

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT (PDD)
TYPE: Official Product
DATE: April 24, 2003

ALASKA GRAPHIC AREA FORECAST

Part 1 - Mission Connection

1. Product/Service Description:

The Alaska Graphic Area Forecast (GFA) is a graphical representation of forecasts contained in the text Area Forecasts (FA) for Alaska. The GFA is comprised of four separate graphics produced using NMAP software at the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit (AAWU). The area covered by the graphics includes the state of Alaska, portions of northwest Canada and extreme northeast Russia, and portions of the North Pacific Ocean, Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean. The graphics produced are: 1 - a forecast surface map containing isobars, highs, lows fronts and areas of precipitation valid at the first synoptic hour following the dissemination of the text FAs; 2 - the forecast of IFR and MVFR flying conditions, strong surface winds, and thunderstorms; 3 - the forecast of moderate or greater in-flight icing and freezing levels; and 4 - the forecast of moderate or greater turbulence and low level wind shear. Graphics 2, 3 and 4 are valid for a 6 hour period beginning 1 hour and 15 minutes after the dissemination of the text FAs.

2. Purpose/Intended Use:

The GFA is not intended as an official forecast but serves to graphically represent the official forecast contained in the text FAs. It is intended that the GFA, used in concert with the text FA, will enhance the understanding of the spatial relationships between the various forecast elements and between the forecast elements and the affected geographic area.

3. Audience:

The target audience for the product includes: general and commercial aviation, and military and government agencies.

4. Presentation Format:

The AAWU provides the product in a graphical format and prepares them in a consistent manner.

5. Feedback Method:

The NWS is constantly seeking to improve its products based on user feedback. Customers can provide continuous feedback through e-mail links to the Meteorologist in charge or the Techniques Development Meteorologist at the AAWU via the office Internet web sites. They also may contact the Regional Aviation Meteorologist at the NWS Alaska Region Headquarters. The AAWU and Alaska Region Headquarters also obtain feedback through meetings with interested aviation interests, FAA, military and other government agencies and through Customer Surveys.

Technical and policy questions, and comments on the Graphical Area Forecast may be addressed to:

National Weather Service
Attn: Bill Alexander
Regional Aviation Meteorologist
222 West 7th Avenue #23 Room 517
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7575
or e-mail questions and comments to: Bill.Alexander@noaa.gov

Part 2 - Technical

1. **Format and Science Basis:**

The Alaska Aviation Weather Unit disseminates the GFA in a graphical format. The production of this graphic is based on the forecast information contained in the text Alaska Area Forecasts (FA). Elements included on the graphics are drawn to best represent the text forecast in a graphically clear and understandable manner. For clarity purposes all elements in the text FA are not represented in the graphic FA. The most significant elements of the text forecast are given precedence for inclusion in the graphic.

2. **Availability:**

The AAWU disseminates the GFA every six hours on a scheduled basis. No updates to the graphic are made between scheduled dissemination times. The product is disseminated via the Internet and to the FAA Alaska Aviation Display System.

The following WWW Internet site is a location to access the Alaska GFA product:

<http://aawu.arh.noaa.gov/graphicarea.php>

3. **Additional Information:** N/A