



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
1325 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283

January 12, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Affected Offices

FROM: W/OS Glenn Austin, <signed>  
Digital Services Transition Manager

W/OS22 Eli Jacks, <signed>  
Public and Fire Weather Branch Chief

THROUGH: Digital Services Planning and Action Committee (DSPAC) and Regional  
Public Weather Focal Points

SUBJECT: Standardizing Weather Intensities for NDFD

The [Predominant] Weather has been a forecast element in NDFD since 2003 and has been operational since March 2005 for all domains (except Alaska.) The Weather element includes type, probability, and intensity information (“-“ for light and “+” for heavy.)

Usage of NDFD has grown dramatically based largely on the popularity of the XML web service. (OCIO reports the XML server receives millions of hits per day!) Upon review of some of the NWS digital forecasts that are displayed on the web, the DSPAC became concerned that the Weather intensities, in particular, were not always being represented in a consistent way.

After some debate and discussion, it was determined that clarification is needed. Effective immediately, all forecasters should use "light" as the default intensity on the Weather grid for Days 1-7 unless the predicted meteorological situation warrants a different intensity. The exception is Pacific Region as their tropical location supports a consistently higher probability of moderate or heavy rainfall events and therefore “moderate” default intensity will be assigned.

NWSI 10-503 currently has a section (9.3.5.3) which states that "beyond 72 hrs no intensity designator should be applied to the grids". This section will be revised in the next policy update.