

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT

Tropical Cyclone Watch/Warning Product

Approved David Caldwell **Date** 3/21/08

David B. Caldwell
Director, Office of Climate,
Water and Weather Services

Tropical Cyclone Valid Time Event Code Product

Part I - Mission Connection

- a. Product Description - The Tropical Cyclone Watch/Warning product (TCV) is based upon the Valid Time Event Code (VTEC). It summarizes all new, continued, and cancelled tropical cyclone watches and warnings issued by: the National Hurricane Center (NHC) for the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coasts, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, southern California; and the Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) for the main islands of Hawaii.
- b. Purpose – National Weather Service (NWS) customer feedback indicates a desire for users to automatically parse and distribute tropical cyclone watches and warnings to their customers.
- c. Audience – Users who can decode and parse VTEC coding are the primary target audience. However, this product will be widely used by federal, state, and local government agencies; state and local emergency managers; and media and maritime interests.
- d. Presentation Format - This is a text product.
- e. Feedback Method

Technical and policy questions and comments may also be addressed to:

National Weather Service
Attn: Scott Kiser, W/OS21
Tropical Cyclone Program Leader
1325 East-West Highway, Room 13126
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

or e-mail questions and comments to: Scott.Kiser@noaa.gov

Part II - Technical Description

- a. Format & Science Basis - The product is issued by NHC and CPHC each time a tropical cyclone watch and/or warning is issued, continued, or discontinued for all Atlantic basin tropical and subtropical cyclones along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the continental United States; the coasts of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, the southern California coast, and the main islands of Hawaii. The VTEC product will use three action codes:
-**NEW** is used when a watch or warning is first issued for a given geographic area. NEW is also used for upgrades and downgrades (e.g. Tropical Storm Watch to Tropical Storm Warning, Hurricane Warning to Tropical Storm Warning, Tropical Storm Warning to Hurricane Watch, etc.)

-**CON** is used if there are no changes in the watch/warning for a given geographic area
-**CAN** is used to cancel an area if there is no longer a watch/warning in effect for the geographic area or if the watch/warning is upgraded/downgraded. (e.g. an area once under a Tropical Storm Warning is now under a Hurricane Warning: the VTEC will show the area as CAN for the Tropical Storm Warning and NEW for the Hurricane Warning)

The product will use official hurricane “break points” and their latitude and longitude as defined in National Weather Service Instruction (NWSI) 10-605, Tropical Cyclone Official Defining Points and Geographic Defining Points. The product takes the break points provided by NHC/CPHC in their watches and warnings and translates them to the affected Weather Forecast Office zones. In rare instances, other supplemental “break points”, with their latitude and longitude, could be used. NWSI 10-605 is available on line at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/010.htm>

- b. Product Availability - These products will be available on the Internet following the issuance of NHC/CPHC tropical cyclone advisories and tropical cyclone updates announcing issuance or changes to watches and/or warnings. This product can be produced for up to five simultaneous tropical cyclones. During times of tropical cyclones, the product is available via the on line for the Atlantic basin and east Pacific at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov> under the “Active Tropical Systems”. The central Pacific TCV will be at <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/cphc/>. A static product example is available at: http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/tcv_example.shtml

- c. Additional Information
A full description of this and other NWS Tropical Cyclone Weather Services Program Products is provided in NWSI 10-601, Tropical Cyclone Products, available on line at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/010.htm>