

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-801**

**MAY 14, 2013**

**Administration and Management  
Corporate Operations, NWSPD 1-8  
EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS & CORRESPONDENCE**

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:** This directive supersedes NWSM 1-801, NWS Directives System - Executive Affairs and Correspondence, dated December 19, 2008. Minor changes were made in the clearance process and more information was provided concerning Memorandum of Understanding and Agreements. Appendix A no longer contains sample letters and memoranda but instead contains links to examples on the Executive Affairs web site. Appendix D was removed.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed by) \_\_\_\_\_ April 30, 2013  
John Longenecker Date  
Acting Chief Financial Officer/  
Chief Administrative Officer

**EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS & CORRESPONDENCE**

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**1. Introduction.** This directive governs the roles of the Executive Affairs Office (EA) and the Action Office (that is, the office that prepares or drafts the documents that respond to an incoming correspondence or creates such document; e.g., CFO, NCEP) in the preparation of National Weather Service (NWS) correspondence for signature by NWS senior management and for correspondence for signature at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Department of Commerce (DOC) levels.

**2. EA Responsibilities.** NWS EA is the focal point for all tracked actions assigned by or prepared for signature by the Assistant Administrator (AA) and the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA), and has the following responsibilities.

- EA reviews incoming correspondence and directs it to the appropriate office for action or information purposes. EA assigns the action, determines the due date, and prepares an NWS Executive Item Sheet.

Note: The “Due Date EA” is the date by which the Action Office must provide a signature-ready response to EA.

- EA assigns actions via e-mail notification, with electronic copy distribution via internet (Executive Log).
- EA monitors due dates, reminds Action Offices at a minimum the day before the Due Date to EA, and follows up on overdue actions.
- EA reviews all correspondence prepared for signature by the AA and DAA to ensure compliance with all NWS/NOAA/DOC correspondence procedures.
- EA performs and documents quality assurance on each action.
- EA electronically transmits to NOAA all NOAA/DOC controlled correspondence. EA retains the official file until receiving a copy of the signed and dated response from NOAA. The file is then returned to the Action Office.
- EA closes a correspondence action upon receipt of the appropriate documentation from the Action Office as described in Section 2.2.1.c.
- EA maintains NWS format standards.
- EA transmits Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement to DOC Office of General Counsel for clearance.

**3. Action Office Responsibilities.** The NWS Action Office is that NWS element that has primary responsibility for the subject matter of the correspondence. The Action Office should prepare a reply and assemble the correspondence package for the AA or DAA's signature. The responsibilities of the Action Offices are set forth below.

3.1 Timeliness. To meet due dates to EA, NWS, NOAA, DOC, or external organizations, Action Offices should adhere to the following procedures, and ensure timely responses to all correspondence.

- a. The Action Office Director is responsible for meeting all due dates. Extensions may be granted by EA only if the Action Office shows justification. Requests for extensions of due dates may be submitted by e-mail, addressed to the EA staff, or by phone.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Action Office to notify EA immediately if an action is assigned in error.
- c. If the incoming correspondence does not require a written response signed by the AA or DAA, it is the responsibility of the Action Office to advise EA what alternative action will be taken. A correspondence action cannot be closed except through a response or statement submitted to EA. The following are examples of acceptable documentation required to close actions:
  - (1) A response may be signed at the Office Director or program officer level; a copy of the signed and dated response must be received by EA by 5 p.m. ET, or as noted in the action, on the due date. The action number and a request to close the action based on the document must be included.
  - (2) An e-mail may be sent by a representative of the Action Office, after proper clearances and coordination, to the author of the incoming correspondence; a forwarded copy of the e-mail, including action number and a request to close the action based on the e-mail, must be received by EA by COB on the due date.
  - (3) If a phone call to the correspondent was made by a representative of the Action Office, and no further action is required, the Action Office must e-mail EA a record of the phone call. Include the date and names of the persons involved in the phone call along with the action number and a request to close the item based on the action taken.
  - (4) If no response or action is required, advise EA of the decision via e-mail by the due date, including the action number and a request to close the action.

If the document to be signed by the AA or DAA is internally generated, any internal or external deadline known by the drafter should be indicated on the Correspondence Control Sheet.

As a general rule, EA has two working days to clear a correspondence action and forward it to the front office. In addition, the AA requires two working days on actions sent for signature. These timeframes are subject to change if the action is a high priority (due

within five working days). Congressional responses should be completed within 10 days.

3.2 A Priorities. An "**A Priority**" action is DOC/NOAA-controlled with a one-day turn around. When preparing an "A Priority" action, there are few, if any, higher priorities. Until the response is signed by the AA or DAA, an office manager and focal point from the Action Office must be available. The action office must make certain that an "A Priority" action has proper clearances from NOAA Office of General Counsel, Weather, Satellites, and Research Section, and/or Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs prior to submitting to EA.

3.3 Taskers. Taskers are tasks or actions assigned by the NOAA Program Coordination Office, often with a short turn around. Taskers are forwarded to NWS via e-mail and can be responded to via e-mail; however, normal NWS coordination, discussed below, applies.

3.4 Coordination/Clearance. The Action Office has the responsibility to determine and obtain clearance from all necessary organizational elements. For actions submitted for AA/DAA signature, this must be completed prior to submission to EA. It is recommended the Action Office give the following instructions, along with the tasker and any incoming, to those providing signature clearance:

- Clear the document with "no comments."
- Clear the document and recommend changes.
- Clear the document with required changes.

3.4.1 All responses to congressional and Cabinet-level correspondence will be coordinated and/or cleared as follows.

a. **NOAA Office of General Counsel, Weather, Satellites, and Research Section (GCWSR)**. All responses prepared for signature at the Department level (Secretary and Deputy Secretary) or at the NOAA level (Under Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary), must be coordinated with GCWSR. GCWSR clearance and/or comments must be part of the correspondence package submitted to EA.

Correspondence assigned to the NWS Line Office for response, where the incoming is addressed to DOC/NOAA officials, must be coordinated with GCWSR if determined by the Action Office to have issues of substance.

b. **Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs for Weather (LAW)**. All responses to Members of Congress or Members of the President's Cabinet must be coordinated with LAW. LAW clearance and/or comments must be part of the correspondence package submitted to EA.

c. **Regional Offices**. All responses to Members of Congress must be coordinated with the appropriate Region. If the issue involves setting national policy, the NWS Director must coordinate/clear on the response; otherwise, coordination

may be below the Director level.

**d. Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (OCFO).** All congressional correspondence must be cleared by OCFO. EA will acquire this clearance after the document is submitted by the Action Office.

**NOTE:** All congressional and gubernatorial correspondence received directly by Regional Offices and field offices should be forwarded by e-mail as soon as possible to EA for assignment and tracking. Local offices should answer inquiries from residents and officials of local governments. Where field offices consider the issues that have been raised to be sensitive or national in scope, by all means forward a copy to EA.

3.4.2 In addition to the above coordination guidelines for congressional responses, several other specific issues require additional coordination.

**e. Correspondence for Signature at DOC/NOAA.** All correspondence to be forwarded to NOAA or DOC for signature must be coordinated with GCWSR. GCWSR clearance and/or comments must be part of the correspondence package submitted to EA.

**f. Programs Affecting Several Offices or Regions.** All responses to correspondence regarding issues that affect more than one program office or region must be coordinated/cleared with those other offices (e.g., NOAA Weather Radio, missed warnings, office closures).

**g. Financial or Budget Issues.** All responses regarding or containing financial or budget issues or information must be coordinated and cleared with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (OCFO).

**h. Personnel Issues.** All responses regarding personnel issues must be coordinated and cleared with OCFO.

**i. NWS Employees Organization (NWSEO) Issues.** All responses regarding NWSEO must be coordinated and cleared with the OCFO, DOC's Office of the General Counsel Employment and Labor Law Division, and NOAA's Workforce Management Client Services Division.

**j. Regulatory/Administrative Issues.** Correspondence on regulations or civil and administrative cases must be cleared by GCWSR.

**k. MOAs and MOUs.** Memoranda of Agreement and Memoranda of Understanding must be cleared by DOC Office of the General Counsel (OGC). Action offices should submit draft MOAs/MOUs to EA, at least 45 days prior to effective date. EA will forward to OGC for clearance.

**NOTE:** Clearance by the appropriate Region/Office/Staff director and the Executive Officer, if applicable, must be obtained on all correspondence packages and indicated on the Correspondence Control Sheet. An example of the NWS Correspondence Control Sheet follows this section. Additional clearances (e.g., from Branch and Division staff) are **not** included on the Correspondence Control Sheet.

*Sample: NWS Correspondence Control Sheet*

**Correspondence Control Sheet**

<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>One paragraph explaining the action-forcing event (no more than 5 sentences)</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>Two to three sentences explaining issues or major points in response</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>One sentence explaining what action needs to be done</b>

Coordination/Clearance

Routing Code, Print Name, and Signature	Date	Routing Code, Print Name, and Signature	Date
W/			
W/			
W/			
GCWSR -			
LAW -			
CFO (if financial/resources issues)			
W/EA - clearance			
Wx11 -			
Wx1 -			
W -			

Reference Number:

Drafted by:

Telephone:

Due:

Due to EA:

Due to NWS:

Due to NOAA:

**W, Wx1, Wx11: Please return all correspondence to EA after signature.**

**NOTE: All reference numbers are assigned by EA only.**

3.5 Distribution. After signature by the AA/DAA, EA will date stamp the response, make copies for its files, and return the original response and file to the Action Office for distribution.

3.6 File Maintenance. It is the responsibility of the Action Office to maintain the official file (with incoming, list of clearances, etc.) for all correspondence unless other arrangements are agreed upon between EA and the Action Office.