

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1704***

***FEBRUARY 27, 2024***

***Operations and Services***

***Dissemination NWSPD 10-17***

***COMPLEMENTARY DISSEMINATION SERVICES***

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <https://www.weather.gov/directives/>

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**Complementary Dissemination Services**

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## 1. Introduction

This National Weather Service (NWS) Instruction (NWSI) provides guidelines on NWS complementary dissemination services and identifies the managerial relationships and operational functions. These services include the provision of NWS information by telephone, by the print and electronic media, through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System (EAS), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Warning System (NAWAS).

Providing marine weather information requires that products have specific formats and codes for proper dissemination through a wide variety of methods to meet user needs. For details, see NWSI 10-3 series of Directives ([https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01003curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01003curr.pdf)).

When responding to requests for weather services from the public, the media, and others in the private sector, NWS personnel should be cognizant of the respective roles of the government and private sector. NWS Policy Directive 1-10, *Managing the Provision of Environmental Information* ([https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/001\\_pdfs/pd00110curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/001_pdfs/pd00110curr.pdf)), summarizes the principles of NOAA's partnership policy and may help to guide the response to these requests. Additional guidelines for providing support for special events are included in NWSI 10-1806, *NWS Support for Special Events* ([https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01018006curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01018006curr.pdf)). Implementation of substantial changes to NWS complementary dissemination services will follow policy and procedures described in NWSPD 1-10 and its underlying instructions and NWSI 10-102, as appropriate.

All NWS directives and instructions mentioned in this Instruction also can be found at <https://www.weather.gov/directives> including information on primary dissemination services for NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) Dissemination (NWSI 10-1710 [https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01017010curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01017010curr.pdf)) and NOAA Weather Wire Service (NWS) Dissemination (NWSI 10-1715 [https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01017015curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01017015curr.pdf)).

### 1.1 Mission Connection

The NWS mission to protect life and property, and to enhance the national economy, is further advanced by timely delivery of NWS information through these complementary dissemination services. Information supplied to the print and electronic media, including to the EAS, and in coordination with emergency officials through the NAWAS, help enhance the public's awareness of hazardous weather, flooding and non-weather emergencies, and actions that may be taken to mitigate the effects.

## 2. Procedural Responsibilities

### 2.1 National Weather Service Headquarters (NWSH)

The Office of Dissemination (DIS), in coordination with Analyze Forecast and Support, provides service requirements and guidelines for the complementary dissemination services in coordination with the Regional Headquarters and the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP).

## **2.2 Regional Headquarters**

Each Regional Headquarters manages the complementary dissemination services within its region and should have a designated regional focal point to oversee, review and evaluate day-to-day operations. This includes the National Tsunami Warning Center in Alaska Region and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Pacific Region. The Regional Headquarters will, as necessary, define and document any region-specific information in regional supplements to this Instruction.

## **2.3 The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP)**

NCEP manages the overall complementary dissemination services carried out by its National Centers and ensures that its Centers have sufficient communications equipment to carry out its responsibilities with its users. Each Center should have a designated focal point to oversee day-to-day operations, ensuring the Center adopts these guidelines consistent with the needs of its user base and staffing. Each NCEP Center will work with NWSH to develop requirements for new complementary dissemination services to ensure consistency of services across the NWS.

## **2.4 Weather Forecast Offices**

In this NWSI, NWS field offices include Weather Forecast Offices (WFO), River Forecast Centers (RFC), and other operational offices that interact with the public. Field office management adopts these guidelines and regional supplements consistent with local service requirements and staffing. Each field office should designate a focal point to oversee these complementary dissemination services, ensuring that all operational staff carry out these duties effectively. Each WFO will first engage with their Regional Headquarters on new concepts for complementary dissemination services. They will then engage NWSH to develop requirements for new complementary dissemination services to ensure consistency of services across the NWS.

## **2.5 Other NWS Offices**

The Office of Water Prediction manages the overall complementary dissemination services carried out by the National Water Center (NWC) and ensures that NWC has sufficient communications equipment to carry out its responsibilities with its users. Additionally, the Office of Observations manages the overall complementary dissemination services carried out by the National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) and ensures that the NDBC has sufficient communications equipment to carry out its responsibilities with its users. There should be a dedicated focal point to oversee these dissemination services. There should be a dedicated focal point in each of these centers to oversee these complementary dissemination services, ensuring that all operational staff carry out these duties effectively. Each Center will work with NWSH to develop requirements for new complementary dissemination services to ensure consistency of services across the NWS.

## **3. Telephone Services**

All NWS field offices and certain National Centers (as determined by NCEP or Center manager) provide specific telephone services to the public, other government agencies, and the media, as described in subsections below. Many of these offices also have the other telephone lines mentioned below, providing a full range of public services. (Certain other field office telephone lines not primarily used for public services, such as data collection or maintenance services, are not described in this instruction.)

During interactions, NWS staff should inform users and partners that telephone services provide a valuable alternative addition to NWS' overall dissemination methods. However, telephone services are not the primary method by which the public should expect to receive comprehensive NWS information, particularly for short-duration warning situations.

### **3.1 Listed Public/Administrative Line(s)**

This is a required service. The public can use one or more public/administrative telephone lines to talk with NWS office staff during normal business hours. Offices can extend or curtail the hours of public phone service based on available resources due to workload or other considerations. The service can be extended by placing the Listed Public/Administrative Line(s) in answer status at any hour during periods of existing or imminent hazardous weather or flood events, if such action is deemed in the public interest.

### **3.2 Telephone Recordings on Listed Public/Administrative Line(s)**

This is a required service. Office staff typically use the Listed Public/Administrative Line(s) to make recordings that provide current weather forecast information. The weather recording should, at a minimum, include a local forecast for the next two days (for example, today, tonight, and tomorrow), with a headline of only long-duration watches/warnings/advisories and short-duration watches, as appropriate. Other recordings may include marine or other information depending on the needs of the local community. These recordings should not contain information beyond that included in standard NWS products.

### **3.3 Recording Implementation Options**

In many offices, the recordings on the Listed Public/Administrative Line(s) are followed by a "ring-through" service where, if the public stays on the line, the call is answered by the office staff during normal business hours. Often, multi-line voice mail systems with a menu of choices for touch-tone users are offered during business hours.

### **3.4 Private Weather Line(s)**

In some areas of the country, the NWS satisfies the need to provide the public with weather information by telephone by entering into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with private companies to provide weather recordings. Information for these recordings could come from the NWS or other NWS sources, news services, or other private sector sources. The MOUs, which are executed between the Regional Headquarters and the company, should ensure the information is recorded in an accurate and timely manner.

### **3.5 Unlisted Line(s)**

This is a required service. Unlisted lines are used for emergency and non-emergency communications with all members of the hazards community as defined in NWSI 10-1801 (e.g., contact with radio/TV stations and newspapers, interviews, coordinating plans for preparedness activities, etc.) in the local calling area. This line(s) could be the same line(s) as described in sections 3.7 and 3.8 at the discretion of the Regional Headquarters.

### **3.6 Severe Weather Reporting Line(s)**

This is a required service. All WFOs are required to receive hazardous weather and flood conditions from the public by telephone. Telephone numbers for these purposes may be toll-free and/or announced and listed in the general telephone directories, as approved by Regional Headquarters. The National Public Observation Program (NPOP) enables the public to relay reports of hazardous weather to NWS forecast offices.

### **3.7 Unlisted Toll-Free Emergency Line(s)**

The Unlisted Toll-Free Emergency Line(s) should be used only for emergency operations within the office's area of responsibility, and only for incoming calls from partners to support the warning process.

### **3.8 Telephone Directory Listings**

#### **3.8.1 Government Listings**

White and yellow page telephone directory listings for the "National Weather Service" should include the local NWS office(s) telephone number(s).

#### **3.8.2 Private Company Listings**

Private weather-by-phone systems that include commercial sponsor or advertising information should not be listed under "National Weather Service," as shown in section 3.8.1. Such numbers normally will be listed in a separate section of the telephone directory. If sponsors of a private company want to have an additional listing at their own expense under the "National Weather Service," the following format should be used.

A description of the service with a cross reference to the page the telephone company lists the number on:

"Local Area Forecast by (sponsored service) ... see page x", or alternatively, "Local Area Forecast by (sponsored service) ... see listing under (sponsor name)"

This format is intended to ensure there is no express or implied endorsement by NWS of any of the sponsors.

In the general listing of the directory, the following example may be used:

Under "N"  
National Weather Service - See listing  
  
U.S. Government Commerce Department  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

### **3.9 Advances in Telephone Services**

The Regional Headquarters and its field offices are encouraged to work with the Analyze, Forecast and Support (AFS), Office of the Dissemination (DIS) and Office of Science and Technology Integration (STI) to use innovative technologies and techniques to provide advanced

telephonic services that reduce staff workload.

#### **4. Media Services**

Print media (newspapers, magazines, etc.) and electronic media (radio, television, webpages, social media, etc.) play a major role in disseminating weather information. Field office and National Center management, in coordination with Regional Public Affairs staff, should ensure strong partnerships with these media in their area to provide a valuable service to the public.

##### **4.1 Print Services**

The print media traditionally disseminates weather information that is difficult to disseminate by telephone, radio, or television. In particular, NWS offices should encourage the print media to publish weather awareness information and stories, highlighting steps the public should take to protect themselves and their property from hazardous weather and other environmental conditions. Public Information Statements (PNS), press releases, and direct mailings to the print media are examples of ways to provide important weather information.

NWS employees will not supply the print media with specially prepared information on a routine basis. NWS staff should, however, encourage the print media to include in a "weather page" such information as: the local area forecasts for the next several days; selected cities forecasts; domestic and foreign temperature/rainfall tables; and local climatic tables, including sunrise/sunset, degree-day information and, where appropriate, tide information. These products may be obtained from NWS sources, such as the NWWS, or from private meteorological or news sources.

##### **4.2 Electronic Services**

NWS employees should encourage radio, television, on-line services, webpages, social media, etc., to broadcast shortened versions of the hazard awareness information and other materials in PNSs (or equivalent) and press releases.

NWS employees will not provide direct broadcasts for radio and television stations or NWS social media on a routine basis. However, during ongoing or expected hazardous conditions, office staff should try to respond to media requests for live or taped interviews or social media updates, consistent with workload, established NOAA/NWS media policies, and NWS' primary mission of getting warnings disseminated accurately and quickly. NWS offices generally may not use government funds to purchase "air time" with media providers to broadcast NWS forecast and/or preparedness information (e.g., Public Service Announcements, or PSAs).

In the Alaska Region, the NWS provides routine weather information via an online weather program and supports public media outlets due to the unique environment and population needs.

#### **5. Emerging Technologies**

The NWS continues to explore the potential use of emerging technologies for dissemination. NWS offices should work through their representative on the NWS Emerging Technologies Integrated Work Team regarding the use of emerging technologies for dissemination, such as social media and mobile wireless services.

## 6. Emergency Alert System (EAS) Services

The EAS is a nationwide alerting system requiring all broadcast stations (radio and television), cable television systems and wireless cable systems to have FCC type-certified EAS equipment. All AM and FM radio stations, television stations, low power television service (LPTV), and cable TV systems with greater than 5,000 subscribers are required to have an EAS encoder/decoder. Cable TV systems with less than 5,000 subscribers may operate without an EAS encoder by using an FCC certified decoder. For more technical details on EAS, see Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 11 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7b9734095821e6d8f923ef6e180c4944&mc=true&node=pt47.1.11&rgn=div5>).

The FCC manages the EAS in partnership with FEMA and the NWS. Electronic media broadcasters are required to receive, forward to other EAS participants, and rebroadcast emergency messages to the public for national-level (i.e., Presidential) Emergency Action Notification and Emergency Action Termination messages. Receiving, forwarding, and rebroadcasting is voluntary for all state and local messages, such as all weather messages or other non-weather emergency messages (see, NWSI 10-518, *Non-Weather Emergency Products Specifications*, [https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01005018curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01005018curr.pdf)).

At this time, the NWS does not have the technical capability to receive and forward Presidential messages via NWR.

Broadcasters' EAS equipment uses a precisely - formatted, digital protocol which includes a two-tone attention signal. This signal defines the nature of the event or emergency, the location of the emergency, the originator of the emergency message, the valid time period of the emergency, and an end-of-message code. The EAS protocol is identical to the NWR Specific Area Message Encoding (NWR-SAME) protocol the NWS uses to broadcast messages over all NWR stations (see NWSI 10-1712, *NWR All Hazards Specific Area Message Encoding*, [https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01017012curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01017012curr.pdf)). The three letter SAME Event Codes correspond to the three letter EAS Event Codes.

The NWS is a key message provider to the EAS via two distinct message pathways. One message pathway monitored by some EAS Participants is NWR. NWS disseminates certain time-critical emergency audio messages using NWR-SAME via NWR to EAS Participants. A second message pathway monitored by some EAS Participants includes using the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) messages disseminated via NWS NOAAPORT, and the Emergency Managers Information Network (EMWIN). These WMO messages include a Broadcast Instruction Line with "EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTED" terminology. See NWSI 10-1710 *NWR All Hazards Dissemination* [https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01017010curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01017010curr.pdf) for additional information on the role of NWR as a source for EAS. See NWSI 10-1701 ([https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01017001curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01017001curr.pdf)), *Text Product Formats and Codes*, for more information on the proper formatting of WMO text products which may be monitored by EAS Participant.

NWS WFOs should actively participate in the development and content of state and local EAS plans in their area by working closely with their respective State Emergency Communications Committees (SECC) and Local Emergency Communications Committees (LECC). In each state, one NWS WFO is designated as the State Liaison Office (SLO) to coordinate with state

emergency management and broadcasters. For more information, see NWSI 10-1801, *Warning Coordination and Hazard Awareness* ([https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010\\_pdfs/pd01018001curr.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/directives/010_pdfs/pd01018001curr.pdf)) for SLOs associated with each state/territory. While it is understood that the relay of state/local information by broadcasters is optional, it is typically in these EAS plans that SECC/LECCs recommend how the voluntary participants should respond to weather and non-weather (e.g., environmental) emergencies.

A complete discussion of the EAS can be found online at:  
<https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-alert-system>

## **7. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)**

NWS transmits weather and hydrologic alerts in Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) format to the FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The most critical life-saving alerts for imminent threats are relayed by IPAWS to commercial wireless carriers for broadcast over WEA. WEA is a public safety system that allows government alerting authorities to geographically target emergency text-like messages to cell phones. WEA broadcasts each alert, using radio technology, from cell towers to the NWS warning area. Thus, WEA is not subject to delivery latency or failure that could otherwise occur if cellular networks were to become congested during times of extreme usage.

WEA was established pursuant to the Warning, Alert and Response Network (WARN) Act (<https://www.congress.gov/109/bills/hr5785/BILLS-109hr5785ih.pdf>) and complements the existing EAS. Commercial wireless carriers volunteer to participate in WEA, which is the result of a unique public/private partnership between the FCC, FEMA and the wireless industry to enhance public safety. See <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea> for more information about WEA.

## **8. Emergency Dissemination Services**

### **8.1 National Warning System (NAWAS) Services**

FEMA operates NAWAS. The primary function of NAWAS is to convey warnings of man made (e.g., enemy attack, terrorism) or natural disasters to Federal, state, and local governments, and to the military and civilian populations. NAWAS messages may be associated with local, regional, state, and national natural or manmade disasters or events. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (<https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr1311/BILLS-116hr1311ih.pdf>), authorizes the use of NAWAS service for emergencies.

There are approximately 2,000 Federal, state, and local warning points on the NAWAS circuit throughout the Nation. Most operational NWS offices (WFOs, National Centers) have NAWAS drops. NAWAS operates 24 hours a day. The system design permits simultaneous issuance of a warning to all warning points on the system via a telephone instrument connected to a dedicated hotline circuit; the ability to place calls during high public call traffic periods; comprehensive coverage of state jurisdictions; conference calling; and high circuit reliability.

Some WFOs use NAWAS to disseminate information and as a two-way coordination tool with Federal, state, and local warning points. There are WFOs who have removed their NAWAS drop, in coordination with FEMA and appropriate state agencies. The level to which weather

information is disseminated or coordination achieved depends on operational procedures for the state NAWAS circuit established by each state government, and the number and location of additional NAWAS terminals in individual state governments and in the local jurisdictions.

NAWAS operational procedures for NWS facilities are in FEMA's publication *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Weather Service National Warning System Terminal Operational Procedures* distributed by FEMA to NWS NAWAS equipped offices.

## **8.2 Amateur Radio Service**

Amateur Radio Service is provided by volunteers who are licensed amateur radio operators. A primary objective of the Amateur Radio Service is to provide public service through non-commercial emergency communications. Amateur Radio Service is valuable to the NWS, especially during emergencies, due to the decentralized (generally on-site) nature of communications infrastructure employed. NWS offices should avail themselves to amateur radio assistance, especially where severe weather or hurricane frequency is high. Often this assistance will include the placement and operation of amateur radio equipment by a licensed amateur radio operator in the NWS office. Amateur Radio Service operations and functions are established and documented at each NWS office.

All amateur radio operators and stations are licensed by the FCC with different grades of licenses and privileges accorded. The amateur radio license grade depends on the demonstrated skill and competence of the applicant. All classes of licenses require passing a written examination on basic FCC regulations, electronics theory, and practical radio operations.

Amateur radio communications cover a broad spectrum of capabilities. Certain bands are especially suited for mobile communications, while others provide nationwide or international coverage. Amateur radio communications are normally well organized and highly disciplined.

There are two principal emergency communication organizations which also operate at the local level on a more formal basis. The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) operates on specifically designated segments of the regular amateur radio bands under the sponsorship and authorization of local or state government officials. The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a national organization of amateurs providing voluntary emergency communication services. It is organized at the county level in each state. Unlike RACES, ARES is not sponsored by local or state government but by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), a national amateur radio organization. ARES groups are organized and ready to assist with local emergency and NWS needs. ARES contact points can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.arrl.org/sections>.

## **8.3 Citizen's Band Service**

Citizen's band (CB) radio was established to meet a public demand for a portion of the radio spectrum to be used for personal or business communications which could not normally be met through commercial facilities. The CB operator is not required to pass any written test on the technical aspects of radio. Power limitations and band characteristics normally limit direct communications ranging from five to 30 miles. At times, distances may be much greater, but it is illegal to exceed 150 miles.

NWS offices should avail themselves of CB service operations in areas where the unique characteristics of the service may prove helpful to the NWS mission. CB service operations and functions are established and documented at each NWS office.

One of the largest CB groups providing public service is the Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Teams (REACT). REACT is a national, volunteer citizen-based communication organization established in 1962. In 1970, the FCC designated "CB-9" as the emergency and travelers assistance channel which REACT routinely monitors. CB groups have been especially effective in rural areas and small-to-moderate sized cities where CB congestion is not as great a problem as in major metropolitan areas. REACT information, including the NWS MOU, can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.reactintl.org/>.

#### **8.4 Maritime Mobile Service**

The Maritime Mobile Service is an internationally-allocated radio service providing for the safety of life and property at sea and on inland waterways. NWS Field Offices may operate FCC/National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) licensed fixed maritime stations which allow direct communication with mariners to convey watches and warnings, and to collect observations. The Maritime Mobile Service covers a broad spectrum of capabilities, including communications at VHF, MF and HF frequencies. Maritime Mobile Service operations and functions should be documented in NWS offices where a station is established. The Maritime Mobile Service can be found on the Internet at: <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/bureau-divisions/mobility-division/maritime-mobile-service>.

### **9. User Requests for Resending Products**

NWS field offices and National Centers may receive occasional user requests to resend a scheduled or unscheduled NWS product. NWS field offices and National Centers should honor user requests to resend products according to procedures in NWSI 10-1701.

### **10. Enterprise Dissemination Services**

While not a dissemination service provided by NWS, our partners in the Weather, Water, and Climate (W/W/C) Enterprise play a key role in further disseminating NWS-issued weather, water and climate information to the public. These non-NWS dissemination services contribute to building a Weather-Ready Nation. This includes media dissemination of NWS information (see section 4, above) as well as Enterprise sources of non-NWS W/W/C information.

#### **10.1 NWS Messaging about Enterprise Dissemination Services**

While NWS employees may not make referrals to specific providers of W/W/C information, those who request information may be referred to <https://www.weather.gov/enterprise/> for a description of Enterprise Resources, including complementary dissemination services provided by our Enterprise partners.

#### **10.2 Messaging Related to Non-NWS Warnings**

The NWS is the Federal Agency mandated by law with the responsibility for issuing storm warnings, watches and advisories. However, private sector entities sometimes initiate their own

warnings, which may at times create considerable confusion. The statements provided below should be used by field offices to respond to inquiries regarding weather/water-related warnings that were not issued by the NWS. It is important that field offices use the wording provided to ensure a uniform agency response. If additional information beyond the statements is requested from media sources, the field office should refer the individual requester to NWS Public Affairs (301-427-9000).

For situations where the field office is not responding directly to an inquiry but is aware that a non-NWS warning has caused confusion, a statement should be issued only if the office cannot reasonably respond to individual inquiries. In particular, NWS posts social media messages about non-NWS warnings should be used only in extreme cases so as not to increase confusion during a watch, warning, advisory or other severe weather situation. In conjunction with issuing a statement, field offices may want to reach out to local media sources that disseminate NWS warnings to ensure they are aware of the potential confusion.

Standard message:

"A National Weather Service (NWS) {type of alert or warning} is not in effect for the {identifying information} area at this time, but we are monitoring the situation closely. We are aware that a private weather forecasting service may have issued an alert to its client[s] that has been shared with others. If and when NWS issues an official warning, it is broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio, disseminated through other NWS dissemination systems, posted on WFO web pages and accessible via weather.gov. As appropriate, Wireless Emergency Alerts, NOAA Weather Radio tone alerts, or television crawl message systems may also be activated. The NWS is the official federal government source of weather watches, warnings, and advisories to the public for the protection of life and property."

Social media message, if warranted:

"There is no NWS {severe thunderstorm/flash flood/tornado} warning in effect for {area} at this time. See {office webpage URL} for the latest."

Followed by:

"NWS warnings are broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio and may trigger Wireless Emergency Alerts, NWR tone alerts, or television crawls. See {office webpage URL} for the latest."

### **10.3 Messaging related to Inadvertent Dissemination of NWS Test Message by Third Party Dissemination Services**

See NWSI 10-1701 for suggested messaging if public confusion arises due to third party dissemination of NWS-issued test warnings without the correct TEST designation.

### **10.4 Messaging related to public complaints Third-Party Alert Dissemination of NWS warnings in the Overnight Hours**

The NWS is the Federal agency mandated by law with the responsibility to issue weather warnings.

In response to complaints from the public about some NWS-initiated notifications, national and regional policy has limited some forms of message alerting in the overnight hours, such as not invoking SAME and/or 1050 Hz Warning Alarm Tones to accompany NWR broadcasts.

Because private sector entities may further disseminate NWS-issued warnings over third-party systems, similar complaints have been received by WFOs from the public concerning overnight alerting by third parties.

In responding to such complaints, it is important to recognize that third-party providers further disseminate NWS alerts/warnings. It is not the role of the NWS to direct or suggest changes to services provided external to NWS, or to criticize practices of private companies when contacted by the public.

The statements provided below will be used by field offices to respond to inquiries regarding those NWS-issued weather/water-related alerts/warnings disseminated by third-parties in the overnight hours. It is important that offices use the specific wording below to ensure a uniform agency response that is in compliance with our policies regarding private industry.

"The National Weather Service (NWS) has a {type of warning} in effect for the {identifying information} area at this time; however, NWS did not directly send out the alert you received during the overnight hours. We are aware that a private weather forecasting service may have sent out our NWS warning to its customers."

"We understand and appreciate your concern. In an effort to work with our dissemination partners, providing NWS with some additional information would be helpful to assist NWS in minimizing disruption to the public and our customers in the overnight hours."

Ask for the following information and enter it in the Google spreadsheet provided and established by each WFO:

- Do you know what dissemination service provided the alert/warning during the overnight hours (suggest how they might determine it (e.g., phone apps in use; originating number for text message, etc.)?)
- What type of alert/warning did you receive (e.g., Flash Flood Warning)?
- What time did you receive the alert/warning, and was it a single alert or received multiple times?
- Is this the first time you received this type of alert/warning in the overnight hours?
- Have you received other types of alerts/warnings in the overnight hours?

Follow-Up actions:

- Enter data from the questions above into the Google spreadsheet provided (to be established for entries by WFOs).
- If incidents from a particular service provider become widespread, local office management should work through their Regional Headquarters to inform managers at

NWS Headquarters. AFS will reach out to service providers, as appropriate, to inform them about the impacts of overnight alerting and best practices NWS uses for this type of dissemination situation.

If additional information beyond the statements is requested from media sources, refer the individual requester to NWS Public Affairs (301-427-9000) or work directly with NWS Public Affairs to develop a more detailed statement for the particular incident.