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Public Information Statement 20-78 Updated
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
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To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From: Douglas C. Young
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Subject: Updated: Soliciting Comments through January 15, 2021 on a
Proposal to Add Polygons to Non-Weather Emergency Messages (NWEM)
Disseminated by NWS in World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Text
Products

Updated to extend Public Comment Period through January 15, 2021.

The NWS is accepting comments through January 15, 2021 on a proposal to
add polygons to NWEMs disseminated via WMO text products when polygons are
provided by civil alerting authorities.

The NWS supports alerting authorities by relaying NWEMs via NOAA Weather
Radio All Hazards (NWR) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). These
messages provide the public with time-critical life- or property-saving
emergency information. NWS also conveys these messages on NOAA Weather
Wire Service, the Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN)
and the NOAAPort/Satellite Broadcast Network. Examples of NWEMs include
the Civil Emergency Message and Evacuation Immediate. The complete list
of state and local NWEMs is provided in the link below for Non-Weather
Emergency Products Specification: [NWS Instruction \(NWSI\) 10-518](#).

State and local EAS plans detail the specific NWEMs recommended for
conveyance by broadcasters to EAS at the state and local levels.

Today, NWS disseminates and broadcasts NWEMs over NWR and EAS on a whole
(entire)-county basis. As a first step towards a broader NWS goal to
reduce the geographical over alerting of NWEMs, NWS is proposing to
incorporate polygons, when provided by alerting authorities, into WMO-
formatted NWEMs. This change will provide third party information
providers and decision makers with the exact boundaries associated with
NWEMs. When alerting authorities provide the NWS with polygons, NWS would
phase in the use of polygons in WMO products as NWS is able to update its
software.

The proposed change supports NWS dissemination of some NWEMs via NWR and
EAS using Partial County Alerting in the future. NWS will provide
additional information on this NWR initiative in a future Public
Information Statement.

The Initial Operating Capability (IOC) requirements for adding polygons to NWEMs will follow the existing NWS requirements for adding polygons to other NWS WMO products. These requirements are specified in [NWS Instruction \(NWSI\) 10-1701](#), Text Product Formats and Codes:

- The maximum number of vertices included will be 20.
- Normally, there will be four points per line of text, as needed. The last point will connect back to the first point.
- Coded pairs will identify the latitude and longitude of a single point, in degrees and hundredths.

The addition of polygons to NWEM WMO text products would occur in a phased implementation, with initial operating capability (IOC) for those NWEMs received by NWS from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

In conjunction with the proposal to incorporate polygons in text NWEMs, if the WMO product does not specify a polygon, then the message applies to the entire county.

If NWS receives positive feedback on this proposal to expand the WMO product format of NWEMs to include polygons, the implementation date for adding polygons and transitioning to mixed-case text will be dependent on NWS national software change schedules. Any changes will be preceded by a Service Change Notice.

For examples of current and proposed products and additional details, please see the Service Description Document (SDD) at:

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/SDD/NWEMs_polygons_2020.pdf

Please send any comments or questions to:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

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

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