

NOUS41 KWBC 311655
PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 15-18
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
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From: Mark Tew
 Chief, Marine and Coastal Weather Services Branch

Subject: Experimental Beach Hazards Statement will become Operational:
Effective May 4, 2015

Effective Monday May 4, 2015, the Experimental Beach Hazards Statement (BHS) will transition to operational status. The BHS is approved for all coastal NWS offices to issue when they determine there are unusual or hazardous conditions in the surf zone or at a beach in their area of forecast responsibility.

The BHS provides beachgoers and local authorities with significant information related to hazards, actual or potential, which currently do not have NWS watch, warning or advisory products. This includes, but is not limited to:

Dangerous currents in the surf zone.
Unusual surf/wave/tide conditions not meeting advisory criteria.

Coastal NWS offices issue Rip Current Statements to inform beachgoers of the potential and risk level for rip currents.

Since 2012, 20 coastal Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) have been testing the Experimental BHS (Table 1). NWS received comments from May 15, 2012, through December 31, 2014. Based on positive feedback for the experimental product, NWS will transition the Experimental BHS to the BHS.

The Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) for the BHS will be the same as for the Experimental BHS: BH.S. Users do not need to make any adjustments to their systems.

Table 1: Communication Identifiers for NWS Offices who Tested the Experimental Beach Hazards Statement

Issuing WFO -----	WMO Header -----	AWIPS ID -----
Newport/Morehead City, NC	WHUS42 KMHX	CFWMHX
Wakefield, VA	WHUS41 KAKQ	CFWAKQ
New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA	WHUS44 KLIX	CFWLIX
Tampa Bay Area/Ruskin, FL	WHUS42 KTBW	CFWTBW
Miami, FL	WHUS42 KMFL	CFWMFL
Key West, FL	WHUS42 KKEY	CFWKEY
Corpus Christi, TX	WHUS44 KCRP	CFWCRP
Grand Rapids, MI	WHUS43 KGRR	CFWGRR
Marquette, MI	WHUS43 KMQT	CFWMQT
Gaylord, MI	WHUS43 KAPX	CFWAPX
Northern Indiana, IN	WHUS43 KIWX	CFWIWX
Chicago, IL	WHUS43 KLOT	CFWLOT
Seattle, WA	WHUS46 KSEW	CFWSEW
San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey, CA	WHUS46 KMTR	CFWMTR
Los Angeles/Oxnard, CA	WHUS46 KLOX	CFWLOX
San Diego, CA	WHUS46 KSGX	CFWSGX
Detroit, MI	WHUS43 KDTX	CFWDTX
Duluth, MN	WHUS43 KDLH	CFWDLH
Green Bay, WI	WHUS43 KGRB	CFWGRB
Milwaukee, WI	WHUS43 KMKX	CFWMKX

Five NWS offices (Table 2) have collaborated with other agencies to include specific ecological hazards in the BHS.

Table 2: WFOs including information on specific ecological hazards in the Beach Hazards Statement:

Issuing WFO	Ecological Hazards in BHS
San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey and San Diego, CA	Bacteria in water (issued only when a beach is closed due to bacteria)
Tampa Bay Area/Ruskin, Harmful Miami, and Key West, FL	Algal Bloom (Issued only when there is a high risk of respiratory impacts)

Below are links to examples of the BHS:

Dangerous Swimming Conditions:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/dangerous_swimming.pdf

Rip Currents and High Water Levels:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/rip_currents_hwl.pdf

Minor Coastal Flooding and Rip Currents:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/minor_coast_flood_rip.pdf

Minor Tidal Overflow:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/minor_tidal.pdf

High Waves and Shoreline Currents:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/mc/high_waves.pdf

Florida Red Tide:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/notification/mc/redtide.pdf>

On the NWS Watch, Warning, Advisory map (<https://www.weather.gov>), the BHS, along with the Rip Current Statement, is highlighted in turquoise.

For information on beach hazards safety and awareness, please refer to the following website:

<http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov>

General background information on VTEC can be found online at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/vtec>

If you have questions or comments, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

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

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