

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

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COMMISSION FOR BASIC SYSTEMS

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES
CO-ORDINATION GROUP

ITEM: 3

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**INFORMAL COMMENTS ON ITEM 3 ("IMPROVEMENT OF ABILITY
OF RSMCs IN EER TO FULFIL THE OPERATIONAL
REQUIREMENTS")**

(Submitted by the Paul K. Stewart, Melbourne, Australia)

Introduction

The following miscellaneous comments, or suggestions, are made with the aim of trying to improve the operational capability of the RSMCs for EER.

1. Request for Action Notification:

There is a need for a clear heading on the top of the fax or other message requesting support from RSMCs. (Although this comment is perhaps better directed at the agencies or NMHSs requesting support, it may lead to a quicker response time from RSMCs.) Maybe something like: "THE RSMC FOR EER IS REQUESTED TO TAKE ACTION NOW. PLEASE PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE YOUR TRANSPORT PRODUCTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE" would be appropriate. This would make it quite definite for operational shift staff in the RSMC to start taking action and hence eliminate any confusion. This type of heading would be in addition to any others associated with defining the emergency type within the message. Such a heading would also apply to tests.

2. Comments on Current Products:

The incorporation of a time/date of issue in UTC (eg ISSUED: hhmm UTC dd mmm yyyy) on all products (ie individual charts and faxes), would save valuable time in collating the various products.

3. Provision of General Meteorological Products:

As part of the response by the RSMC, it is suggested that perhaps a standard set of general meteorological products be generated and made available to the NMHSs, upon request. This standard set may include, for example, the latest geostationary satellite image, analysed and forecast fields. The field types and prognosis intervals would all be pre-defined for this basic, standard set.

4. Additional Products - Backward Trajectories:

There may be a need for information on where some observed pollutants have come from. The use of backward trajectories can provide the necessary guidance. These products could be made available to NMHSs, on request.

5. Maintenance of Lists of Dissemination Addresses and Numbers:

There is a need to have a list of operational email (and other) addresses, along with operational phone and fax numbers, that is always current and valid. In view of the confidentiality, or restricted access required, of the entries, this list should be password protected. Maybe the current web address (<http://www.wmo.ch/web/www/DPS/EER-Lists.html>), which attempts to list such details, could be made more interactive by allowing the RSMCs and NMHSs to update their own entries as required. However, this would perhaps require an extra level of security with an extra password.

6. Capability for Mesoscale Emergencies:

The recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak, in a number of countries, raises the issue of whether RSMCs should be able to provide support for NMHSs for this type of emergency, if requested. Usually this type of incident involving air-borne viruses are microscale or mesoscale, rather than synoptic scale, although they could be trans-boundary. Other smaller localised incidents (eg chemical fires) could also create the need for similar support. From an RSMC perspective, this may raise further issues about having the operational capacity for running deployable finer scale models for various localities within their regional area, with the functionality to handle air-borne viruses and other pollutants.

7. Source Location in Decimal Degrees:

The standardization of all requests for action with the latitude/longitude locations specified in decimal degrees, rather than using minutes, would save confusion.

8. Default Sources and Standard Products for Other Emergencies:

When considering a wider environmental emergency perspective, where there may be an atmospheric release due to forest fires, chemical explosions or volcanic eruptions, there is a need to define a set of default sources and standard products so that a timely and relevant initial response can be made by the RSMC. These sources and products could be defined in much the same way as that already done for the nuclear case. There would also be the need to generate appropriate joint statements as well. Also, associated with the standard products for the different types of emergencies, there would be the need to set up relevant joint web sites.
