

Emergency Managers: Weather Communication and Training

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The National Weather Service (NWS) provides a wide variety of products and services that are utilized by the government, public and private sector across the country. Officials in the government sector utilize the information provided from the NWS in making decisions that affect the public at large, commonly during periods of severe weather. One of the primary users of this information is emergency managers. NWS products are a valued asset to the local emergency manager during periods of severe weather. However, effective use of the NWS products by the local emergency managers is somewhat limited. There are few individuals working in the local jurisdictions that have a full understanding of the NWS products and are able to utilize the NWS products to maximize effectiveness.

Currently, standard training on NWS products is limited. As a result, there are two major areas of concern: the need for increased communication between the NWS and local emergency managers and the need for increased knowledge and understanding of the NWS products and information by the emergency managers. Another relative unknown is the ways in which weather information is communicated to other local officials and the public from the local emergency management offices.

This research allows for the opportunity to work and train with local officials to enhance their knowledge base for a better understanding of weather information products and how they can be utilized. The goal is to identify needed training and aid in a more rounded comprehension and understanding of how to utilize or enhance existing products or create new ones in order to aid in the emergency management cycle of mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery. Through this study, the hope is to build a unique program of training and outreach that will enhance the ability to communicate weather information to emergency managers.