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Service Change Notice 12-25
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
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From: Thomas Graziano
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 National Weather Service Headquarters

Subject: NWS to Establish New Methods to Collect Automated Flood Warning
System Information by March 31, 2013

For over 30 years, the NWS has routinely collected raw Automated Local Evaluation in Real Time (ALERT) messages. NWS field offices make use of these ALERT messages to support hydrologic forecast and warning operations. The NWS Automated Flood Warning System (AFWS) currently collects and processes raw ALERT messages 24x7x365 from over 1,700 rainfall and stream sensors in 12 states: Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. These data are used routinely to generate NWS river forecasts and flood advisories, watches, and warnings.

By March 31, 2013, to ensure ALERT data continue to be available for forecast and warning operations, the NWS is engaging data partners and requesting they provide ALERT messages to the NWS in a Standard Hydrologic Exchange Format (SHEF).

SHEF is a well-established and well-documented standard for data exchange. This request will increase the efficiency and extensibility of the NWS AFWS and enable better integration of ALERT data into the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS) web portal. The NWS will work with data partners to affect a transition to this new AFWS operational workflow.

After March 31, 2013, NWS will no longer be able to ingest raw ALERT messages. The NWS is requesting SHEF encoded ALERT messages from these 12 states be sent to a central NWS server within the Office of Hydrologic Development (OHD). The ALERT messages will then be encoded within OHD's Hydrometeorological Automated Data System and disseminated over the Satellite Broadcast Network to assure the continued availability and use by the NWS field offices in the watch, warning and advisory mission. Additionally, the NWS will update our AHPS Web pages to include the timely display of data from these AFWS rain and stream sites. These AFWS data will be managed, integrated and displayed by the NWS in the same manner as data for AHPS sites.

Detailed information on SHEF is available at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01009044curr.pdf>

The AHPS Web page portal is found at: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps/>.

For questions or to access more information about the new methods to collect AFWS data, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

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