

NWS Fire Weather Planning Forecasts

NWS Fire Weather Planning Forecasts provide general, information for daily preparedness and planning purposes. Forecasts are subdivided into meteorologically and topographically similar forecast areas called zones. Because of their more generalized information, planning forecasts are never to be used as a spot forecast. The table below outlines issuance times of planning forecasts for each NWS office. The beginning and ending date of high season forecast issuances vary by year, depending on weather and fuel conditions.

Weather Forecast Office	High Season Narrative Forecasts	Morning Narrative Forecast NLT	Afternoon Narrative Forecast NLT	Low Season Narrative Forecasts NLT	NWS Forecast Zones
Extreme Northern California – Medford	<i>Usually by June 1 to October 1 #</i>	7:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:30 a.m.	280-282, 284, 285
Northwest California – Eureka	<i>Usually by June 1 to November 1 #</i>	7:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:30 a.m.	201-204, 211, 212, 276,277, 283
North Central California – Sacramento	<i>User Driven</i>	7:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:00 am.	213-221, 263, 264, 266-269, 279
Extreme Eastern California – Reno	<i>Usually by June 1 to November 1 #</i>	7:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:00 a.m.	270-273, 278
Central Coast California – San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey	<i>Usually by June 1 to November 1 #</i>	7:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 3:30 p.m.	006, 505-513, 516-518, 528-530
Central California Interior – San Joaquin Valley/Hanford	<i>Usually May 15 to November 15 #</i>	7:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 3:00 p.m. PST or 3:30 p.m. PDT	289-299
Southwest California – Los Angeles/Oxnard.	<i>Usually May 15 to December 1 #</i>	9:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	M-F 3:30 p.m. also M at 9:30 a.m. *	234-241, 244-246, 251-254, 259, 288, 547,548
Extreme Southwest California – San Diego		7:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	Daily 7:00 a.m.	552,554,243 248,250, 255-258,260-262,265
Southeast California – Phoenix		7:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:30 a.m.	230-232
Southeast California – Las Vegas		7:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Daily 7:00 a.m.	226-229

* excludes Federal holidays

Customer coordinated depending on weather/fuels; two weeks' notice preferred for NWS WFOs

Update/Corrected forecasts – Planning Forecasts are updated or corrected upon issuance of a Fire Weather Watch or a Red Flag Warning, when the current forecast does not adequately describe significant weather expected in the future, or when typographical/format errors prevent proper interpretation of the forecast.

Access – Planning Forecasts are widely available from the California Fire Weather Page (<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/cafw/>), NWS office web sites, and Predictive Services web sites. All NWS fire weather information can also be accessed from the NWS National Fire Weather Page at: www.weather.gov/fire. Forecasts are also available via WIMS.

Content and Format – Forecasts follow the national standard narrative format, per NWS Directive 10-401. Morning forecasts focus on the next 36 hours and afternoon forecasts on the next 48 hours, with general extended outlooks in both cases out to at least five days.

Planning Forecasts begin with pertinent headlines and a non-technical weather discussion. Headlines are included as needed for Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches. Headlines for critical fire weather conditions that do not meet Red Flag criteria are also included. Discussions should normally be no more than 8 lines in length. A detailed, technical weather discussion is available in the [Area Forecast Discussion \(AFD\)](#) product which can be found on each forecast office website. An optional technical fire weather discussion embedded within the Area Forecast Discussion may be included during critical fire weather periods or when incident meteorologists are assigned within the forecast area.

Short-term forecast for the first 36 or 48 hours - Short-term forecasts emphasize information needed for initial attack and day-to-day fire management. Each forecast zone or zone grouping contains the following elements, listed in the order they appear:

- Headline(s) as appropriate
- Sky/Weather
- Temperature
- Relative Humidity
- Wind – 20-foot, 10 minute average RAWS standard (slope/valley and ridge top, as appropriate)
- Chance of Wetting Rain (CWR)
- Lightning Activity Level (LAL)

Forecasts may include the following optional elements based on local customer requirements:

- Haines Index
- Mixing Level or Mixing Height
- Marine Layer
- Transport Wind
- 10,000-foot Wind
- Ventilation Category (or numeric value)
- 24-hour Trends (of temperature and relative humidity)

Extended Outlook - Beyond 36-48 hours, planning forecasts are used for resource planning. They contain general guidance information, keying on significant changes in temperature, humidity, wind, or weather needed for decision-making purposes.