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PNSWSH

Technical Implementation Notice 11-54, Amended
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
330 PM EDT Mon Apr 16 2012

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From: Tim McClung
Chief, Science Plans Branch
Office of Science and Technology

Subject: Amended: Change to First Guess Used by Real-Time
Mesoscale Analysis To Rapid Refresh (RAP):
Effective date set for May 1, 2012

Amended to set the implementation date for Tuesday, May 1, 2012.
Users are cautioned that if a Critical Weather Day (CWD)
designation is in effect on May 1, this implementation will be
delayed until the conclusion of CWD. You can monitor the CWD
status at the following webpage:

<http://www.nco.ncep.noaa.gov/pmb/cwd/>

On Tuesday, May 1, 2012, with the 1200 Coordinated
Universal Time (UTC) run, the Real-Time Mesoscale Analysis
(RTMA) for CONUS at both 5-km and 2.5-km resolution will use the
Rapid Refresh (RAP) instead of the Rapid Update Cycle (RUC) as
the forecast model that provides the first guess. The current
5- and 2.5-km resolution RTMA terrain fields, which were created
at ESRL/GSD, will also be replaced by terrain fields created at
NCEP/EMC.

The RTMA is a set of gridded surface and near-surface analyses
that are created by combining observations with the first guess,
weighted by their error statistics.

The change of the first guess is necessary since the RUC is being
replaced by the RAP on that same date (see NWS Technical
Implementation Notice 11-53 for details of the RUC to RAP
transition). The main impact of this change will occur in areas
of sparse observational data where the RTMA analysis relies more
heavily on the guess field than in areas with greater
observational coverage. While the use of the new RTMA terrain
will have little impact on the overall analysis on scales larger
than a few grid lengths, users who might be using the RTMA
terrain to locally adjust the analysis are advised of the need to

use the updated terrain provided in the output files.

NCEP urges all users to ensure their decoders can handle changes in content order, changes in the scaling factor component within the product definition section (PDS) of the GRIB files, changes to the GRIB Bit Map Section (BMS), and volume changes. These elements may change with future NCEP model implementations. NCEP will make every attempt to alert users to these changes before implementation.

For questions regarding these changes, please contact:

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NWS National Technical Implementation Notices are online at:

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

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