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Service Change Notice 22-81
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
1140 AM EDT Wed Aug 24 2022

To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
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From: Daniel Roman, Acting Chief
 Severe, Fire, Public and Winter Weather Services Branch

Subject: Implementation of Impact-Based Warning Tags for Snow Squall
Warnings and Changes to Wireless Emergency Alerts for Snow Squall
Warnings: Effective on or after November 7, 2022

The NWS will phase in the implementation of Impact-Based Warning (IBW) tags for Snow Squall Warnings (SQWs) beginning on or after November 7, 2022. IBW tags are machine-readable tags that will be appended to the bottom of World Meteorological Office (WMO)-formatted SQW text products and will be used to characterize the snow squall impact and source information. The IBW tags will also be added as parameters in Common Alert Protocol (CAP) formatted Snow Squall Warning messages.

All NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) will transition to issuing SQWs with IBW tags by late February 2023.

Currently, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are issued for all SQWs. Once the IBW tags are implemented at the issuing WFO, WEAs will be limited to only those SQWs with the Snow Squall Impact tag of "Significant." With this change, the NWS is aiming to improve the public response to SQWs by issuing WEAs only for snow squall events that pose a substantial threat to safe travel.

There will be no change to the information included in the SQW segment header block, including the Valid Time Event Code (VTEC) strings, nor will there be a change to the criteria for warning dissemination through other systems (e.g., NOAA Weather Radio).

WEA is a joint effort between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the wireless industry that allows emergency alerting authorities to geographically target emergency messages to mobile devices, primarily cell phones. The NWS provides messages to WEA for hazards believed to be life-threatening and that have consequences that can be mitigated or minimized by immediate action. More information about WEA can be found at:

<https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea>

The characterization of the snow squall impact and source information, along with examples of SQWs with IBW tags, are contained in the Product Description Document (PDD) link below:

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_OplIBWTagsforSnowSquallWarnings2022.pdf

For more information, please email:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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