

NOUS41 KWBC 301455  
PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 17-40  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
1055 AM EDT Thu Mar 30 2017

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
              -NOAAPort  
              -Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Offices  
              Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From:       William Bauman  
              Chief, Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch

Subject: Add Experimental Aviation Surface Forecast and Aviation Cloud  
Forecast Graphics: Effective March 30, 2017

Effective on Thursday, March 30, 2017, the Experimental Aviation Surface  
Forecast and Aviation Cloud Forecast graphics will be added to the  
Satellite Broadcast Network (SBN), also known as NOAAPort.

The experimental Aviation Surface Forecast and Aviation Cloud Forecast  
graphics are snapshot images derived from a subset of the aviation weather  
forecasts. The graphics are valid for the continental United States  
(CONUS) and coastal waters used within the Experimental Graphical  
Forecasts for Aviation (GFA) interactive web-based display, which will  
become operational effective 4/13/17; see Service Change Notice 17-31:

[https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdfs/scn17-31awc\\_exp\\_graphics.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdfs/scn17-31awc_exp_graphics.pdf)

The static images are provided every three hours for one CONUS projection  
and nine regional projections with 3-hourly forecasts of Surface  
(predominant weather, visibility, wind) and cloud coverage and layer  
(bases and tops) information out to 18 hours. Details of the forecast  
graphics can be found in the Product Description Document (PDD):

[http://products.weather.gov/PDD/PDD\\_AviationForecastGraphics\\_4\\_17.pdf](http://products.weather.gov/PDD/PDD_AviationForecastGraphics_4_17.pdf)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), pursuant to Title 49 United  
States Code Section 44720, established requirements for this weather  
information and service which is necessary for the safe and efficient  
conduct of operations in the National Airspace System. These graphics  
provide a low-bandwidth alternative to the GFA interactive web-based  
display and are provided through NOAAPort/SBN and via the Aviation Weather  
Center webpage. The static images are intended for FAA Flight Service  
Stations (FSS) providers, commercial and General Aviation pilots,  
operators, briefers and dispatchers with limited Internet access.

These Portable Network Graphics (PNG) graphics will be available over NOAAPort/SBN. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) header information will be as follows:

T1T2A1A2ii CCCC

CCCC is KNCI (Aviation Weather Center)

T1 = Q (Regional Static Graphic)

T2 specifies the forecast graphic as follows:

= I for the Aviation Clouds Forecast Graphic

= Z for the Aviation Surface Forecast Graphic

A1 = T (Northern Hemisphere)

A2 specifies the forecast time as follows:

= B for the 3-hour forecast

= C for the 6-hour forecast

= D for the 9-hour forecast

= E for the 12-hour forecast

= F for the 15-hour forecast

= G for the 18-hour forecast

When T2 = I, ii specifies the regional domain of the Aviation Clouds Forecast Graphic as follows:

= 00 for Continental United States

= 01 for Northeastern United States

= 02 for Eastern United States

= 03 for Southeastern United States

= 04 for North Central United States

= 05 for Central United States

= 06 for South Central United States

= 07 for Northwestern United States

= 08 for Western United States

= 09 for Southwestern United States

When T2 = Z, ii specifies the regional domain of the Aviation Surface Forecast Graphic as follows:

= 90 for Continental United States

= 91 for Northeastern United States

= 92 for Eastern United States

= 93 for Southeastern United States

= 94 for North Central United States

= 95 for Central United States

= 96 for South Central United States

= 97 for Northwestern United States

= 98 for Western United States

= 99 for Southwestern United States

Additionally, the Experimental Aviation Surface Forecast and Aviation Cloud Forecast Graphics can be found at:

<https://www.AviationWeather.gov/gfa/plot>

Although requirements for the underlying meteorological information currently provided through the legacy text Area Forecast (FA) have not changed, the FAA recognizes that, given modern advances within NWS, the legacy text FA is no longer the best source of en-route flight planning weather information.

Retiring the FA and transitioning to more modern digital and graphical forecasts will allow the NWS to focus the efforts of forecasters on maximizing operational benefit to aviation end users, resulting in improved weather information to decision-makers.

Based on comments received by the FAA and other NWS users on this proposed change, NWS plans to discontinue production of FAs. This termination will occur once the experimental GFA interactive web-based display and the experimental Aviation Surface Forecast and Aviation Clouds Forecast graphics are operational and any concerns identified within submitted comments have been addressed. Formal public notification will be provided in advance of the action to discontinue the FAs.

The effective date of this change is sooner than specified by NWS policy (NWS Instruction 10-1805). The reduction of the normal advance lead-time was requested by local users (FAA Flight Service Stations providers).

If you have any questions regarding the experimental Aviation Surface Forecast and Aviation Cloud Forecast Graphics, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

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

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