

NOUS41 KWBC 151801  
PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 15-33  
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington, DC  
200 AM EDT Mon Jun 15 2015

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From: Mark Tew  
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National Ocean Service

Subject: Beach Hazards Statements issued by WFO Miami and  
WFO Key West to include information about Harmful  
Algal Blooms (HAB) when criteria are met, effective  
June 29, 2015

Effective Monday, June 29, 2015, at 2 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) or 1800 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), harmful algal bloom (HAB) forecast information provided by the National Ocean Service (NOS) HAB Operational Forecast System (HAB-OFS), which meets the criteria shown below, will be included in the Beach Hazards Statements (BHS) being issued by WFO Miami and WFO Key West during a HAB event when criteria described below are met.

An adjacent NWS office, WFO Tampa Bay Area, has been including NOS HAB forecasts, when issuance criteria are met, in their BHS since February 4, 2013. The addition of the two WFOs provides more complete coverage of HABs affecting southwest Florida.

Starting on the above effective date, an NWS BHS for respiratory irritation from HAB will be issued by WFOs Miami and Key West for their areas of responsibility for a HAB of *Karenia brevis* (commonly known as Florida Red Tide) if ALL of the following criteria are met:

- HAB-OFS team has issued a HAB-OFS public conditions report or update.
- *Karenia brevis* concentrations, which correlate to respiratory Irritation (>50,000 cells/L) have been confirmed by in-situ cell counts in WFO Miami's and/or WFO Key West's area of

responsibility.

- HAB-OFS team forecasts high respiratory irritation is possible in WFO Miami's or WFO Key West's area of responsibility.
- If the level of forecasted respiratory irritation from HAB decreases before the previously issued BHS for HAB irritation expires, WFO Miami and/or WFO Key West will issue a cancellation of the Beach Hazards Statement for HAB.

These are the same BHS criteria being used by WFO Tampa Bay Area respiratory irritation from HAB.

A graphic showing the areas of responsibility for WFO Miami and WFO Key West is online at:

[http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mirs/public/prods/maps/map\\_images/state-maps/cwfa/fl\\_cwfa.pdf](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mirs/public/prods/maps/map_images/state-maps/cwfa/fl_cwfa.pdf)

NWS issues the BHS under the NWS Coastal Hazard Message (CFW) with a Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) of BH.S. The Beach Hazards Statement is issued by many coastal WFOs for a variety of marine hazards. A subset of the coastal WFOs also includes ecological hazard information, such as HAB, in the BHS. Beach Hazards Statements issued by the following WFOs are/will incorporate HAB content when criteria are met:

- WFO Tampa Bay Area: since February 2013
- WFO Miami: as of June 29, 2015
- WFO Key West: as of June 29, 2015

Table 1: Communication identifier for the CFW issued by WFO Miami and WFO Key West for Beach Hazards (BHS):

Issuing WFO	WMO Header	AWIPS Id
Miami, FL	WHUS42 KMFL	CFWMFL
Key West, FL	WHUS42 KKEY	CFWKEY

Routine HAB forecast products prepared by NOS' HAB-OFS are issued via listserve and online once a week, at a minimum, or twice a week during an active bloom. By including high respiratory irritation from HABs in the NWS BHS, critical health information is disseminated more broadly and in real-time to the public. For more information about the HAB-OFS and the services they provide, refer to:

<http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/hab/>

WFOs Miami and Key West will coordinate with NOS' HAB analysts concerning harmful algal blooms and potential health impacts on coastal areas of southwest Florida as does WFO Tampa Bay Area. The HAB analysts will provide information to WFOs Miami and Key

West on a bloom when high respiratory irritation associated with a HAB is forecasted by the HAB-OFS. WFOs Miami and Key West will relay that information in the Beach Hazards Statement for their areas of responsibility. An HAB-OFS point of contact and other local sources of red tide information will be included in all Beach Hazards Statements which include HAB forecasts.

See the following links for an example of the BHS to be issued by WFO Miami and WFO Key West for high respiratory irritation from HAB:

[http://www.weather.gov/om/afs/bhs\\_miami.docx](http://www.weather.gov/om/afs/bhs_miami.docx)  
[http://www.weather.gov/om/afs/bhs\\_keywest.docx](http://www.weather.gov/om/afs/bhs_keywest.docx)

When in effect, Beach Hazard Statements issued by WFOs Miami and Key West, as well as all of the additional WFOs issuing Beach Hazards Statements, will be highlighted in turquoise on the NWS Watch, Warning Advisory map:

<http://www.weather.gov>

Users interested in the BHS who are not already parsing the Coastal Hazards Message (CFW) using the BH.S VTEC code (for Beach Hazards Statement) may need to make the appropriate changes to their software and/or systems to do so. Otherwise, no additional changes are necessary.

The effective date of this change is sooner than specified by NWS Instruction 10-1805. The reduction of the normal advance lead time was approved because this change applies to only two WFOs and will enable these offices to issue these products starting July 1 when the need for this product increases. NWS has coordinated with local partners.

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:

WFO Miami:	WFO Key West:
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Warning Coordination Meteorologist	Senior Forecaster
WFO Miami, FL	WFO Key West, FL
305-229-4520	305-295-1316 x 241
<a href="mailto:robert.molleda@noaa.gov">robert.molleda@noaa.gov</a>	<a href="mailto:kennard.kasper@noaa.gov">kennard.kasper@noaa.gov</a>

For Harmful Algal Bloom-related questions, contact:

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Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services  
Silver Spring, MD  
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[Karen.Kavanaugh@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Kavanaugh@noaa.gov)

For general questions about the Beach Hazards Statement for ecological hazards, contact:

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NWS Service Change Notices are online at:

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

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