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OFCM

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL COORDINATOR FOR
METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTING RESEARCH

National Hurricane Operations Plan

FCM-P12-2004

Hurricane Isabel - 16 September 2003

Washington, DC
May 2004

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FOR
METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTING RESEARCH

8455 Colesville Road, Suite 1500
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

NATIONAL HURRICANE OPERATIONS PLAN

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CHANGE AND REVIEW LOG

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FOREWORD

The Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference (IHC) is sponsored annually by the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research (OFCM) to provide a forum for the responsible Federal agencies, together with representatives from the user communities like emergency management, to review the Nation's hurricane forecast and warning program and to make recommendations on how to improve the program in the future. The major objective is to plan and prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. The 58th IHC was held in Charleston, South Carolina, March 1-5, 2004, and the new procedures, procedural changes, and agreements reached at the conference were incorporated into this publication--the 42nd edition of the *National Hurricane Operations Plan* (NHOP).

At the 58th IHC, the Working Group for Hurricane and Winter Storms Operations and Research (WG/HWSOR) addressed six action items. Of the six, one was for information only, and four were closed through incorporation into the NHOP as approved recommendations and/or changes. In the remaining action item, the Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center (TPC/NHC) requested that the Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center (FNMOC) increase the run frequency to four times daily and extend the forecast period out to 126 hours for the GFDN model (the Navy version of the GFDL hurricane model) so that TPC/NHC could make greater use of the model. The Navy agreed to the request on a resources-permitting basis. The action items will be published on the OFCM web site at www.ofcm.gov.

This edition includes a number of minor revisions and changes to Chapter 3, *General Operations and Procedures of the National Weather Service Hurricane Centers*, and Chapter 5, *Aircraft Reconnaissance*. Chapter 6, *Satellite Reconnaissance*; Chapter 8, *National Data Buoy Capabilities and Requirements*; and Appendix A, *Local National Weather Service (NWS) Office Products*, were substantially updated.

The 2003 Atlantic tropical cyclone season was a record season which extended from April until December. Hurricane Isabel caused record flooding in upper Chesapeake Bay and major flooding along the North Carolina coast; Hurricane Fabian was the worst hurricane to hit Bermuda in over 75 years; and Hurricane Juan was the worst hurricane to hit Halifax, Nova Scotia, in its modern history. Tropical Storm Ana was the first Atlantic tropical storm on record in the month of April, and Tropical Storm Odette was the first storm on record to form in the Caribbean Sea in the month of December. Of particular note, Hurricane Isabel was an exceptionally long-lived storm that strengthened at one point to a Category 5 hurricane and resulted in 17 deaths and over $3.37 billion in damage following landfall in North Carolina. The bottom line: Our multiagency tropical cyclone warning support system superbly responded to the challenges of this record-breaking season--a tribute to the professionalism, dedication, and cooperation of the civilian and military agencies involved.

Samuel P. Williamson
Federal Coordinator for Meteorological
Services and Supporting Research

NATIONAL HURRICANE OPERATIONS PLAN

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