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Service Change Notice 15-20
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
1100 AM Wed EDT APR 1, 2015

To: Subscribers:
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Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
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From: Robert Rutledge
Acting Chief, Aviation Services Branch

Subject: Operational implementation of the Helicopter
Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) Tool effective
May 4, 2015

Effective May 4, 2015, 1800 Coordinated Universal Time
(UTC), the NWS Aviation Weather Center (AWC) in Kansas
City, MO, will make the Helicopter Emergency Medical
Services (HEMS) Tool operationally available on the
Aviation Weather Center website:

<http://www.aviationweather.gov/hemst>

The HEMS Tool interactively displays high resolution grids
of critical weather parameters: ceiling, visibility, flight
category, winds, icing severity, relative humidity,
temperature, radar, satellite, G-AIRMETs, SIGMETs, METARs,
TAFs, PIREPs, NWS warnings, and Center Weather Advisories
(CWAs). Overlays include navigational aids, airports and
heliports for the entire United States. More detail is
revealed as you zoom in and individual layers can be turned
on or off independently. The tool is not a weather product;
it is a display that aggregates a number of existing
weather products into a single, quick-glance, automated
graphic. All underlying products have already gone through
a safety risk management process.

HEMS flights represent commercial aviation activity
performed by FAA certificated air carrier operators;
therefore, operations must have the highest level of
safety. Pursuant to Title 49 United States Code Section
44720, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
establishes requirements for the weather information and
services necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of
operations in the National Airspace System (NAS). As such,
NOAA/NWS may be tasked to provide the weather information
and services necessary to meet the requirements established

by the FAA. Operational implementation of the HEMS tool has been identified as an FAA requirement.

This tool has been specifically designed to show weather conditions for short-distance and low-altitude flights that are common for the HEMS community. By using a highly interactive and intuitive tool that focuses on small, localized regions, HEMS operators gain critical weather awareness to make their flights safer for crews and patients.

Additional information on HEMS can be found at:

<http://www.aviationweather.gov/hemst/help>

The Product Description Document can be found at:

https://products.weather.gov/PDD/HEMS_PDD.pdf

If you have any questions regarding the Helicopter Emergency Medical Services Tool, contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notif.htm>

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