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***Operations and Services***
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***Backup Operations, NWSI 10-2201***
***BACKUP OPERATIONS FOR ALASKA REGION OFFICES***

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This supplement supersedes Alaska Region Supplement 01-2009, Backup Operations for Alaska Region Offices, March 18, 2019, and filed with NWSI 10-2201. The following changes were made in this issuance:

1) Revised WFO product/service priority list in Appendix A.

2) Reorganized all information in Appendix A into a table format.

Signed May 15, 2020
Scott Lindsey Date
Acting Regional Director

# Backup Operations for Alaska Region Offices

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1. Purpose. NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) offices provide forecast and warning services to a variety of customers. This Supplement provides service backup guidelines and instructions for Alaska Region (AR) field offices as well as for the Alaska Region Headquarters (ARH). ARH is not an operational field unit; however, it serves both as a regional communication and data center and as an operational support center during a weather-related or environmental emergency. Therefore, ARH has to be integral to the overall backup strategy for the region.

NOTE: This supplement cannot address every situation. Responsibility for the success of any service backup ultimately resides with the operational teams involved. A well-trained team versed in backup procedures and contingency plans will be better prepared to exercise good judgment and ensure a continuation of mission critical services.

2. Responsibilities.

2.1 Alaska Region Offices. Offices are required to have backup contingency plans in place to respond to the disruption of critical systems and services in their office, and to provide for as seamless a transition of those functions as possible to the assigned site backup office(s). Priority will be given to mission critical products and services to ensure they are maintained as seamlessly as possible, followed closely by the restoration of local operations at the disabled office. When an office is expected to be disabled for an extended length of time, support may include TDY at the backup location(s).

2.2 Weather Forecast Offices (WFO). The goal for service backup is to ensure that the backup function is essentially transparent to our customers. Provision for products and services while operating in a backup role is priority dependent and can be found in NWS Instruction

10-2201 while AR specific priorities are outlined in Appendix A. WFO service backup assignments are provided in the table below.

| Office | 1st Backup | 2nd Backup |
|---|---|---|
| WFO Anchorage | AER-AJK and ALU-AFG | N/A |
| WFO Fairbanks | AFC (ALU) | AJK |
| WFO Juneau | AFC (AER) | AFG |

2.3 Weather Service Offices (WSO). WSOs requiring support due to communication or upper air launch failures will contact their parent WFO to provide notification of their status. The primary responsibility of the parent WFO is to ensure that the upper air messages are manually transmitted in a timely manner using the WebComp V5.0 webpage. There are no Continuity of Operations (COOP) for WSOs.

2.4 Alaska Pacific River Forecast Center (APRFC). When the APRFC requires service backup, AR WFOs should have the capability of providing critical hydrological services (e.g., flood watches and warnings) without RFC guidance during the first 24 hours of an APRFC outage. If the APRFC outage is expected to continue beyond 24 hours, RFC operations should be relocated to an AR WFO and would use a WFO AWIPS workstation to remotely login into the National Water Center (NWC) AWIPS server to generate hydrologic model guidance for Alaska. Relocation of operations may necessitate APRFC personnel to travel TDY to the designated AR WFO to implement procedures and issue forecasts. During the breakup season, establishment of off-site operations may be initiated sooner. If the outage occurs during a high water situation, the APRFC may deploy staff at affected WFOs to assist in the handling of the event(s).

2.5 Alaska Aviation Weather Unit (AAWU) and Volcanic Ash Advisory Center (VAAC). For unscheduled outages, AAWU High Level Significant Meteorological Information (SIGMET) responsibility will be assumed by the Aviation Weather Center (AWC). Airmen's Meteorological Information (AIRMET) and Area Forecast (FA) services however do not currently have a suitable backup. The AAWU and ARH are working with the AWC to develop this capability, however it does not currently exist due to operational challenges. In the event of a longer term outage, consideration will be given to send AAWU personnel to an alternate location, with the goal of this alternative being to reestablish full AAWU operations, to the fullest extent possible.

The production and issuance of Volcanic Ash Advisories from the Anchorage VAAC will be transferred to the Washington VAAC when an operational outage occurs at the AAWU. To the extent possible, AAWU personnel will remain in close contact with the Washington VAAC especially during a period when a volcano is active in or upstream of the AAWU area of responsibility.

2.6 Center Weather Service Unit (CWSU). Service backup of CWSU Operations will be in accordance with Appendix B of NWSI 10-803, "Support to Air Traffic Control Facilities."

2.7 National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC). In the case of an operational failure, responsibility will be transferred to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) in Hawaii.

2.8 Alaska Region Headquarters (ARH). ARH responsibilities are to ensure regional data and product flow to support backup operations for all field offices; to provide operational support to field offices in the event of a weather related, or environmental disaster; and to provide administrative support for travel and logistics.

2.8.1 Alaska Region Operations Center (ROC). The Alaska Region ROC will track and notify essential regional personnel of operational service backup issues. The ROC should be notified by email at nws.ar.roc@noaa.gov or phone at (907) 271-6540.

2.9 Communications Backup. Backup operations for communications such as WSR-88D, NOAA All Hazards Radio, etc., will be handled in accordance to NWSI 10-2201 Appendix I.

3. Operations. Scheduled backup operations (e.g. AWIPS builds) will be coordinated in advance by the office requesting backup. However, there will be times when immediate implementation of service backup will be required. Examples of circumstances requiring immediate implementation include emergency evacuation, site communications or power failure, and critical equipment failure.

For unscheduled/emergency situations as defined above, the Alaska ROC Duty Officer should be notified as soon as possible in order generate a preliminary “For the Record (FTR)” to notify essential AR personnel and the NWS Operations Center. Designated primary or secondary backup offices will provide warning and forecast services until normal office operations at the affected site are restored. Notification will be provided to the AR ROC and to all affected AR field offices once normal operations and services are restored.

Offices providing backup will provide service consistent with normal operations and take into account additional workload, the weather, and available resources (personnel and equipment). Additional personnel may be called in or held over to maintain continuity of services for the disabled office and may require overtime pay or compensatory time at the supervisor’s discretion. For long-term backup, temporary duty at the backup office may be necessary to sustain services.

4. Readiness. Offices will maintain all instructions related to service backup. Offices will maintain lists and contacts for emergency management, other key partners, spotters, and Cooperative Observers. All offices should also be familiar with their assigned backup offices’ operational programs, procedures, and seasonal products. The office management team is responsible for ensuring that personnel are trained in service backup, and those procedures are exercised on a regular enough basis for personnel to remain proficient. It is the responsibility of each office to ensure that offices performing service backup have been provided all necessary items, as outlined above, to accomplish backup successfully.

# APPENDIX A -Critical Products List

| Priority Definitions | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Required critical products/services to be issued with no break in service.** These products/services are mission critical and are needed for the protection of life and property. |
| **2** | Products/services issued with minimal break in service once Priority 1 items are addressed and completed. |
| **3** | Products/services issued only after Priority 1 and 2 items are completed and as time and workload constraints warrants. |

| National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) | |
|---|---|
| **Product/Service** | **Priority** |
| Tsunami Watch/Warning/Advisory | 1 |
| Tsunami Information Bulletins | 1 |

| Alaska Aviation Weather Unit (AAWU) | |
|---|---|
| **Product/Service** | **Priority** |
| Volcanic Ash Advisory | 1 |
| SIGMETs | 1 |
| AIRMETs | 1 |
| Area Forecasts | 2 |

| Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center (APRFC) | |
|---|---|
| **Product/Service** | **Priority** |
| River stage and flow forecasts (RVFs) issued during flood situations | 1 |
| Hydrometeorological Coordination Messages (HCMs) providing guidance on flood impacts and extent | 1 |
| River stage and flow forecasts (routine issuance) | 2 |
| Hydrometeorological Coordination Messages (HCMs) (routine issuance) | 2 |
| RFC Quantitative Precipitation Forecasts | 2 |
| Flood Potential Outlooks | 2 |
| Hydrologic Summaries | 2 |
| AHPS graphic river forecasts | 2 |

| Weather Forecast Office (WFO) | |
|---|---|
| **Product/Service** | **Priority** |
| WWAS (Watch/Warning/Advisory/Statement) | 1 |
| Gridded Forecasts [0-36 hours] (including updates of ZFP, FWF, CWF, OFF, LFP, PFM, and FWM) | 1 |
| TAFs (all sites) | 1 |
| Spot Forecasts (Wildfire or Incident Response) | 1 |
| IDSS* (supporting core partners during significant events (e.g., weather, earthquake, etc.)) | 1 |
| * core partner support *may* include messaging (social media) | |
| Gridded Forecasts [37 hour – Day 3] (including updates of ZFP, FWF, CWF, OFF, LFP, PFM, and FWM) | 2 |
| Routine Hydro | 2 |
| LSRs (all) | 2 |
| Area Forecast Discussion (AFD) | 2 |
| Recreational Forecast (REC) [Fairbanks – Denali Climbing Forecast; Anchorage - Southcentral Mountain Forecast; Juneau – SE AK Mountain Forecast] | 2 |
| Motoring Forecast [Juneau only] | 2 |
| Dispersion Forecast [Fairbanks only] | 2 |
| Sea Ice Products | 3 |
| Gridded Forecasts [Day 3 night – Day 8] (including updates of ZFP, FWF, CWF, OFF, LFP, PFM, and FWM) | 3 |
| Short-Term Forecasts (NOWs) [Z222 Fairbanks, Juneau] | 3 |
| Climate Products (CF6, CLI, CLM) | 3 |
| Public Information Statements (PNS) | 3 |
| IDSS Messaging (social media) Routine | 3 |
| Weather Stories [Juneau] | 3 |
| Regional Temperature & Precipitation Roundup (RTP) | 3 |
| Record Event Reports (RERs) | 3 |