



# 2024 National Hurricane Center Hurricane Pool Coverage Agreement

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

This non-competitive pool coverage agreement (hereafter called "Agreement") is intended to facilitate the dissemination of important information from NOAA's National Hurricane Center (hereafter called "NHC") to residents in areas threatened by a hurricane, while increasing the efficiency of resources allocated for the media. This will allow officials to perform their necessary duties while balancing the needs of broadcast media (hereafter called "Media").

## **2.0 FORMAL INTENT TO PARTICIPATE**

Unless notified in writing at the start of the Atlantic hurricane on June 1, receipt of this agreement by each pool member indicates its respective willingness and intention to abide by the terms in this agreement.

## **3.0 BUILDING ACCESS AND SECURITY**

- Department of Commerce (DOC) security guidelines require NHC to enforce DOC security policies and ensure NHC procedures and policies conform. These security procedures will be enforced year-round.
- The NHC has designated parking spaces in front of the building for the on-duty Pool staff. The NHC Public Affairs Officer will allocate these spaces. Satellite trucks and microwave trucks will park on the open lot on the east side of the building.
- All vehicles, parcels, hand bags, computer cases, briefcases, camera equipment cases, etc. are subject to hand search by security.

#### **4.0 OFFICIAL START OF THE POOL**

When a hurricane threatens populated areas of the United States, a pool may be established at NHC. The decision to activate (and deactivate) the pool will be made by the NHC Director along with the Public Affairs Officer and the primary television pool coordinators. Pool participants will be given as much notice as possible by NHC. Notification will be made by e-mail.

No pool feeds will begin less than two hours after pool stations have been alerted to the start-up. The NHC Public Affairs Officer will provide via e-mail an official statement to signify the official activation of the pool.

#### **5.0 POOL STAFFING**

Once a pool is activated, the Network pool will arrange to have a producer and photographer in place and establish audio/video signals as expeditiously as possible. If a local pool is also called, the Network pool producer and photographer will remain in place. When NHC determines that the threat has passed, the pool will be deactivated.

#### **6.0 NATIONAL VS. LOCAL POOL**

- A National pool is called in all situations and will follow the National pool rotation schedule. If a local (South Florida) station desires a live interview, it will be arranged through the Network pool producer on an availability basis only. Priority will be given to those local stations that are in the hurricane and/or storm surge watch and warning areas.

- When a hurricane threatens South Florida, a Local pool will also be called, using the Local pool rotation schedule. The National pool will remain activated, with network stations using available network/affiliate slots within the Local pool schedule.

#### **7.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE NETWORK & LOCAL POOLS**

- The 2024 Network pool consists of ABC, CBS, CNN, FOX, NBC, The Weather Company, WeatherNation and NewsNation.

- The 2024 Local pool consists of WFOR, WTVJ, WSVN, and WPLG. They will serve as the local pool when a storm threatens Miami-Dade, Broward, and/or Monroe counties.

#### **8.0 NUMBER OF POOL CAMERAS**

No more than one fixed pool camera is permitted at the National Hurricane Center at any one time in the pool area.

## **9.0 STAFFING ROTATIONS FOR LOCAL POOL**

The 2024 staffing rotation of the NHC local pools is:

PRIMARY - WSVN

SECONDARY - WFOR (photographer), WPLG (engineer) and WTVJ (producer).

Because the Network pool does not have an engineer, the Local pool must provide one. The engineer need not be on site for the event, only on standby in the event a piece of equipment was to fail.

For 2024, WSVN will provide the (standby) engineer for the first shift, with the secondary station (WFOR) providing the (standby) engineer for the second shift, if necessary. The primary and secondary stations will provide the contact information of their respective engineer to the network pool producer upon activation of the network pool.

## **10.0 SPANISH-LANGUAGE INTERVIEWS**

For potential impacts from a tropical cyclone directly threatening South Florida, the NOAA NHC will provide Spanish media interviews when available. The NWS Miami forecast office will also provide support for Spanish-language media interviews if necessary. Please contact the NHC Public Affairs officer at **305-229-4404** or via email at [nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov](mailto:nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov). For non-South Florida threats, NHC will provide an expert when available. If no one is available due to operational demands at NHC or NWS Miami, the [NWS Multimedia Assistance in Spanish \(MAS\) network](#) will provide an expert if available.

## **11.0 PRE AND POST-POOL ACTIVATION**

All media interviews requests before and after the pool activation must be arranged through the NHC Public Affairs Officer - [nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov](mailto:nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov)

## **12.0 “SOFT” MEDIA POOL**

If a storm is not an immediate threat to the U.S. but is drawing significant interest due to its forecast track and potential impacts, NHC may open a “soft” media pool, which will have limited hours of operation. The pool producer and photographer will be provided by the network pool stations. All interviews during a soft pool will be conducted through the pool itself. No on-site interviews will be made available. The NHC Public Affairs Officer will announce the soft media pool availability via email to national outlets and local stations in the potential path of the storm.

## **13.0 PHONE LINE COSTS**

The primary Local station will underwrite the costs of activating and maintaining the three local phone lines, with long-distance service, from June 1 through November 30.

The service will be provided to the pool IFB and production coordination equipment and should remain consistent during the entire hurricane threat.

#### **14.0 MAINTENANCE OF MEDIA POOL COMMON EQUIPMENT**

Because the local pool stations (WFOR, WTVJ, WSVN, WPLG) do not have any costs for staffing a pool producer and photographer, the cost of repair or replacement of any piece of common equipment used in the operation of the media pool will be divided evenly among the local pool stations.

#### **15.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

The pool producer is responsible for the following:

- Coordinating live shots and stations, using the pool to take calls from their staffers, dialing IFB, keeping track of and assigning windows, resolving any difficulties that may arise concerning pool access/coverage.
- Maintaining a chronological daily record of Pool Rotation Sheets for all interviews. This information will be provided to the NHC Public Affairs Office at the end of each pool event.

The pool photographer is responsible for the following:

- Providing all equipment necessary to properly carry-out the media pool.
- Making certain that all equipment is functioning properly.

#### **16.0 POOL WINDOWS**

- The assignment of pool "windows" gives media participants fair and equal access to the NHC personnel at the live shot desk.

- Pool rotations are updated each year with the outlets all moving up one spot from the previous year.

- The Local pool and the Network pool have separate rotations.

- At certain times, NHC meteorologists must perform forecasting duties, so they will be unavailable to the media. These include the 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. EDT hours.

- There is time set aside for breaks for the forecasters at :0000 -:04 and at :55 -:59 of every hour.

- There is time set aside for virtual live streams at 8:30 -:39 a.m., 11:30 -:39 a.m., 2:30 -:39 p.m. and at 5:30 -:39 p.m. EDT. These will be used as necessary.

- Networks have been assigned blocks of time corresponding to their unique air times/broadcast requirements between 7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. The network pool has agreed to decide among them how their rotation will

work. If they choose not to use those times, they will be made available for (1) the network's affiliates or (2) other pool participants.

## **17.0 POOL ROTATION**

**The 2024 network pool rotation is as follows:**

1. WeatherNation
2. CBS
3. The Weather Company
4. NewsNation
5. NBC
6. FOX
7. ABC
8. CNN

**The 2024 Local pool rotation is as follows:**

1. WPLG-TV10
2. WFOR-TV4
3. WTVJ-TV6
4. WSVN-TV7

Schedules for the Network pool and Local pool are located on the NHC website at [www.nhc.noaa.gov/pool](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pool) prior to the start of the Atlantic hurricane season on June 1.

## **18.0 ROTATION CLOCK**

The pool rotation "clock" begins at 12:00:01 a.m. the day the pool goes into effect. The pool stations will move ahead one position each day at 12:00:01 a.m. until the pool is terminated. All radio requests will be reserved in a "Network/Affiliate use" time slot.

## **19.0 ROTATION BEGINS**

With each new storm during the season, the pool rotation begins again with the "Day One" rotation

## **20.0 USE OF WINDOWS**

If a station or its representatives are not prepared to take advantage of its "window" for whatever reason, it will lose that position. Window times can be traded on an individual basis but it is the responsibility of the stations involved to work with the pool coordinator to arrange the changes. The pool coordinator *must* also be informed if a station does not intend to use its assigned window.

## **21.0 PROPRIETARY RIGHTS TO UNILATERAL WINDOWS**

Broadcast content fed during unilateral windows is the exclusive property of the individual organization and may not be used by any other entity without permission.

## **22.0 USE OF MEDIA ROOM**

All cell phones must be placed on vibrate or silence.

## **23.0 TECHNICAL FAILURE, USE OF COMMON CONTENT**

In the event of technical failure, the Pool Coordinator shall notify all participating stations that are authorized to re-broadcast official advisories from each other's air signal. In such an event, pool stations agree to drop a bug/chyron that includes their call letters or station logo.

## **24.0 NHC GENERIC HITS**

Starting in 2024, we will experiment with an audio version of the live stream, which will be available 30 minutes after a live stream broadcast has been recorded. The audio will provide an overview of the current tropical advisory and potential areas of interest. The live stream audio will be available on our website under the day's top news.

## **25.0 "FORECAST WINDOW"**

Refers to specific times at which the forecaster on duty is unavailable.

**26.0 SUMMARY OF 2024 NHC POOL ROTATION TIME SEQUENCE** All times in DST (Daylight Savings Time), in effect from March 10 to November 3, 2024. 12 AM-3:59 AM covers the basic rotation with breaks at the top of each hour. 4 AM-4:59 AM is reserved for Forecaster planning.

5 AM-5:34 AM and 6 AM-6:34 AM is reserved for local pool rotation only.

7:05-7:24 AM and 8:05-8:24 AM is reserved for network rotation only. 9

AM-9:59 AM begins basic rotation, with breaks at the top of each hour.

10:00 AM-10:45 AM reserved for Forecaster planning.

10:45 AM-10:59 AM is reserved for a press conference (if needed).

11:00 AM-3:59 PM begins basic rotation again, with a break at the top of each hour.

4 PM-4:45 PM is reserved for Forecaster planning.

4:45 PM-4:59 PM is reserved for a press conference (if needed).

5:05 PM-5:29 PM and 6:05 PM-6:29 PM is reserved for local pool only, with a break at the top of the hour.

6:30 PM-7 PM is reserved for network pool rotation.

7 PM-9:59 PM begins basic rotation again, with a break at top of each hour.

10:00 PM-10:45 PM is reserved for Forecaster planning.

10:45 PM-10:59 PM is reserved for a press conference (if needed).

11-11:29 PM is reserved for local pool rotation only, with a break at the top of the hour.

11:30 PM-3:59 AM begins basic rotation again, with a break at the top of each hour.

***March 15, 2024***

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