

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

1. **Format and Structure.** The Handbook consists of three major parts: Part A - Atmospheric, Part B - Land, and Part C - Marine. The three parts are (a) linked to the type of data that is being coded and transmitted and (b) associated with the geographical origin of the data.
2. **Incorporation of Other Codes.** This Handbook was not intended to contain all meteorological codes used nationally, or codes used only by one agency. As agencies identify and agree upon additional codes for inclusion, these codes will be published and inserted into the appropriate section.
3. **Definitions.** Throughout this Handbook, the following definitions apply:
  - \* "shall" indicates a procedure or practice that is mandatory
  - \* "should" indicates a procedure or practice that is recommended
  - \* "may" indicates a procedure or practice that is optional
  - \* "will" indicates futurity; it is not a requirement to be applied to practices
4. **Changes to the Handbook.** Changes, additions, deletions, and corrections will be issued, as necessary. These changes shall be issued only by the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (OFCM) after consultation and coordination with the Working Group for Meteorological Codes (WG/MC).
5. **Relation to Other Handbooks and Manuals**

Individual agencies may issue their own manuals that further define or describe agency specific coding procedures and practices. Such manuals shall complement, not change, the standards contained in FMH-12.

FMH-12 is consistent with agreements and publications of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), specifically *WMO No. 306 - Manual on Codes*, with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) *Annex 3, Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation*, and civil as well as military weather services. Where the United States does not follow international standards for coding practices, exceptions or differences have been filed with WMO and/or ICAO as applicable. The listing of exceptions and differences to the standards and practices can be obtained from WMO and ICAO.

### 6. **Agency Procedures and Procedural Changes**

Agencies may issue manuals and directives to provide more detailed instructions and training to their personnel and users. Copies of these procedures shall be provided to the reference library. Agencies may also issue changes to their procedures as follows:

- a. Routine procedural changes that are in conformance with FMH-12 may be issued by an agency at any time without coordination with the WG/MC.
- b. Procedural changes not in conformance with FMH-12 shall be coordinated with the WG/MC when time allows. However, when necessary to meet urgent requirements, procedural changes not in conformance with FMH-12 may be issued by an agency without coordination with the WG/MC. Copies of changes shall be forwarded to the WG/MC for coordination and appropriate action.

7. **Reference Library**

The WG/MC shall maintain a record and library of agency procedures, changes, and supplements issued by all participating agencies. The WG/MC shall establish a procedure for making these procedures, changes, and supplements available to users.

8. **Other Questions and Suggestions Regarding FMH-12**

Questions or suggestions about the content or organization of this Handbook should be directed to:

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