Aware

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FCC Taking Comments on Three Proposed New EAS Event Codes

*By Tim Schott, NWS Dissemination Systems; **Mike Dion**, NWS Tropical Cyclone Program Manager*

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is accepting comments until September 9 on three proposed new Emergency Alert System (EAS) Event Codes. The NWS tropical cyclone program has long advocated the Event Codes summarized below:

- **Extreme Wind Warning, Event Code EWW,** would provide advance notice of sustained surface winds of 115 mph or greater. Extreme Wind Warnings inform the public of the need to take immediate shelter in an interior portion of a well-built structure. Currently, EAS communicates the Extreme Wind Warnings using the Tornado (TOR) Event Code. The FCC is proposing adding the EWW code for these extreme conditions.

- **Storm Surge Watch, Event Code SSA**, would be issued for the possibility of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland within the specified area, generally within 48 hours, associated with a tropical, subtropical or post-tropical cyclone. NWS may issue a Watch when conditions, such as tropical storm-force winds, could limit the time available for protective actions, such as evacuating. NWS also may issue a Watch for locations not expected to receive life-threatening inundation but which could potentially be isolated by inundation in adjacent areas.

- **Storm Surge Warning, Event Code SSW,** would provide advance notice of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland within the specified area, generally within 36 hours, associated with a tropical, subtropical or post-tropical cyclone. NWS may issue a Warning when other conditions, such as the onset of tropical storm-force winds, are expected to limit the time available to take protective actions, such as evacuating. NWS also may issue a Warning for locations not expected to receive life-threatening inundation but which could potentially be isolated by inundation in adjacent areas.

You can submit comments electronically at the FCC website in the section for Proceeding Number 15-94. The type of filing is "comment." If you prefer to mail comments, you must submit one original and one copy by September 9, to:

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission Headquarters
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

The full text of the FCC request for comments is also online. If you have any questions concerning FCC administrative processes, email NWS Dissemination Systems Meteorologist Tim Schott or call Tim at 301-427-9336.

If you have any questions concerning the NWS tropical cyclone program, email NWS Tropical Cyclone Program Maager Mike Dion or call Mike at 301-427-9373.

Decision Support for Heat and Humidity During Special Olympics World Games

*By **Eric Boldt**, WCM, NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard*

NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard recently provided weather decision support for the emergency management community during the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles, July 25 to August 2. Nearly 7,000 athletes and 300 coaches from around the world travelled to Los Angeles for this year's games; an estimated 500,000 spectators watched the events. NWS Los Angeles served as an agency representative at the Unified Command Post (UCP). Onsite NWS Meteorologists Todd Hall, Kathryn Hoxsie, and WCM Eric Boldt provided daily weather briefings for divisional chiefs and incident commanders from the LA police and fire departments at the UCP. NWS meteorologists also provided twice-a-day weather forecasts in each operational period's Emergency Action Plan and for the five satellite UCPs at venues across the metropolitan area.

UCP for the Special Olympics was staffed 24 hours a day.

Although Southern California is well known for its sunny and tranquil weather pattern during the summer months, during the games there was a heightened concern about a building heat wave that would be a significant impact on athletes and fans. In addition, a potent surge of monsoon moisture brought added humidity and a risk of lightning to the venues late in the week. Kaiser Permanente medical staff staffed a medical UCP where they closely monitored the heat and humidity from a health perspective. Each venue had handheld Kestrel units to measure heat and humidity levels directly on the playing fields and implemented a flag warning system for awareness and safety measures during activities. As directed by EM officials, NWS worked closely with the medical UCP to identify potential heat impacts on public safety.

Temperature and humidity forecasts were critical for incident commanders and other decision-makers at the UCP, making it important for meteorologists to be onsite during the games. Lightning safety and contingency shelter plans were other factors that involved advance decision-making for the venues.

As stated by a captain from the LA Fire Department in the UCP, "Having accurate weather for each venue was a big help in both the planning process as well as the decision making process."

The WFO's participation at this event emphasized how weather events like heat and a risk of lightning can have a significant impact on thousands of athletes and fans attending outdoor venues.

Just as important, the WFO's involvement builds on already well-established partnerships with public agencies demonstrates how NWS can operate in coordination with private sector companies in supporting the EM community. NWS, working together with public agencies and the private sector, are strengthening strengthen the Weather-Ready Nation initiative across Southern California.

The Future in Weather: Decision Support Service

By Jim Kramper, WCM, NWS, St. Louis, MO

Four NWS offices in Missouri and Kansas started a prototype Decision Support Service (DSS) project in the spring of 2015: NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) St. Louis, Springfield and Pleasant Hill, MO, and Topeka, KS. The goal of the project is to test a baseline of DSS service these four offices will provide. The WFOs will ask NWS local core partners, primarily the emergency management (EM) community, to provide feedback on these services.

The heart of DSS is providing weather support to the EM community and other core partners for large, outdoor events. The potential for injuries and deaths during an outdoor event due to weather is quite high and

the NWS wants to assist however it can to make sure such events are held safely. NWS is proposing to provide two levels of DSS.

Level 2

- The local WFO will list the event on its event calendar to ensure situational awareness.
- The core partner requesting support will receive an email with a link to the forecast for the specific event location.
- The local WFO will provide a short briefing call each day of the event to the core partner's point-of-contact (POC) around 9 am.
- The WFO will NOT commit to contacting the POC if hazardous weather is imminent. Contact may be made based on the event, office staffing, etc.
- The POC is encouraged to contact the NWS at any time for updated weather information. Core partners are encouraged to use NWSChat or other communication systems to enhance contact.

Level 1

In addition to the support offered in Level 2, in Level 1 event, the WFO will maintain a constant weather watch in support of public safety for the event and if hazardous weather is imminent, contact the POC.

The test includes an experimental Google form EMs are being asked to use to submit requests for Level 1 or 2 support for their events. Once the form is submitted, the event is immediately placed on the NWS event calendar. If a core partner requests Level 1 support, the information will go to the appropriate NWS personnel for consideration. Each request will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If the WFO approves Level 1 support, local NWS staff will contact the POC.

The prototype project began May 18 and will continue through September. At that point evaluations will be done to see what worked and what didn't work. Did we provide what our users needed? What additional service would they like? What were the workload issues faced by each office?

The project may continue into the winter or it could be put hold until 2016 when more NWS Central Region offices would participate. When expanded, the effort will be considered an experimental service and be available for public feedback.

Amateur Radio Volunteers Play Crucial Safety Role

*By **Jan C. Lederman**, Ph.D.*

Ham radio operators have long played a crucial role during weather and other emergency situations. WX4NHC is the amateur radio station at the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami, FL.

The Huricane Center activates up the WX4NHC team whenever a hurricane is within 300 miles of making landfall in the western Atlantic, the Caribbean or the eastern Pacific. The radio team also provides emergency backup communications from NHC to NWS Offices and other agencies during local landfall.

The WX4NHC team is comprised of 30 specially trained

Some of the 30 specially trained volunteer ham radio operators at the National Hurricane Center in Miami, FL.

volunteer operators that staff the ham radio station in 3 to 4 hour shifts. For example, during the historic 2005 hurricane season, the station was staffed, sometimes with two to three operators at a time, for more than 500 hours, supporting back-to-back hurricanes at times. We operated from inside the eye of a hurricane during Katrina and Wilma and collect hundreds of surface reports each hurricane season.

Our operators work in conjunction with the Hurricane Watch Net, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) WX-Talk Hurricane Net and other volunteer networks to collect real-time Surface Reports for the NHC Hurricane Specialists via Amateur Radio using many modes such as:

- HF Shortwave Radio
- VHF/UHF Radio
- VoIP systems
- EchoLink
- Internet Radio Linking Project
- Automatic Packet Reporting System
- Volunteer weather observer networks such as Observers Network
- Citizen's Weather Observers Program
- On-line reporting
- Email and fax

WX4NHC also relays Hurricane Advisories via the Ham Radio Networks to the hurricane affected areas and governmental agencies when conventional means of communications have been interrupted.

NWS Education Program Goes Back to School

By Mary Fairbanks, Meteorologist, NWS Communications Office

NWS has always been a wealth of information and resources for educators and those interested in learning about weather. As the school year begins, the NWS launched a Back to School social media campaign. Beginning on Sunday, August 16, Owlie Skywarn, the NWS education mascot, and NWS Facebook and Twitter feeds, began featuring weather related resources to help formal and informal educators and others who support education prepare for the upcoming school year.

The social media posts will appear over a 2-week period on both NWS and Owlie Skywarn feeds. Our goal is to highlight NWS Education resources as well as links to NOAA resources and some of our prominent partner resources.

To find our pages on Facebook, just search for NWS or Owlie. On Twitter, go to @nws and @nwsowlieskywarn

Educators preparing for the new school year can gather fun ideas, information, learning resources, and classroom ideas about weather. Follow us on social media and visit Owlie Skywarn's NWS Education page for more resources.

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