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# NATIONAL WEATHER ASSOCIATION (NWA) BROADCAST METEOROLOGY COMMITTEE and RADIO & TELEVISION WEATHERCASTER SEAL OF APPROVAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Effective 1 September 2007

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## 1. NWA Broadcast Meteorology Committee Purpose

The public deserves the most accurate and timely weather forecast and warning information, in terms they can understand, to take appropriate action. For quality of life and the safety of all, weathercasters and other media representatives should commit to provide and continually improve this service. The NWA Broadcast Meteorology Committee promotes the development of quality television and radio weathercasting among NWA members. Through the NWA Broadcaster Seal of Approval program, the NWA grants Seals of Approval to NWA member weathercasters in radio and television who meet or exceed the standards set by the NWA. The Broadcast Meteorology Committee, with the approval of the NWA Council, is responsible for the review and update of the Seal of Approval guidelines, qualifications, and procedures, to ensure the Seal remains credible and relevant. The NWA Broadcast Meteorology Committee also fosters a better relationship among weathercasters and the National Weather Service, and other government and private-sector meteorological entities.

## 2. The Broadcast Meteorology Committee and the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics

### a. Broadcast Meteorology Committee

The Broadcast Meteorology Committee suggests candidates for Chairperson to the NWA Council. The Chairperson must be a Sealholder appointed by the NWA President with the advice and consent of the NWA Council for a term up to three years. At the end of his/her term, the outgoing Broadcast Meteorology Committee chair will, with the advice and consent of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics, suggest a candidate to the NWA President. With the advice and consent of the NWA Council, the NWA President will appoint the new chair for a term of up to three years. The NWA Broadcast Meteorology Committee will consist of members selected by the Chairperson with the consent of the NWA President. The Broadcast Meteorology Committee members include:

1. Committee Chairperson (a Sealholder)
2. Seal Chairperson (a Sealholder)
3. Testing Chairperson
4. Program Chairperson
5. Public Relations Chairperson
6. Recertification Chairperson (a Sealholder)

The Seal Chairperson, with the advice and consent of the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, will appoint at least three evaluation panels, each consisting of four NWA Broadcast Sealholders and one non-broadcaster with a meteorological background. The panel members are responsible for evaluating the recorded presentations of individual Seal of Approval applicants in a timely manner and then submitting the evaluations to the Seal Chairperson, who then submits the panel's results to the NWA Executive Director. Members of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics cannot serve on an evaluation panel.

### b. Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics

The Subcommittee, with the advice and consent of the NWA officers and councilors, shall be responsible for all policies relating to television and radio weathercasting, including review and refinement of the NWA Seal of Approval process. Any change to the policies must have a 2/3 majority (5 of 7) of the Subcommittee to pass. The Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics consists of seven members as follows:

1. Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson (Subcommittee Chair)
2. Seal Chairperson
3. Immediate past Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson
4. Immediate past Seal Chairperson
5. Immediate past Recertification Chairperson
6. Sealholder at large
7. Non-broadcaster experienced in a meteorological profession other than broadcasting.

If one of the above Chairs is appointed as BMC Chair that member's future position of *Immediate past Chair* will be filled in the following order: 1) The current sitting member in said position will serve another term. 2) If the current sitting member is unwilling or unable to serve another term, the outgoing Broadcast Meteorology Chair, with the advice and consent of the "old" subcommittee, will appoint an NWA Sealholder that has previously served on the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics. 3) If no qualified member is willing or available, the outgoing Broadcast Meteorology Chair, with the advice and consent of the "old" subcommittee, will appoint a current NWA Broadcast Seal of Approval holder until option 1 or 2 is exercised, or the term expires, whichever comes first.

### 3. Seal of Approval Qualifications and Procedures

#### *a. All applicants must*

1. Be full (regular) members in good standing in the NWA, as defined by the NWA by-laws.
2. Be currently employed as a commercial on-air weathercaster, and have two years full-time or three years part-time experience as a commercial on-air weathercaster. For the Seal procedures, full-time is defined as four or more days per week on-air as a weathercaster. Anything less is considered part-time employment. Freelance employment is also part-time, and employment as a commercial on-air weathercaster at multiple stations must run consecutively with no more than 6 months between jobs.
3. Submit a formal letter of application and a current resume to the NWA Executive Director, along with a check or money order payable to "NWA" in the amount of \$175.

If the application is not accepted, the applicant will be notified by return mail with the application fee returned. The unsuccessful applicant will be advised as to why the application was not acceptable. All applicants are considered and evaluated equally without regard to sex, race, or religion.

In order to keep the NWA Council aware of the status of the Seal of Approval program, the Executive Director will brief the NWA Council at least twice each year on the status of NWA Seal candidates.

#### *b. Written Exam Procedures*

The Executive Director will notify the qualified applicant by return mail and/or email with instructions for the evaluation process. The applicant will be required to take a written exam covering all or part of the following topics: general meteorology, radar and satellite meteorology, severe weather, synoptic meteorology, climatology, and technology/terminology. The applicant will be instructed to identify a proctor. The proctor must be approved by the Executive Director. This proctor may be associated with a university, private college, community college, a local National Weather Service office or a commercial testing service. The applicant is responsible for all testing fees. The Executive Director will forward the exam materials to the proctor with instructions on administering the closed-book exam. The proctor will return the completed exam and all other test materials to the Testing Chairperson. The Testing Chairperson will grade the exam and forward the results to the Executive Director. A grade of at least 80% is required to pass.

Testing service will also be provided at the NWA Annual Meeting, if the applicant submits a written

request to the Executive Director at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

Testing exceptions must be requested in writing to the Testing Chairperson. With the consent of the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, the Testing Chair will render a decision as to the acceptability of any options. In the event of individual test taking difficulties or other hardships, the Executive Director will notify the Testing Chairperson who, with the consent of the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, will select an alternate proctor and /or testing procedure.

The Executive Director will notify all candidates of their test results. If the applicant did not pass the written exam, he/she may schedule to take a new exam, administered by a proctor, at least 3 months and no later than 6 months from the date of notification of the first written exam result. If the applicant fails the second written exam, the Executive Director will notify the applicant that they may reapply after one year from the date of the letter of notification. There will be a \$75 reapplication fee.

#### *c. On-Air Evaluation Procedures*

Once an applicant has successfully completed the written exam, the Executive Director will forward a list of the members of the evaluation panels and instruct the applicant to prepare and submit unedited recordings of their weathercasts. The applicant will review the list for any possible conflicts of interest. If a conflict exists, the applicant will notify the Executive Director, in writing, with a detailed explanation. If circumstances warrant, the Executive Director in consultation with the Seal Chairperson will replace that panel member, or forward the applicant's submission to a different panel. Applicants shall not make contact with any panel member regarding their Seal application during the evaluation process.

The applicant's submission will consist of unedited weathercasts from three consecutive appearance days, recorded within 30 days before or after the date of notification of the written examination results. The entire presentation, forecast, and graphics must solely be the original work of the applicant. The presentation materials must be clearly labeled with the show dates and times and must include all "tosses" to and from station breaks or other talent. Applicants should try to send weathercasts recorded during active weather patterns, but *not* severe or other emergency weather events.

The Executive Director will notify the chosen panel members of the applicant's submissions they will be receiving for evaluation. If there is any conflict of interest, the panel member should inform the Executive Director. If circumstances warrant, the Executive

Director in consultation with the Seal Chairperson may replace that panel member, or choose another panel.

Each panel member will judge on-air performance in six categories. Each category will be assigned a whole number score from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest) points, based on the judgment of the panel member. Each panel member will submit their completed evaluation to the Seal Chairperson, keeping a copy for future reference. The Seal Chairperson will calculate a mean score in each category, write a summary letter and forward it to the Executive Director with a copy to the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson. A mean score of at least 2.6 in each category is required to pass. The categories for on-air performance evaluation are:

1. Logical order of presentation
2. Meteorological competency
3. Use of graphics
4. Communication skills
5. Sufficient geographical area coverage
6. Terminology

The Executive Director will notify all candidates of their results. Successful candidates will receive an interim Seal of Approval. If the applicant did not pass the on-air evaluation, he/she may submit new recordings, conforming to the aforementioned requirements and recorded within 60 days after the date of the notification letter. The applicant will send the recordings to the Executive Director, who will forward them to the same review panel. If the applicant does not pass the second on-air evaluation, the Executive Director will notify the applicant that they did not meet the requirements for earning the Seal. The candidate may reapply one year after the date of that letter of notification and will not be required to retake the written exam as long as the reapplication occurs within a two-year period. There will be a \$75 reapplication fee, and the applicant will only be allowed to reapply once. If the candidate again fails twice to pass the on-air evaluation, he/she will have to wait a year after the date of the letter of notification and then may submit a new application restarting the process at the beginning, which includes taking a new written exam.

#### ***d. Final Approval***

The Executive Director will send a recommendation for final approval of the applicant for the Seal of Approval to the NWA President, with a copy to the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson and Seal Chair. The NWA President, after review and discussion, if necessary, with the Broadcast Committee and Council members, will then instruct the Executive Director to forward the final approval to the applicant. The Executive Director will provide successful applicants a Seal of Approval logo, a list of guidelines for use of the Seal and a certificate signed by the

Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson and the Executive Director. Only qualified members, in good standing, may display the NWA Seal of Approval.

#### ***e. Appeals***

Applicants may appeal the results of the evaluation process. A written appeal must be mailed to the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, with copies to the Executive Director and NWA President, within 60 days of notification of the contested decision. The Broadcast Committee Chairperson, with the advice and consent of the Executive Director, may immediately dismiss frivolous appeals and appeals that clearly do not follow the proper Seal of Approval procedures. Valid appeals include those claiming lack of due process, failure to follow approved procedure, or discrimination. Appeals citing mitigating factors not disclosed to the panel members prior to evaluation, or simple disagreement with panelists' scoring, are considered frivolous.

The Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics will judge appeals. The Subcommittee will render its decision with the advice and consent of the NWA President. The NWA President will instruct the Executive Director to notify the Seal applicant of the result.

#### ***f. NWA Radio Weathercaster Seal of Approval***

The NWA also offers a Seal of Approval for use by radio weathercasters. The requirements for application, written examination, evaluation, recertification, and fees are the same as the television Seal. However, the use of graphics will not be considered in the on-air evaluation process.

#### ***g. Recertification***

NWA Sealholders are required to recertify their Seal(s) of Approval by December 31st following the third year of certification, and every three (3) years thereafter. The Executive Director will remind each Sealholder of the recertification requirements when the initial Seal of Approval certificate is mailed to them, and with a form letter early in the third year of each 3-year recertification period. The final notice will be included with the annual membership renewal invoice sent in late November. To request recertification, Sealholders are required to send a letter to the Executive Director listing the continuing education accomplished with supporting documentation and with payment of a \$75 recertification fee before the 31 December deadline. If all requirements have been met, the Sealholder will be notified by the Executive Director that recertification was approved and the Sealholder may continue to display the NWA Seal of Approval. To satisfy recertification requirements at the

end of each 3-year period, an applicant must have completed 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by participating in at least one of the options listed in *Appendix A: Recertification Continuing Education Units (CEUs)*.

The CEU list will be modified as needed by the Recertification Chair with the consent and approval of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics. Additions, proposed by Sealholders at large, must be submitted in writing to the Recertification Chair at least one month prior to enrollment or attendance. The Recertification Chairperson will notify those Sealholders proposing new CEUs of the decision in writing. The Sealholder must obtain this written approval from the Recertification Chairperson prior to starting such a course or program or risk non-approval for recertification.

Only in the event of extreme hardship, the Recertification Chairperson, with the consent of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics, will determine other recertification options on a case-by-case basis.

#### ***h. Revocation of Seal of Approval***

Revocation of the Seal of Approval will occur in the any of the following circumstances:

1. Non-payment of annual dues by May 15, per the by-laws of the NWA
2. Failure to recertify by December 31 of every third year after Seal approval
3. Conduct and behavior inappropriate to the profession and/or damaging to the NWA
4. Violation of the policies of the NWA, including repeated failure to satisfy the six categories of Seal evaluation
5. Failure to adhere to the guidelines for use of the NWA Seal of Approval

If a Sealholder does not recertify by December 31st and/or does not pay annual dues by May 15th, the Executive Director will send a certified letter of revocation to the Sealholder and to his/her News Director that all consent to use, claim, and display the NWA Seal of Approval is withdrawn.

Items #3 through #5 will be processed by the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson. Any individual can send complaints containing grounds for revocation to the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, with copies to the Executive Director and NWA President. The Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson will determine if the complaint merits further attention. If not, an explanation will be sent to the complainant with copies to the Executive Director and NWA President. Otherwise, the case is forwarded to the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics. Sealholders must cooperate fully, providing a written response and

any additional requested material. The Subcommittee will act as an independent investigative body and their decision will be forwarded to the NWA President through the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson for final approval. The NWA President will direct the Executive Director to appropriately notify the Sealholder and complainant.

A NWA member, who has had a Seal revoked, can reapply for a new Seal, only after satisfying the following conditions:

1. A period of five years has elapsed since the date of revocation
2. Permission is granted by the Subcommittee on Ethics and Standards, with the approval of the NWA President.

#### ***i. Inactive Status***

Members in good standing not employed in any form or fashion as a television or radio weathercaster, may elect to have their Seal of Approval listed as inactive. This status is not granted to Sealholders that are "between" jobs.

A written request for inactive status must be made to the Executive Director. The Executive Director, with the advice and consent of the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chairperson, will provide confirmation or denial by return mail. Inactive Sealholders may not display or promote the NWA Seal of Approval. Additionally, if the Seal is mentioned on a resume, the word "INACTIVE" should precede the listing, on the same line, in the same size type.

If circumstances should warrant the return of the Sealholder to weathercasting, he/she may reactivate their Seal. NWA membership must have been maintained throughout the entire inactive period, otherwise the membership must be renewed and the Seal process started from the beginning, as if the applicant were applying for the first time. If the inactive Sealholder is a member in good standing, a reactivation fee of \$100 will apply. Furthermore, the Sealholder must meet current recertification requirements, and resubmit weathercasts for the on-air evaluation process. The same judging criteria used for new applicants will apply. The Executive Director will notify successful Sealholders that their Seal is again active. Unsuccessful Sealholders should resubmit weathercasts within 6 months. If the Sealholder does not pass the second review, the Executive Director will notify the applicant that they did not meet the requirements for activating the Seal and may reapply as a new applicant one year from the date of the notification letter. All fees, qualifications, and procedures will then apply.

***j. Guidelines for Use of the NWA Seal of Approval***

The NWA Seal of Approval is currently granted to those who meet or exceed the standards of meteorological competency and clear delivery of weather information via television and/or radio, as determined by the National Weather Association. The technology, data, and techniques available to the broadcast meteorology community have evolved, and so has the NWA Seal. Periodic review and refinement of the requirements will ensure that the quality and credibility of the Seal continues to improve.

Achievement of the NWA Seal of Approval alone, although significant, does not grant a Sealholder the title of "meteorologist". The American Meteorological Society defined "What is a Meteorologist" in a statement adopted September 28, 1990. We believe this document is consistent with the spirit of the National Weather Association, recognizing that those with non-traditional backgrounds can contribute to the science and the organization, benefiting from exposure to membership. The NWA Council and the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics urge all members to adhere to these guidelines.

Furthermore, the NWA Seal of Approval is awarded to the successful candidate, not to the television or radio station where the Sealholder is employed. The Seal does not imply forecast accuracy. Promotional statements such as, "John/Jane Sealholder's forecast is approved or certified by the National Weather Association," are forbidden. Promotional statements should reflect the Seal as being awarded for "John/Jane Sealholder's" performance, but not their forecast accuracy. Sealholders may continue to display their Seal if they change stations. The Seal logo may be displayed only during the Sealholder's weathercasts, or during promotional announcements that promote the Sealholder. No product or service endorsements may be expressed or implied in relation to the NWA or the NWA Seal of Approval. Choice of colors used for the trademarked Seal logo is the option of the Sealholder. Use of the NWA Seal of Approval or logo without the expressed, written consent of the NWA is forbidden and may result in legal action. The NWA reserves the right to revoke the Seal of Approval of any Sealholder.

Note: All references to the Executive Director also apply to the Assistant Executive Director.

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## Appendix A: RECERTIFICATION CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEUs) Effective 1 January 2008

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To recertify the NWA Seal of Approval, 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) must be earned within each 3-year period. The options for earning the units are listed below. This list will be modified as necessary by the Recertification Chair with the consent of the Broadcast Meteorology Committee Chair and if needed, the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics. Proposed additions to the list must be submitted to the Recertification Chair.

**1. Registration and attendance at the following conferences/meetings.** The Sealholder is responsible for providing proof of attendance/completion. A full day is considered more than five hours of instruction. A half day is considered more than 2 hours but less than 5 hours of instruction.

* NWA Broadcast Workshop	5 CEUs
* AMS Short Course	5 CEUs
* AMS or NWA nationally sponsored meeting	2 CEUs per full day 1 CEU per half day
* NWS WFO sponsored workshop	1 CEU per full day 0.5 CEU per half day
* Weather vendor user group seminar	1 CEU per full day 0.5 CEU per half day

(No more than 4 CEUs per 3 years can be obtained through the weather vendor user group seminars)

**2. Registration and attendance at other conferences approved by the Recertification Chair.** This list will be updated as necessary. The Recertification Chairperson, with the consent of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics, will determine the acceptability. Sealholders must obtain written approval from the Recertification Chairperson prior to completing conferences not listed here, and then provide proof of attendance/completion. A full day is considered more than five hours of instruction. A half day is considered more than 2 hours but less than 5 hours of instruction.

All of the following are approved and will supply 1 CEU per full day and 0.5 CEU per half day:

- \* Annual Meeting of the Missouri Academy of Science
- \* Bahamas Weather Conference
- \* Black Hills Winter Weather Workshop (Rapid City)
- \* Des Moines Severe Storms and Doppler Radar Conference
- \* High Plains Conference
- \* Intermediate Avalanche Awareness (Avalanche Center, Utah)
- \* Mississippi State University Conference
- \* National Hurricane Conference
- \* National Severe Weather Workshop
- \* Northeastern Storm Conference
- \* Northern Plains Winter Storm Conference
- \* Sierra Nevada Conference
- \* Southern New England Weather Conference
- \* Steamboat Weather Summit
- \* Tahoe Conference

**3. Presentation and author of a paper, poster, or service to the NWA as an officer, councilor or committee member.**

- \* Presenting a paper at an NWA/AMS sponsored meeting 2 CEUs
  - \* Presenting a paper at a meeting not sponsored by the NWA or AMS 1 CEU
- (Credit can only be received ONCE per paper)**

- \* Serving as an officer, councilor or committee member for the NWA (local or national) 1 CEU per year

**4. Enrollment and passing (with a grade of C or better) an accredited college-level meteorology or related sciences course that is a minimum of 3 semester hours.** All courses **must be approved in advance** by the Recertification Chair, with the consent of the Subcommittee on Standards and Ethics. Requests for course approval must be submitted to the Recertification Chair at least one month before the start of the course. Each approved 3-hour course is worth 6 CEUs. Each approved 4-hour course is worth 8 CEUs. The Sealholder will provide a transcript as supporting documentation. **Each individual course can be used only once.**

**5. Completion of online continuing education courses available from COMET.** This is for courses that have exams and includes:

COMET module level 1 0.5 CEU per course  
COMET module level 2 2 CEUs per course  
COMET module level 3 3 CEUs per course

Sealholders must send in completed exam reports. No more than 6 CEUs can be obtained from COMET courses during each 3-year period.

**6. Completion of a familiarization program at a nearby NWS Forecast Office.** The Sealholder will provide a letter from the office's manager, confirming that the familiarization was satisfactorily completed. For Sealholders obtaining NWS familiarization hours, each 5-hour period will be worth 1 CEU and Sealholders can obtain up to 5 CEUs within a 3-year period through this program. The NWA appreciates the involvement of local NWS offices, but does not guarantee or assume their availability to participate in the familiarization program. The NWS Familiarization option must accomplish AT LEAST TWO of the following tasks:

- a) working with the Science Operations Officer on a case review (Weather Event Simulator)
- b) working a complete upper air release
- c) working at least 4 hours with the aviation or public forecast desk
- d) working at least 4 hours at the radar desk
- e) working with the Warning Coordination Meteorologist to learn the capabilities and limitations of the local severe weather warning program

**7. Completion of self-study hours in preparation for teaching college-level meteorology courses.** The Sealholder who teaches college-level meteorology courses may earn 1 CEU for each credit hour taught, as approved by the Recertification Chair. The Sealholder must provide the school name, credit hours and time period covered. No more than 6 CEUs can be earned through self-study preparation time during each recertification period. **(Each individual course can be used only once per recertification period)**