

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
WEATHER BUREAU  
Washington 25, D. C.

0-2.13  
File: 080

October 26, 1949

MEMORANDUM

TO: Section Centers, WRPC's, and River Centers  
(With Copies to Regional Offices for Information)

FROM: Chief, C&HS Division

SUBJECT: Climatological Service Memorandum No. 7.

1. PREPRINTED FORM LETTERS FOR COOPERATIVE OBSERVERS: From time to time considerable thought has been given to the best method of reporting discrepancies and errors to the cooperative observer. We have hesitated to promote the use of preprinted form letters because of possible unfavorable reaction from the observers although many feel that this anticipated unfavorable reaction has been over-emphasized. However, the work involved in preparing individual letters is so great, that in many cases, observers are not advised of irregularities in their reports. Improvement of the quality of these observations is extremely difficult under such circumstances.

With the above in mind a number of tentative form letters have been designed for use as indicated below. Samples of these letters are enclosed.

WB Form 5067. This form is to be used to report discrepancies to substation observers. It would be filled out in duplicate at the WRPC as the forms are checked, sent to the Section Director for signature, adding of remarks, if desired, and mailing of the original to the observer. A carbon copy should be retained at the Section Center and a copy may be retained at the WRPC.

WB Form 5068. This form is for use in reporting discrepancies at hydro-climatic stations. It should be prepared and handled in the same manner as Form 5067.

WB Form 5069. This is a request for late weighing gage charts. It may be prepared either by the WRPC or the Section Center but it will be signed by the Section Director. Either a carbon copy or a check list of observers to whom this form was sent should be kept at the Section Center for a few months.

WB Form 5070. Similar to Form 5069 except that it is a request for late Forms 1006, 1009, 1024, etc.

The forms are designed for mailing in window envelopes, and these envelopes can be made available. Comment on the desirability of this point is requested.

Before we proceed permanently with this plan we would like to give it a three month trial in each Section Center after which a statement from the Section Director that the plan is favored or is not favored will be in order. Suggestions for changes in the proposed letters, changes in the proposed routing, for additional letters, or comments on arrangement or other details will be welcomed at the end of the trial period.

An original supply of these forms will be distributed without requisition to WRPCs and Section Centers by the Central Office. Additional supplies should be requisitioned on WB Form 2044H, as needed.

The form letters will be used in all sections. If an individual observer here and there resents the use of form letters they should not, of course, be used for that person.

An explanatory letter should be sent to each observer, possibly in the Section Center Newsletter, before the form letters are used. The following draft, or portions of it, is suggested as a possible guide:

Dear Observer:

I would like to tell you something about the more recent developments in our climatological service. During the war important developments were made in the use of climatological data by the military planner. Since then both agriculture and industry have availed themselves of these advancements, with the result that demands on the Weather Bureau for data have multiplied. You will be interested to know that over the past years more than a billion items of weather records have accumulated in the Weather Bureau repositories and in the National Archives.

Fortunately, we have been able to publish such simple expressions of these records as "averages" or "normals" and the extremes occurring within the period of record, but the more complex statistical expressions of "probability" or "frequency" or "weather risk" have had to await the availability of modern machine methods. These have only recently been made available to the Weather Bureau.

It is apparent that the number one rule in our Climatological Service is that requiring the highest degree of uniformity in the records produced by our Cooperative Stations. The users of these data can do no other than assume that all observations are made with the same kind of instruments and in the same way. The second rule is that of timeliness. Naturally, we try to get the monthly publications out to the public on the earliest possible date. A delayed report

means that there will be a break in the published record of your station, or that the bulletin must be delayed until the report arrives.

In the past it was possible to engage in direct correspondence with you regarding questions pertaining to your records. Now we have reached the point where it will be necessary to communicate with you on certain matters through the use of form letters. These letters will have listed various types of inconsistencies which our experience has found will occur occasionally in the reports. A check mark will be placed beside the item we wish to call to your attention.

The only action ordinarily necessary on your part when one of these letters is received is to note, for future guidance, the items called to your attention. Occasionally you may be asked to report to us on a doubtful item. However, if at any time these letters are not clear, you should feel free to query us on any point.

The use of form letters does not mean a more "impersonal" approach; on the contrary they indicate we have made progress to the point that we can resort to this simple efficient means of attending to routine details. Moreover, in using the form letters we will all have more time to expand and improve the climatological services in which you play so large a part.

Let me take this opportunity to invite your suggestions regarding our climatological service and to urge that when you can you visit the Section Center in your state and the Central Office of the Weather Bureau in Washington.

Sincerely yours,

Section Director

2. ANNUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO SUBSTATION OBSERVERS: The Central Office is having a supply of annual acknowledgments to substation observers printed. These acknowledgments, similar to the ones prepared last year, will carry a space for signature of the Official in Charge. They are suitable for mailing to all types of substation observers, such as voluntary or paid climatological, hydrologic, river or marine observers, etc.

All supervising offices should report promptly to the Regional Office the number of copies of the acknowledgment desired. The Regional Office will then report to the Central Office the total number of copies needed for the region. As soon as they are printed the acknowledgments will be sent to the Regional Offices for distribution.

In view of the fact that a letter such as that suggested above is an official acknowledgment for services rendered in accordance with the legislative authority under which the Weather Bureau engages substation observers, the letters should be sent in the usual franked envelopes.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGES IN STATION NAMES (Reference: C.S.M. No. 1, Item 13): Changes in station names are considered to be the responsibility of the Section Director. The policy outlined in the referenced item should be followed in determining whether a change in name is indicated, and in selecting the new name. Form 4303 should be submitted for every change in name. In addition, if a paid station is involved, Form 50 should be submitted.

Every change in station name during the preceding year should be listed under the reference notes in the annual summary. Section Directors should make sure that WRPCs have this information before the annual is prepared.

4. NEWSLETTERS: Two copies of each newsletter issued at a Section Center should be sent to the WRPC. The San Francisco WRPC reports that newsletters are circulated among the employees working on Forms 1009 for that particular section, and that these employees thus gain a feeling of greater intimacy with the stations with which they deal.

Two copies should be mailed to the Central Office Library and one to Field Services Section of C&HS Division.

We expect to receive and issue the formograph stencils for this newsletter within the next few weeks. Use of this formograph is optional with the Section Center, since some may prefer to continue use of their present form of newsletter heading. The Central Office wishes, however, to encourage the use of the standard formograph and, because of its economy, will ultimately require its use.

5. RECORDS FROM STORAGE PRECIPITATION STATIONS: We need, but do not have, a complete list of all storage precipitation stations which would be published in the storage precipitation table in the June Climatological Data. Section Directors are accordingly asked to prepare such a list and forward it to us through the Regional or Area Engineer's office.

Samples of the reporting forms now used and comments and suggestions on the need of a standard form are also desired.

The original records for these stations, after publishing and microfilming, should be sent to the Section Center for permanent filing. These forms should be microfilmed as a part of the climatological series, following the June Forms 1024.

6. MONTHLY AND SEASONAL SNOWFALL: The absence of any snowfall data in the Climatological Data annual was intentional, since we felt that annual snowfall, combining amounts from two winters, does not have much value. Beginning with the June 1950 issue of Climatological Data a table of monthly and seasonal snowfall will be carried in each June issue. Monthly and seasonal totals, to tenths, for all stations for the preceding 12 months will be carried in this table.

Stations will be arranged alphabetically by states. Section Directors in those southern states where snowfall is not considered to be an important element, and who feel that this table would not be of value for their section, should advise us.

7. TIME OF OBSERVATION (Reference: C.S.M. No. 4, Item 4 and C.S.M. No. 3, Item 3): We would like to again emphasize the importance of having temperature observations at cooperative climatological stations made in the evening. One reason for the desirability of p.m. temperature observations is that degree day data from such stations is comparable to degree day data on a midnight-midnight basis. Wherever possible a.m. temperature stations should be converted to p.m. As new observers are appointed at temperature substations, it should be understood that the temperature observations are to be made in the evening.
8. SEASONAL PRECIPITATION: Would a table giving total seasonal precipitation and departures from normal be of value in Climatological Data? In agricultural areas the season probably should end with the month of September; in California and possibly some other states the season probably should end with June. Monthly precipitation would not be listed, only the seasonal totals and departures for each station. Section Center comment is desired on the value of such a table, the period to be used and whether or not the table could be easily prepared.
9. SECTION CENTER NEWSLETTER: Occasionally the question is raised concerning the issuance of newsletters from River District Offices that are not Section Centers.

In line with current policy, outlined in Circular Letter No. 87-48, of eventually having Section Centers assume supervision of all substations, and in order not to confuse observers by newsletters from various sources, we feel that it would be best to confine the issuance of these letters to Section Centers. River District Offices are encouraged to submit items of general interest to the Section Centers for inclusion in the section newsletter.

10. GENERAL SUMMARY IN CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA (Reference: C.S.M. No. 3, Item 16): The text of the general summary should be prepared with care at the Section Center. In some cases errors in punctuation and discrepancies with the tabular data have been noted and corrected by the WRPC. Since editing of this text is limited at the WRPC to a casual examination, we would like to emphasize that proper preparation of this summary is an important Section Center responsibility.

On at least ~~one~~ occasion criticism has been received because of a statement similar to the following:

"The highest temperature in the state was 90°  
on the 5th at \_\_\_\_\_".

Actually the 90° temperature occurred on the 4th but was reported on the 5th by an a.m. station. If such a statement is carried in the summary, this type of criticism can easily be avoided by examining the synoptic maps to determine the actual dates of occurrences of the temperature extremes.

11. ENTRY OF STATION INDEX NUMBER ON FORMS 1006, 1009 AND WEIGHING GAGE CHARTS: Suggestions are invited for an inexpensive, accurate and practical method of entering the Climatological Data bulletin index number on forms and charts before they are issued to the observers. If the index number could be placed on each form before it was issued to the observer identification of the record would be positive and the tedious time-consuming task of making these entries as the forms are received at the WRFC would be eliminated. The Central Office has received several suggestions for performing this task but all suggestions submitted to date have involved the tedious procedure of stamping each form individually. We are looking for an economical mass-production idea for doing this job.
12. DEGREE DAYS FOR COOPERATIVE STATIONS (Reference: C.S.M. No. 5, Item 6): Replies to Item 6 in C.S.M. No. 5 were overwhelmingly in favor of publishing some degree day data from cooperative stations. The Central Office agrees with this opinion. Since it is not believed good practice to begin publication of degree day data except at the beginning of a heating season, we plan to make revised procedures and formats available in time for publication in the September 1950 Climatological Data. Total monthly degree days from all p.m. temperature stations will then be carried in Table 2. Degree days from a.m. temperature stations are not comparable to those from p.m. stations, therefore, it is believed best to omit these data for all a.m. stations.
13. PRESSURE, WIND, HUMIDITY TABLE (Reference: C.S.M. No. 5, Item 5): Replies to the referenced C.S.M. item indicate that there is considerable demand for this table in the Climatological Data. Since the original idea of including special summaries in the Climatological Data has been dropped, we now believe that this small table should be published. A revised format for this table, to be known as Supplemental Data, is now being prepared.
14. COMMENTS REQUESTED IN CLIMATOLOGICAL SERVICE MEMORANDUMS: Quite often, when controversial issues arise in problems related to Section Centers and the Bureau's climatological program, comments or opinions are requested from the field. We do this in order to be guided by the majority opinion of those "who should know". Too often, these comments are not given. A recent item requesting field opinion on a matter

resulted in replies from less than two-thirds of the Section Centers.

Since we do base our decisions on these replies, or use them as a guide in making our decisions, we will appreciate receiving prompt replies from all Section Centers when comments or suggestions are requested.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merrill Bernard". The signature is enclosed in a large, thin, hand-drawn bracket on the right side.

Merrill Bernard, Chief,  
Climatological and  
Hydrologic Services

GUIDE TO CLIMATOLOGICAL SERVICE MEMORANDUM NO. 7.

ITEM NO.

PAGE NO.

1.	PREPRINTED FORM LETTERS FOR COOPERATIVE OBSERVERS.....	1-3
2.	ANNUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO SUBSTATION OBSERVERS.....	3-4
3.	RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGES IN STATION NAMES.....	4
4.	NEWSLETTERS.....	4
5.	RECORDS FROM STORAGE PRECIPITATION STATIONS.....	4
6.	MONTHLY AND SEASONAL SNOWFALL.....	5
7.	TIME OF OBSERVATION.....	5
8.	SEASONAL PRECIPITATION.....	5
9.	SECTION CENTER NEWSLETTER.....	5
10.	GENERAL SUMMARY IN CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA.....	5-6
11.	ENTRY OF STATION INDEX NUMBER ON FORMS 1006, 1009 AND WEIGHING GAGE CHARTS.....	6
12.	DEGREE DAYS FOR COOPERATIVE STATIONS.....	6
13.	PRESSURE, WIND, HUMIDITY TABLE.....	6
14.	COMMENTS REQUESTED IN CLIMATOLOGICAL SERVICE MEMORANDUMS.....	6-7