



Jefferson County - City of Port Townsend
COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN



Part 3: Emergency Operations Guide

EOG 3.3.09
OBTAINING A NWS SPOT FORECAST

Revised September 05, 2008

WEATHER SERVICE SPECIAL FORECAST PRODUCT - Tactical site-specific operations, such as a wildfire, aircraft crash site, hazardous materials incident, search and rescue, etc., may require accurate short term weather information for planning purposes. These forecasts are time and location specific, and are a product of the National Weather Service under the Fire Weather program.

USES OF A SPOT FORECAST

- Determination of potential fire behavior
- Hazardous materials behavior (relative humidity, precipitation, etc.)
- Hazardous materials plume trajectory (wind direction and speed)
- Possible weather conditions during a specific segment of a field operation
- Visibility and/or precipitation
- Conditions for the planned use of aircraft
- General planning for site-specific operations

COMPONENTS OF A SPOT FORECAST - When operations parameters are defined, the National Weather Service forecast office in Seattle develops a custom forecast in real time for that specific request. An on-line SEATTLE SPOT FORECAST REQUEST is used to identify the forecast elements desired. Primary forecast elements are (selectable as needed):

- Clouds/weather
- Chance of wetting rain
- Temperature
- Relative humidity
- Eye level wind speed and direction
- 20 foot wind speed and direction
- Smoke dispersion
- Lightening activity
- Swell height
- Swell period
- Wind wave
- Rainfall amount

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE REQUEST - Along with the identification of the requestor, the purpose, and the justification ("essential to public safety"), the request must include:

- Elevation of the area of operations (highest and lowest)
- Latitude and Longitude
- Aspect
- Current weather observations (wind, temp, etc.)
- Time period for the forecast (today, tonight, tomorrow)

HOW TO SUBMIT A REQUEST - Fill out the on-line request form (see **Emergency Action Checklist 3.3.11**) and submit it. A forecaster may call to confirm information. A SPOT forecast for the parameters requested will appear on the SEATTLE SPOT FORECAST page in about fifteen minutes from submission. The on-line request is the most efficient and preferred by the NWS.

There are also telephonic procedures for making a request in the event of lack of internet capability. Contact the NWS Lead Forecaster at **1-206-526-6083** (24-hours).

RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS - It is important to avoid unnecessary or duplicate requests for SPOT reports. When the EOC is activated (at any level, including support to search and rescue operations) requests for forecasts will be made through the Plans Section. In emergency situations where the EOC is not activated, Jeffcom has procedures for making the request.

CLARIFICATION OF SOME OF THE TERMS USED HERE

- Aspect – predominant terrain facing or exposure.
- Fire behavior – likely prognosis of a Wildland fire based on conditions like dryness of fuels, humidity, etc.
- Forecast parameters – the geographic location, elevation, and type of forecast components needed for incident-specific operational planning.
- Site-specific – single geographic location where tactical operations are being conducted.