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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 12-10  
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington, DC  
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From: Mark Tew  
Chief, Marine and Coastal Services Branch

Subject: Test of Beach Hazards Statement with new Valid Time  
Event Code (VTEC) in Coastal Hazard Message at  
Select Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) Effective  
May 15, 2012

Effective Tuesday May 15, 2012, at 1200 Coordinated Universal  
Time (UTC), six NWS Weather Forecast Offices will use a new VTEC  
event code for beach hazards in their Coastal Hazard Messages  
(CFW).

These WFOs will begin using the new VTEC event code for the  
following BH.S: Beach Hazard Statement within the CFW instead of:

CF.S: Coastal Flood Statement  
LS.S: Lakeshore Flood Statement used in the Great Lakes  
RP.S: Rip Current Statement used at 17 coastal WFOs when  
specifically targeting hazardous conditions that are occurring or  
likely to occur along a beach, coastal area or shore and their  
immediate adjacent waters.

The Beach Hazards Statement, with the headline of "Hazardous  
Beach Conditions in effect for [timeframe]" will inform  
beachgoers and local authorities of a multitude of hazards  
including, but not limited to:

- rip currents or other types of dangerous currents in the  
surf zone
- unusually cold water temperatures
- potential for lightning along the beach/shoreline
- high heat indices which do not meet advisory criteria
- unusual surf/wave conditions which do not meet advisory  
criteria.

In coordination with other agencies, as needed, the product may  
also inform users of various types of environmental hazards  
(e.g., chemical spills, harmful algal blooms, high bacteria

levels in the water, or potentially hazardous marine wildlife which may be impacting the area.

The Hazardous Beach Conditions Statement is intended to provide information for these types of hazards in a single product. The examples of hazards provided above will not necessarily apply to all NWS coastal offices because each office has unique criteria for their area of responsibility.

The BH.S will be operational, i.e., the VTEC line will carry the (O) identifier. The Beach Hazard information issued by these offices will be highlighted in turquoise, same color as rip current statement, on the NWS Watch, Warning Advisory map at: <http://www.weather.gov>

Table 1: Communication identifiers for the CFWs issued by the 6 WFOs that will use the new VTEC for Beach Hazards (BH.S) effective May 15, 2012:

Issuing WFO	WMO Header	AWIPS Id
Grand Rapids, MI	WHUS43 KGRR	CFWGRR
San Francisco Bay Area, CA	WHUS46 KMTR	CFWMTR
Newport/Morehead City, NC	WHUS42 KMHX	CFWMHX
New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA	WHUS44 KLIX	CFWLIX
Seattle, WA	WHUS56 KSEW	CFWSEW
Tampa Bay Area, FL	WHUS52 KTBW	CFWTBW

Customers must make the appropriate changes to their systems in order to process the new VTEC BH.S.

The remainder of NWS coastal and Great Lakes offices will continue using the VTEC event codes CF.S, LS.S, and RP.S in their Coastal/Lakeshore Hazard Message (CFW) when there is a threat of hazardous beach conditions. No actions are necessary to continue processing the CF.S, LS.S, and RP.S VTEC event codes.

This test of the new VTEC event code (BH.S) within the CFW by the WFOs specified in Table 1 will continue until further notice, unless significant negative feedback is received.

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

[weather.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=CHMBHS](http://weather.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=CHMBHS)

General background information on VTEC can be found online at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/vtec>

If you have questions or comments please contact:

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NWS Service Change Notices are online at:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/notif.htm>

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