

**§ 8545. Warning coordination meteorologists at weather forecast offices of National Weather Service**

**(a) Designation of warning coordination meteorologists**

**(1) In general**

The Director of the National Weather Service shall designate at least one warning coordination meteorologist at each weather forecast office of the National Weather Service.

**(2) No additional employees authorized**

Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize or require a change in the authorized number of full time equivalent employees in the National Weather Service or otherwise result in the employment of any additional employees.

**(3) Performance by other employees**

Performance of the responsibilities outlined in this section is not limited to the warning coordination meteorologist position.

**(b) Primary role of warning coordination meteorologists**

The primary role of the warning coordination meteorologist shall be to carry out the responsibilities required by this section.

**(c) Responsibilities**

**(1) In general**

Subject to paragraph (2), consistent with the analysis described in section 409,<sup>1</sup> and in order to increase impact-based decision support services, each warning coordination meteorologist designated under subsection (a) shall—

(A) be responsible for providing service to the geographic area of responsibility covered by the weather forecast office at which the warning coordination meteorologist is employed to help ensure that users of products of the National Weather Service can respond effectively to improve outcomes from weather events;

(B) liaise with users of products and services of the National Weather Service, such as the public, media outlets, users in the aviation, marine, and agricultural communities, and forestry, land, and water management interests, to evaluate the adequacy and usefulness of the products and services of the National Weather Service;

(C) collaborate with such weather forecast offices and State, local, and tribal government agencies as the Director considers appropriate in developing, proposing, and implementing plans to develop, modify, or tailor products and services of the National Weather Service to improve the usefulness of such products and services;

(D) ensure the maintenance and accuracy of severe weather call lists, appropriate office severe weather policy or procedures, and other severe weather or dissemination methodologies or strategies; and

(E) work closely with State, local, and tribal emergency management agencies, and

other agencies related to disaster management, to ensure a planned, coordinated, and effective preparedness and response effort.

**(2) Other staff**

The Director may assign a responsibility set forth in paragraph (1) to such other staff as the Director considers appropriate to carry out such responsibility.

**(d) Additional responsibilities**

**(1) In general**

Subject to paragraph (2), a warning coordination meteorologist designated under subsection (a) may—

(A) work with a State agency to develop plans for promoting more effective use of products and services of the National Weather Service throughout the State;

(B) identify priority community preparedness objectives;

(C) develop plans to meet the objectives identified under paragraph (2); and

(D) conduct severe weather event preparedness planning and citizen education efforts with and through various State, local, and tribal government agencies and other disaster management-related organizations.

**(2) Other staff**

The Director may assign a responsibility set forth in paragraph (1) to such other staff as the Director considers appropriate to carry out such responsibility.

**(e) Placement with State and local emergency managers**

**(1) In general**

In carrying out this section, the Director of the National Weather Service may place a warning coordination meteorologist designated under subsection (a) with a State or local emergency manager if the Director considers doing so is necessary or convenient to carry out this section.

**(2) Treatment**

If the Director determines that the placement of a warning coordination meteorologist placed with a State or local emergency manager under paragraph (1) is near a weather forecast office of the National Weather Service, such placement shall be treated as designation of the warning coordination meteorologist at such weather forecast office for purposes of subsection (a).

(Pub. L. 115-25, title IV, §405, Apr. 18, 2017, 131 Stat. 107.)

**Editorial Notes**

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 409, referred to in subsec. (c)(1), is section 409 of Pub. L. 115-25, title IV, Apr. 18, 2017, 131 Stat. 112, which is not classified to the Code.

**§ 8546. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Ready All Hazards Award Program**

**(a) Program**

The Director of the National Weather Service is authorized to establish the National Oceanic

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

and Atmospheric Administration Weather Ready All Hazards Award Program. This award program shall provide annual awards to honor individuals or organizations that use or provide National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards receivers or transmitters to save lives and protect property. Individuals or organizations that utilize other early warning tools or applications also qualify for this award.

**(b) Goal**

This award program draws attention to the life-saving work of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Ready All Hazards Program, as well as emerging tools and applications, that provide real-time warning to individuals and communities of severe weather or other hazardous conditions.

**(c) Program elements**

**(1) Nominations**

Nominations for this award shall be made annually by the Weather Field Offices to the Director of the National Weather Service. Broadcast meteorologists, weather radio manufacturers and weather warning tool and application developers, emergency managers, and public safety officials may nominate individuals or organizations to their local Weather Field Offices, but the final list of award nominees must come from the Weather Field Offices.

**(2) Selection of awardees**

Annually, the Director of the National Weather Service shall choose winners of this award whose timely actions, based on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards receivers or transmitters or other early warning tools and applications, saved lives or property, or demonstrated public service in support of weather or all hazard warnings.

**(3) Award ceremony**

The Director of the National Weather Service shall establish a means of making these awards to provide maximum public awareness of the importance of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio, and such other warning tools and applications as are represented in the awards.

(Pub. L. 115–25, title IV, §407, Apr. 18, 2017, 131 Stat. 111.)

**§ 8547. Report on contract positions at National Weather Service**

**(a) Report required**

Not later than 180 days after April 18, 2017, the Under Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the use of contractors at the National Weather Service for the most recently completed fiscal year.

**(b) Contents**

The report required by subsection (a) shall include, with respect to the most recently completed fiscal year, the following:

(1) The total number of full-time equivalent employees at the National Weather Service,

disaggregated by each equivalent level of the General Schedule.

(2) The total number of full-time equivalent contractors at the National Weather Service, disaggregated by each equivalent level of the General Schedule that most closely approximates their duties.

(3) The total number of vacant positions at the National Weather Service on the day before April 18, 2017, disaggregated by each equivalent level of the General Schedule.

(4) The five most common positions filled by full-time equivalent contractors at the National Weather Service and the equivalent level of the General Schedule that most closely approximates the duties of such positions.

(5) Of the positions identified under paragraph (4), the percentage of full-time equivalent contractors in those positions that have held a prior position at the National Weather Service or another entity in National<sup>1</sup> Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(6) The average full-time equivalent salary for Federal employees at the National Weather Service for each equivalent level of the General Schedule.

(7) The average salary for full-time equivalent contractors performing at each equivalent level of the General Schedule at the National Weather Service.

(8) A description of any actions taken by the Under Secretary to respond to the issues raised by the Inspector General of the Department of Commerce regarding the hiring of former National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration employees as contractors at the National Weather Service such as the issues raised in the Investigative Report dated June 2, 2015 (OIG–12–0447).

**(c) Annual publication**

For each fiscal year after the fiscal year covered by the report required by subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall, not later than 180 days after the completion of the fiscal year, publish on a publicly accessible Internet website the information described in paragraphs (1) through (8) of subsection (b) for such fiscal year.

(Pub. L. 115–25, title IV, §410, Apr. 18, 2017, 131 Stat. 112.)

**Editorial Notes**

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The General Schedule, referred to in subsec. (b), is set out under section 5332 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

**§ 8548. Weather enterprise outreach**

**(a) In general**

The Under Secretary may establish mechanisms for outreach to the weather enterprise—

(1) to assess the weather forecasts and forecast products provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

(2) to determine the highest priority weather forecast needs of the community described in subsection (b).

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should be preceded by “the”.