Guidelines for writing Notifications

Notifications require very specific formatting for consistency and compatibility with dissemination systems.

Basic formatting requirements:

Page Layout: Letter size (8.5 X 11), portrait orientation.
Margins: 1 inch (top/left/right/bottom)
Font: Courier New, 12 point only.
No before/after paragraph spacing. Use single line only.
No images or graphics.
No Tables. No Text color or highlight color.
No Tabs or indents. (use spaces instead)
No text formatting (bold, underline, italic, superscript, etc.)
No Bullets, No Autonumbering, or auto-bulleted lists.
No special character like ½, 32°, trademark™

Common Pitfall: Starting a list or paragraph with 1. or a. or – and the system auto indents; indents are not allowed.

To prevent this:
In **Google Docs:** select Tools, Preferences, and uncheck "Automatically detect lists"
In **Word:** select File, Options (may need to click on More.. to see it), Proofing, Autocorrect options, then uncheck "Automatic bulleted lists and Automatic numbered lists.

Rules when using Links:

Double check each and every link to ensure they are correct and the embedded 'hyperlink', if included, matches the text 100%.

All notifications are sent out as TEXT through the dissemination systems, and posted on the website as a pdf document. *The text message does not transmit embedded hyperlinks.*

Good Examples:
...Radar viewer at: https://radar.weather.gov/
...Radar viewer at: https://radar.weather.gov/ (with embedded hyperlink)

The second example works because even though the embedded hyperlink will not be transmitted in the TEXT message, the full URL is still visible as text.

Bad Example: ...click on the Radar Viewer ...
Why? - the TEXT message will NOT show or transmit the embedded hyperlink. It will be transmitted as:
...click on the Radar Viewer ... (with no URL or link provided).

EXAMPLE Service Change Notice (Fictional)

Note: Items in Blue text are entered by the Notification Team prior to issuance/posting; In the actual notification the text is black.

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NOUS41 KWBC DDHHMM
PNSWSH

All National Notifications include this header, and "To:" list.
PNSWSH is used for both SCNs and PNS in the header.

This address never changes for National Notifications.

Service Change Notice XX-XX
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
XXXX xM ExT day mmm dd yyyy

To: Subscribers:
-NOAA Weather Wire Service
-Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
-NOAAPort
Other NWS Partners and Employees

From: Carlos Diaz, Notification Manager
Service Advancement Division
Office of Future Readiness

Subject line must have Effective date, or "Effective Immediately"

Subject: Changes to Example Fictional Product Effective December 31, 2026.

The effective date is repeated in 1st Paragraph.

Beginning on or about December 31, 2026, at 1200 Universal Coordinated Time (UTC), the Nosuch Weather Center will implement the following changes to the Example Fictional Product:

1. Product will be issued at four hour intervals instead of six.
2. Change in the valid time from 2 hours to 1 hour.

Here we can add more details to this fictional example, such as text describing the before and after changes.

For questions regarding this change, please contact:

John Q. Smith
Chief, Operations Division
Nosuch Weather Center
john.smith@noaa.gov

Notifications must include at least one contact and method to reach the contact (email / phone)

National Service Change Notices are online at:
https://www.weather.gov/notifcation

NNNN

All SCNs include this at the end. For PNS, it would be: "National Public Information Statements are online at:"

National Notifications FAQ

Where can I find Notifications that have been issued?
National Service Change Notices and Public information Statements are listed at this location: https://www.weather.gov/notification/ and each notification listed includes a link to the PDF version of the notification.

Who is notified when a notification is issued?
(1) The text version of notifications are sent via the National Weather Service Telecommunication Gateway (NWSTG) and disseminated on NOAA Weather Wire Service, Emergency Managers Weather Information Network, and NOAAPort, and;
(2) An email is sent to over 1900 subscribers letting them know the Subject (title) of issued notifications along with a link to the PDF version of the notification.

How can I subscribe to receive an email whenever a notification is used?
Simply send an email to nws.hq.afs.notify@noaa.gov requesting to be added to the list. The list contains ONLY your email address – no additional information is needed.

What is the difference between a Service Change Notices (SCN) and a Public Information Statement (PNS)?
PNS are used to notify partners and the public of NWS announcements, such as conducting a test, and to solicit feedback on: proposed new, changed, or enhanced products or services, and proposed terminations.
SCN are formal advance notifications detailing technical changes, additions, or discontinuations of operational products and services.

How would a notification convey images or graphics?
Since notifications are disseminated as TEXT, they cannot include images or graphics. However they may include a link to a document hosted on a website that conveys more details including images/graphics.

Is there a Template I can use?
Use this link to download an SCN Template.
Use this link to download a PNS Template.
Note: the templates include sample Subject and Body content – those are to be replaced with your actual Subject and content.