

NOUS41 KWBC 021440
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Public Information Statement 17-04
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
1040 AM EST Thu Feb 2 2017

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From: Allison Allen
Chief, Marine, Tropical and Tsunami Services Branch

Subject: Soliciting comments through March 4, 2016, on changing
criteria for issuing tropical cyclone watches and
warnings to include certain land-threatening
disturbances that are not yet tropical cyclones

Effective immediately and continuing through March 4, 2017,
NWS is seeking user feedback on the proposed option to issue
watches, warnings and graphical and textual advisory products
for disturbances not yet tropical cyclones but which pose the
threat of bringing tropical storm or hurricane conditions to
land areas within 48 hours.

Under previous long-standing NWS policy, the NWS has not been
permitted to issue a hurricane or tropical storm watch or
warning until after a tropical cyclone had formed. Advances in
forecasting over the past decade now allow the confident
prediction of tropical cyclone impacts while these systems are
still in the developmental stage. For these land-threatening
"potential tropical cyclones," the NWS proposes to issue the
full suite of products that previously have only been issued for
ongoing tropical, subtropical or post-tropical cyclones.

Potential tropical cyclones would share the naming conventions
currently in place for tropical and subtropical depressions,
with depressions and potential tropical cyclones being numbered
from a single list (e.g., One, Two, Three, ..., Twenty-Three,
etc.). The assigned number would always match the total number
of systems (tropical cyclones, subtropical cyclones, or
potential tropical cyclones) that have occurred within that
basin during the season.

For example, if three systems requiring advisories have already
formed within a basin in a given year, the next land-threatening
disturbance would be designated Potential Tropical Cyclone
Four. If a potential tropical cyclone becomes a tropical
depression, its numerical designation remains the same (i.e.,
Potential Tropical Cyclone Four becomes Tropical Depression

Four).

The issuance times for potential tropical cyclone products would be identical to the standard tropical cyclone product issuance times. No changes would be necessitated to the format of NWS text products. These products would add the term "potential tropical cyclone" to describe the system responsible for the watch or warning conditions in the MND header and the body of the product as appropriate.

NWS products for potential tropical cyclones would be issued until watches or warnings are discontinued or until the threats for land areas sufficiently diminishes, at which point advisories would be discontinued. If, however, it seems likely new watches or warnings would be necessary within a short period of time (say 6-12 hours), then advisories could briefly continue in the interest of service continuity. Once a system becomes a tropical cyclone, the normal rules for discontinuing advisories would apply. Potential tropical cyclone advisories would not be issued for systems that pose a threat only to marine areas.

Because NHC and the Central Pacific Hurricane Center would be issuing their normal graphical products depicting the 5-day forecast track and uncertainty cone for potential tropical cyclones, the Graphical Tropical Weather Outlook would no longer display a formation area for these systems to avoid confusion.

If comments are favorable, the NWS will offer the option beginning at or around the start of the 2017 hurricane season to issue tropical cyclone watches and warnings for land-threatening "potential tropical cyclones." An SCN will be issued prior to implementing this change.

Comments may be submitted via the survey link below:

www.nws.noaa.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=PTCWW

Or send comments or requests for more information to:

Jessica Schauer
NWS Marine, Tropical and Tsunami Services Branch
National Hurricane Center
Miami, FL 33165
Telephone: 305-229-4476
Email: Jessica.Schauer@noaa.gov

or
Wayne Presnell
NWS Marine, Tropical and Tsunami Services Branch
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: 301-427-9390
Email: Wayne.Presnell@noaa.gov

National Service Change Notices are online at:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/notif.htm>

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