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Service Change Notice 13-28
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From: Mark Tew
 Chief, Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch

Subject: Change in Tropical Cyclone Watch and Warning Definitions to
Include Post-Tropical Cyclones: Effective June 1, 2013

Post-Tropical Cyclone is a generic term to describe a cyclone that no longer possesses sufficient tropical characteristics to be considered a tropical cyclone. Former tropical cyclones that have become fully extratropical, as well as remnant lows, are two specific classes of post-tropical cyclones.

One of the challenges associated with Hurricane Sandy in 2012 was the forecast transformation of the storm from a tropical cyclone to a post-tropical cyclone prior to landfall. Although NWS watches and warnings were issued well in advance of the storm's landfall, the NWS received some criticism from partners for opting to not issue hurricane watches or warnings for New York and New Jersey. The national tropical cyclone policy in place, however, during 2012 required the discontinuation of any hurricane watches or warnings at the time Sandy became post-tropical. Discontinuing these warnings in the middle of the event was not viewed as an acceptable option by the NWS.

After a careful assessment of recommendations from partners and users, including feedback provided to the NWS Hurricane Sandy Assessment Team, the NWS will officially modify its national tropical cyclone policy for the 2013 hurricane season. The following changes are effective on June 1, 2013:

The definitions of hurricane and tropical storm watches and warnings will be broadened to allow these watches and warnings to be issued or remain in effect after a tropical cyclone becomes post-tropical.

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) and the Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) will continue issuing advisory products after a tropical cyclone becomes post-tropical in those cases where the system continues to pose a significant threat to life and property, and where the transfer of responsibility to another office would result in an unacceptable discontinuity of service. Similarly, WFO Guam will continue issuing advisory products after a tropical cyclone becomes post-tropical in those

cases where the system continues to pose a significant threat to life and property.

Specifically, NHC/CPHC text advisory products, including the Tropical Cyclone Public Advisory (TCP) and the Tropical Cyclone Watch/Warning (TCV) products, would continue to be issued under the POST-TROPICAL CYCLONE XXXXXX header (where XXXXXX is the name of the storm) and be accompanied by the full suite of standard tropical cyclone graphical products. In addition, local NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) would continue to issue Hurricane Local Statements as appropriate under the POST-TROPICAL CYCLONE XXXXXX header until NHC/CPHC discontinues advisories. WFO Guam would continue to issue its Hurricane Local Statements under the POST-TROPICAL CYCLONE XXXXXX header using their Public Advisory (TCP) product.

The updated watch and warning definitions will be used by the NHC, CPHC, WFO Guam and local WFOs. The updated definitions and an example of an NHC-issued TCP for a post-tropical cyclone is posted online at:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/news/20130404_hsu_postTropicalChanges.php

In summary, for Sandy-like storms in the future, this policy update will enable the NWS to issue tropical watches/warnings at the outset; allow them to stay in place into the post-tropical phase; permit the NHC and CPHC to retain the lead in issuing advisories for the post-tropical phase; and permit WFO Guam to issue advisories for the post-tropical phase.

For questions regarding this policy change, please contact:

Timothy Schott
National Weather Service Headquarters
Marine and Coastal Services Branch
Silver Spring, MD
301-713-1677, x 122
timothy.schott@noaa.gov

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