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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 23-51
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
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From: AJ Reiss, Director
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Subject: Discontinuing the Forecasts of High Pressure Systems in the High
Seas Text Forecasts Issued by WFO Honolulu, Hawai'i and the Ocean
Prediction Center: Effective May 17, 2023

Effective with the 1200 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) issuance May 17,
2023, the Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Honolulu, Hawai'i and the NWS
National Centers for Environmental Prediction's (NCEP) Ocean Prediction
Center (OPC) will discontinue the forecasts of high pressure systems in
high seas text forecasts issued by WFO Honolulu and OPC.

A comment period from January 25 to March 1, 2023 yielded only six
comments. Four comments wished to keep the highs in the high seas
forecast and two supported removal. From each perspective, there was one
comment that offered a compelling case. With the continued availability
of the location and strength of highs through graphical products,
including surface analyses, and 24-, 48-, 72- and 96-hour forecasts
products via radiofax, ftpmail and the internet, the locations of the
highs are available through a variety of means.

The high seas text forecasts issued by WFO Honolulu and OPC, especially in
the cold season, can have extensive warning and synopsis information on
low pressure systems that results in the forecast being exceedingly
lengthy. Customer feedback has noted the excessive length of the
products, along with a requested focus on wind and wave hazards.
Currently, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) broadcasts NWS high seas text
forecasts and storm warnings from communication stations with a 40-minute
broadcast window.

In the cold season, with multiple gale, storm, and/or hurricane-force wind
warnings, plus tropical cyclone activity especially in the early part of
the cold season, the high seas text forecasts can reach or exceed 15,000
alphanumeric characters. Exceeding that, many characters will also exceed
the 40-minute (USCG) broadcast window. Discontinuing forecasts of high
pressure systems in high seas text forecasts will result in shorter
broadcasts, in concert with feedback and broadcast limitations.

In addition, discontinuing the forecasts of high pressure systems in high seas text forecasts allows for more time for forecasters to diagnose and accurately convey significant wind and wave information, including hazards, to the mariner. Furthermore, no other high seas text forecasts from the NWS include high pressure systems. This change results in product consistency among national centers that produce high seas text forecast information.

Again, OPC and WFO Honolulu graphical information will continue to include the locations and central pressures of high pressure systems. No changes will be made to the depiction of highs on surface analyses. Furthermore, no changes will be made to the depiction of highs on 24-, 48-, 72- or 96-hour forecast charts.

You can find more information about high seas forecasts at:

<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01003011curr.pdf>

Examples of the high seas forecasts can be found at:

<https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/NFDHSFAT1.php>

<https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/NFDHSFEP1.php>

<https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/NFDHSFEPI.php>

Comments can be provided to:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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