

Audio Weather Briefing

Product Description Document (PDD)

National Weather Service, Southern Region

Part I – Mission Connection

a. Product Description - The Audio Weather Briefing is an Internet-accessible recording that provides a wide suite of weather information. The recording contains information that alerts users to any hazardous weather that is forecast to affect the region for a period of seven days from the recording date, with a heavy emphasis on the current day's weather. The recording explains, in broad and primarily non-technical terms, what weather features are expected to affect the region, as well as what specific weather hazards may result from these features (flooding, tornadoes, excessive heat, severe thunderstorms, tropical weather, fog, rip currents, etc.)

Area weather summaries, forecasts, and weather preparedness and safety information are included in these briefings. A WFO forecaster or a member of the management team performs the task of this briefing and it is available on the Internet daily, or as frequently as staffing and need allows. During fair weather conditions, the audio briefing might only be conducted once a day. During impact weather events, the frequency of audio briefings increases as needed in order to adequately address the risks posed to users. Every effort will be made to assure these briefings are updated regularly; however, in times of shortage of staff, the NWS primary mission of issuing warnings will take priority over these briefings.

b. Purpose - The purpose of the audio recording is to serve as a briefing tool that can be used primarily by Emergency Management Coordinators, SKYWARN Spotters, Media, and elected officials, and the general public. The recording also serves as a source of information to help determine if any advanced emergency preparations are needed for any weather that may occur. It provides an additional means for WFO partners and customers to obtain forecast and preparedness information from the NWS. Besides forecast information, the forecaster creating the recording may include a weather synopsis and reasoning that justify the forecast. This can be especially useful to those customers well-versed in meteorology.

c. Audience - The target audience encompasses all WFO partners and customers with Internet access and multimedia playback capability. This product is available to anyone who has an Internet connection (dial-up or high-speed) and a multimedia player configured to play mp3 audio files.

d. Presentation Format – The user downloads the file by selecting the appropriate link on the NWS Southern Region web site. The file is either played while downloaded or can be played after download depending on which multimedia player the user chooses to use for

playback. Most if not all major multimedia players have the ability to play mp3 files.

e. Feedback Method - We always are looking for positive or negative feedback on this product. Comments regarding the audio briefing can be emailed to the National Weather Service Southern Region webmaster at : SR-SRH.Webmaster@noaa.gov

Part II – Technical Description

a. **Format & Science Basis** - The files used for recording and storage use the mp3 format.

Mp3 is a popular digital audio encoding and compression format. The files are stored on the regional web site that distributes files to users via HTTP (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol). Users can access the .mp3 file via hyperlinks on web pages served via the Internet.

The files can be produced using a variety of audio recording software. The audio program used should be robust enough to create mp3 files at many different levels of compression.

One of the main goals in creating this type of multimedia content, is to preserve bandwidth as much as possible to help serve other regional goals. Subsequently, NWS Southern Region offices are required to maintain file sizes at less than 3 MB per briefing. These files sizes can easily contain robust audio briefings ranging in length from 3 to 6 minutes.

The recording is completed and uploaded via FTP (file transfer protocol) to the Southern Region web site. A “raw” recording is first completed by the NWS employee using a microphone plugged into the computer’s sound card. The raw file is then edited and modified in order to be “broadcast-ready” on the Internet. After upload, the file is then available for download by users.

b. **Availability** – The product is available for download from various NWS Southern Region websites. The recording is completed once a day during times when no hazardous weather is expected during that particular day. If “impact weather events” affect the area (Tropical Cyclones, Widespread Severe Thunderstorms, Flash Flooding), then the briefing may be issued more frequently in order to address user needs. Frequency of product issuance is at the discretion of the Meteorologist-In-Charge, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Science and Operations Officer, or Lead Forecaster on shift.

c. **Additional Information** - None