

## APPENDIX B

### DEFINITIONS

**Area of Concern.** The geographic area of concern for the *National Winter Storms Operations Plan* covers the Gulf of Mexico and extends about 150 miles inland along the U.S. Gulf Coast. In the Atlantic, the area of concern ranges from latitudes 25°N to 48°N, west of longitude 55°W, extending about 150 miles inland along the eastern coast of the United States. *It also includes the North Pacific Ocean east of the international date line.*

**Blizzard Warning.** A blizzard warning is a headline carried in NWS forecasts and special weather statements that serves notice to the public of a high probability for the occurrence of blizzard conditions (sustained or gust wind speeds of 35 mph or more, considerable falling and/or blowing snow causing poor visibility, frequently less than one-fourth mile).

**Due Regard.** Operation wherein state operated aircraft assume responsibility for separation from all other aircraft without ATC assistance.

**Freezing Rain (or Drizzle).** The freezing of rain or drizzle on objects as it strikes them. Winter storm warnings should be reserved for occasions when significant, and possibly damaging, accumulations of ice are expected. However, even small amounts are extremely dangerous to traffic when encountered unexpectedly, and these conditions frequently require the issuance of a travelers' advisory.

**Heavy Snow Warning.** A heavy snow warning, carried in NWS forecast and special weather statements, serves notice to the public of a high probability for the occurrence of heavy snow (four inches or more accumulation in 12 hours or six or more inches accumulation in 24 hours in most areas of the country, but some variation in the snowfall criterion is allowable on a regional basis).

**Ice Storm Warning.** This product may be issued when significant ice accumulations are expected and no other winter storm element is expected to occur.

**Mission Identifier.** The nomenclature assigned to winter storm aircraft reconnaissance missions for weather data identification. It comprises an agency-aircraft indicator followed by a CARCAH-assigned mission-system indicator.

**Reconnaissance Aircraft Sortie.** A flight that meets the requirements of the winter storm plan of the day.

**Sleet.** One form of ice pellet. Generally, solid grains of ice that form from the freezing of raindrops or the refreezing of largely melted snowflakes. Sleet, like small hail, usually bounces when

hitting a hard surface. Heavy sleet is a fairly rare event in which the ground is covered to a depth of significance to motorists and others.

**Winter Storm Outlook.** This product may be issued when there is a good chance of a major winter storm beyond the point normally covered by a watch. The intent of an outlook is to provide information to those who need considerable lead time to prepare for the event (i.e. 36 to 72 hours).

**Winter Storm Plan of the Day.** A coordinated mission plan that tasks operational weather reconnaissance requirements during the next 1100Z to 1100Z day; describes reconnaissance flights committed to satisfy operational requirements and identifies possible reconnaissance requirements for the succeeding 24-hour period.

**Winter Storm Warning.** A Winter Storm Warning is a headline carried in NWS forecasts and special statements. It is issued when hazardous weather or a hydrologic event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurrence. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property. The warning is issued for the same events (except for blizzard conditions) that serve as a basis for the issuance of a winter storm watch. An exception may be made in three special situations: one is the heavy snowfall that often occurs along the lee of the Great Lakes, two is locally heavy orographic snowfall in mountainous terrain, and the third when freezing precipitation is the only element expected. When any of these conditions cannot be directly connected to a synoptic-scale winter storm, the headlines Heavy Snow Warning and Ice Storm Warning may be used in forecasts.

**Winter Storm Watch.** A Winter Storm Watch is a headline carried in NWS forecasts and special statements. It is used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. The watch will cover the possible occurrence of the following elements, either separately or in combination: blizzard conditions, heavy snow (or light snow in areas where snow is relatively rare), accumulations of freezing rain or freezing drizzle, and/or heavy sleet.

**Winter Weather Advisories.** Event-specific advisories are used to describe conditions that do not constitute a serious enough hazard to warrant a warning for the general public but; nevertheless, pose a significant threat to specified users. They are highlighted in forecasts and statements. These types of advisories include snow (less than 4 in), blowing snow, wind chill, freezing rain, dense fog, etc.