beachgoers about minor flooding along the coast that does not meet advisory criteria.

Option 1: Use Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) BH.S instead of all of the following VTEC codes: CF.S (Coastal Flood Statement), LS.S (Lakeshore Flood Statement) and RP.S (Rip Current Statement).

Option 2: Use VTEC RP.S for rip currents, VTEC CF.S for minor coastal flooding and VTEC BH.S for other beach and surf zone hazards.

There are no new VTEC codes for the continuation of this test. Users do not need to make any adjustments to their systems.

Table 1: Communication identifiers for 16 NWS offices testing Beach Hazard Statements which were effective May 20, 2013:

Issuing WFO -----	WMO Header -----	AWIPS ID -----
Newport/Morehead City, NC	WHUS42 KMHX	CFWMHX
Wakefield, VA	WHUS41 KAKQ	CFWAKQ
New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA	WHUS44 KLIJ	CFWLIJ
Tampa Bay Area, FL	WHUS42 KTBW	CFWTBW
Miami, FL	WHUS42 KMFL	CFWMFL
Key West, FL	WHUS42 KKEY	CFWKEY
Corpus Christi, TX	WHUS44 KCRP	CFWCRP
Grand Rapids, MI	WHUS43 KGRR	CFWGRR
Marquette, MI	WHUS43 KMQT	CFWMQT
Gaylord, MI	WHUS43 KAPX	CFWAPX
Northern Indiana, IN	WHUS43 KIWJ	CFWIKW
Chicago, IL	WHUS43 KLOT	CFWLOT
Seattle, WA	WHUS56 KSEW	CFWSEW
San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey, CA	WHUS46 KMTR	CFWMTR
Los Angeles/Oxnard, CA	WHUS46 KLOX	CFWLTX
San Diego, CA	WHUS46 KSGX	CFWSGX

Table 2: WFOs testing Option 1 in 2014:

Issuing WFO:
 Grand Rapids, MI
 Marquette, MI
 Gaylord, MI
 Northern Indiana, IN
 Chicago, IL
 Seattle, WA
 San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey, CA
 Los Angeles/Oxnard, CA
 San Diego, CA
 Newport/Morehead City, NC*
 Wakefield, VA*

*WFOs Newport/Morehead City, NC and Wakefield, VA will use the Coastal Flood Statement (VTEC CF.S) for minor flooding and the Beach Hazards Statement (VTEC BH.S) for all other beach and surf zone related hazards, including rip currents. These WFOs will not use the Rip Current Statement (VTEC RP.S).

Table 3: WFOs testing Option 2 this season:

Issuing WFO:
 New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA
 Tampa Bay Area, FL
 Miami, FL
 Key West, FL
 Corpus Christi, TX

Other coastal NWS offices not participating in this test will continue using the CF.S, LS.S, and RP.S codes. This test of the Beach Hazards Statement will continue until further notice unless significant negative feedback is received.

Some of the test offices (Table 4) have collaborated with other agencies to include specific ecological hazards in the Beach Hazards Statement.

Issuing WFO -----	Ecological Hazards in BHS -----
San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey, CA	Bacteria in water (issued only when beaches are closed for dangerous bacteria levels)
Tampa Bay Area, FL	Harmful Algal Bloom (issued only when there is a high risk of respiratory impacts)

WFOs Miami and Key West, FL, are in the process of developing policies to issue Harmful Algal Bloom information in the Beach Hazards Statement. An updated Service Change Notice will be issued when those offices will begin issuing Harmful Algal Bloom information in the Beach Hazards Statement.

Below are links to examples of the BHS issued for Florida:

Dangerous Swimming Conditions:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/dangerous_swimming.pdf

Rip Currents and High Water Levels:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/rip_currents_hwl.pdf

Minor Coastal Flooding and Rip Currents:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/minor_coast_flood_rip.pdf

Minor Tidal Overflow:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/minor_tidal.pdf

High Waves and Shoreline Currents:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/high_waves.pdf

On the NWS Watch, Warning, Advisory map (<https://www.weather.gov/>), the Experimental Beach Hazards Statement and Rip Current Statement are highlighted in turquoise and the Coastal Flood Statement is highlighted in olive drab.

Users are encouraged to provide feedback by using the brief survey and comment form online at:

www.weather.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=CHMBHS

For information on beach hazards safety and awareness, please refer to the Beach Hazards and Safety website at:

<https://www.weather.gov/safety/beachhazards>

General background information on VTEC can be found online at:

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

If you have questions or comments, please contact:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

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

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