

NOUS41 KWBC 141520  
PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 17-31  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring, MD  
1120 AM EDT Tue Mar 14 2017

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
              -NOAAPort  
              Other NWS partners and employees

From:         William Bauman  
              Chief, Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch

Subject:      Operational Implementation of Aviation Weather  
              Center Experimental Graphical Forecasts for  
              Aviation Effective April 13, 2017

Effective April 13, 2017, the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation (GFA) produced by the NWS Aviation Weather Center (AWC) will transition to operational status.

The experimental GFA were created in response to a formal request by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to discontinue production of the textual Area Forecasts (FA). Requirements for the underlying meteorological information in the FA have not changed. The FAA recognizes that, given modern advances within NWS, the legacy text FA is no longer the best source of en route flight planning weather information.

The FAA, pursuant to Title 49 United States Code, Section 44720, established requirements for this weather information and service which is necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of operations in the National Airspace System (NAS). The new graphical forecasts are designed to provide meteorological information equivalent to the textual FA. The graphical product includes observations and forecasts valid for the continental United States that provide data critical for aviation safety and are overlaid on high-resolution base-maps. FAs for Hawaii, Alaska, the Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico will not be affected at this time.

Observational data in the GFA are time-synchronized and available by the hour for the current time and the previous 6 hours. Hourly model data are available for up to 15 hours in the future. Wind, icing and turbulence forecasts are available in 3000 ft. increments from the surface up to Flight Level (FL) 180 or 18,000 ft. Mean Sea Level (MSL), and in 6,000 ft. increments from FL180 to FL480 or 48,000 ft. MSL. Turbulence forecasts are also broken into LO

(below FL 180) and HI (FL180 and above) graphics. Maximum icing and maximum wind velocity graphics (regardless of altitude) are also available.

Data including Observations/Warnings, Thunderstorms, Clouds, Flight Category (Ceiling and Visibility), Precipitation, Icing, Turbulence, and Winds are available in the GFA. These data are combined into categories that the user can select from the top level menu. Details of each category can be found in the Product Description Document (PDD):

[http://products.weather.gov/PDD/PDD\\_GFA\\_2017.pdf](http://products.weather.gov/PDD/PDD_GFA_2017.pdf)

The GFA can be found at: [www.AviationWeather.gov/gfa](http://www.AviationWeather.gov/gfa)

FAs will continue to be produced until formal notification is provided by NWS in advance of discontinuation.

If you have any questions regarding the GFA, please contact:

Debra Blondin  
Domestic Operations Branch Chief  
Aviation Weather Center  
Kansas City, MO 64153  
816-584-7207  
[Debra.Blondin@noaa.gov](mailto:Debra.Blondin@noaa.gov)

National Service Change Notices are online at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notif.htm>

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