

CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 3

PUBLIC RELATIONS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Public relations (PR) activity seeks to manage the interface between an organization and the outside world in such a way as to promote that organization and its services in the most positive way. In the Office this activity is the responsibility of the Marketing Branch. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 describe the range of activities undertaken.

3.1.2 In the wider sense PR is the concern of all. Effective communication is an essential element of all aspects of PR work, from the marketing and selling of individual services, through their delivery to the customer to the all important area of customer servicing. Succeeding sections of this chapter deal with procedures for the writing of articles for publication, the delivery of lectures and participation in non-routine broadcasts, arrangements for the handling of visitors to the Office, official entertainment, dealing with enquiries and complaints and the use of language in the provision of information. Since the weather affects almost everyone, it is a favourite topic of conversation and is frequently the subject of intense media interest, this information is necessarily slanted towards satisfying the general audience rather than specific commercial markets, which are discussed in more detail in the appropriate chapters.

3.2 Publicity

3.2.1 Corporate identity It is very necessary that all materials published or produced by The Met. Office conform to a recognizable style, or 'house style'. This consists of a well defined logo and typeface for the Met. Office's name, some carefully considered design rules on how these elements may be used on the page and in relation to one another, acceptable colours and so on. All this is contained in a design 'bible', maintained by Corporate Communications' design group. This enables us to develop and evolve our image in a controlled way, to keep abreast of modern design styles, without compromising our visual identity.

The present identity consists of a badge — a cockerel weather vane encircled by the words 'Meteorological Office' and surmounted by a crown and our preferred method of address, 'The Met. Office' in a particular typeface. This is to firmly establish in the public's mind that we are a single organization, The Met. Office, rather than say, the London Weather Centre, or Sella Ness Met., etc. Our title, 'The Met. Office', should always be used when answering calls, or identifying ourselves, to ensure we are always associated with the production of the highest quality forecasting services.

Corporate Communications' design group must always be consulted when any materials which identify ourselves to an outside audience are being considered. This includes stationery, letterheads, brochures, reports, advertisements, mailers, 'MetFAXes', exhibition stand graphics, overhead or 35 mm projector slides, visual presentation materials, and so on. Corporate Communications' design group provides professional design expertise to ensure that the reproduction quality of our corporate identity is maintained to the highest standards.

3.2.2 Promotional materials Corporate Communications is responsible for producing all brochures and promotional materials for the Office, for commercial purposes or otherwise. Promotional materials supporting commercial products are free of charge, although it is best to ensure that the more costly items, such as colour brochures, are distributed only to genuine sales prospects, rather than freely to the general public. These publications, and ones of general interest such as the *Annual Review* and the "...now here's the weather forecast" brochure, are freely available within the Office, however, so that all staff can inform themselves of our services and products. Literature and brochure stocks are controlled by Marketing Services, who can supply these as required.

Promotional materials needed for talks and lectures can be obtained from weather centres, market sector or business unit managers. Limited stocks are also held by Corporate Communications. A list of current brochures is given in Annex A. A VHS video is also available from weather centres, which gives an interesting 'layman's guide' to The Met. Office.

3.2.3 Advertising and trade shows Advertising and trade shows are among the many other media used by Services & Business to promote its products. Market sector and business unit managers plan promotional campaigns which coordinate a wide range of media, and fund these campaigns from their budget. Financial and technical control of this budget resides with Marketing Branch, for whom approval must be obtained for any expenditure on this vote. All promotional campaigns are organized through Marketing Services, to ensure consistency of the Met. Office's corporate

identity, and to ensure the most suitable and cost-effective format. The costs of promotional campaigns must always be justified by a sufficient increase in profitable business for the Met. Office.

3.2.4 Trailer Marketing Services maintains a 7 m mobile display unit, equipped with MIST, MetFAX, telephones and graphics for promoting The Met. Office at trade and public exhibitions and relevant military open days. Outstations should contact the Promotions Office in Marketing Services to book the use of this trailer.

3.2.5 Staffing Commercial, market sector and business unit managers are responsible for providing resources to man stands at trade shows or other promotional events which they have organized. The level of manning and possible use of personalities must be commensurate with the increase in profitable business expected from the event. Planning for staffing must begin in good time, to take account of rostering.

3.2.6 Equipment A certain amount of equipment is available at Headquarters to enable the display of satellite or radar imagery and videotex products at exhibitions. Local arrangements may also permit current weather charts and forecasts to be made available via document facsimile. Such facilities add greatly to the attraction of the display if organized effectively. Conversely they are distractions for specifically targeted audiences. In addition multi-media presentation equipment is available for seminars and briefings both external and internal. Bookings should be made through the Promotions Office in Marketing Services.

3.2.7 Publicity via telephone and telex directories PS offices are provided with telephone and document facsimile lines to facilitate access by potential customers and for the provision of services. Direct exchange lines fall into three categories. A single line facilitates the provision of access by the general public as part of the Free Public Service (see chapter 21) while one or more lines are provided for administrative and commercial purposes. Additionally a number of ex-directory telephone lines are provided primarily for the provision of services and their numbers should not be divulged except to currently registered paying customers and to certain specific persons who have a need to contact a forecast office without delay and are officially authorized to do so. These unlisted lines may also be used for transmission of information by document facsimile or for the connection via modems of computer terminal equipment. The free public line and commercial numbers require publicity if potential customers are to be able to contact the office. Commercial numbers and, where appropriate, Internet addresses, will be given on commercial stationery and business cards and should also be given publicity via the appropriate British Telecom Phonebook and/or Yellow Pages covering the area of responsibility of the office concerned. In the case of the public line an entry in the local Phonebook for the area in which the WC is located is sufficient. The responsibility for Weathercall and allied publicity rests with the service provider, Telephone Information Services Ltd (TIS).

3.3 News releases

3.3.1 A particularly effective form of publicity, assuming the subject matter is sufficiently newsworthy, is through the release to general or specific media contacts of a prepared statement. Such 'News Releases' can take three forms: the standard news release is issued formally only by the Meteorological Office Press Office. Operational forecasting news releases are issued by CFO as a supplement to the routine forecasts when it is considered important to highlight forthcoming weather. Press statements on current or recent weather may also be issued locally by PS offices, e.g. the LWC 'Weather Items of Interest'. Full details of procedures relating to these News Releases are given in *Met O OM* section 3.2.5. A fourth category of increasing use for publicizing new commercial services is the preparation of articles for commercial or special interest magazines. Such articles should be submitted for approval to Marketing as directed in *Met O OM* section 3.6.2.

3.3.2 Adverse media criticism of the performance of the Office, usually in relation to its national forecasts, may be regarded as an occupational hazard. In general published comments do not merit an official response. The Press Office routinely monitors the majority of national newspapers and is alert to the need or otherwise to counter the more serious comments. PS offices should routinely monitor the more relevant local publications and draw the attention of the Senior Press Officer to any items of importance. Comments on press and broadcast statements are issued in the name of the most relevant person by the Press Office only. Officers-in-charge should not become involved in public debate via the media. All requests or suggestions for an official response should be directed to the Senior Press Officer. Where a response is deemed proper and relates specifically to local criticism of a specific office, responsibility for reply may be delegated to the Officer-in-Charge, who would normally have received appropriate training. Procedures in relation to dealing with enquiries from the Press and broadcast media are expanded further in chapter 25.

3.3.3 All queries about news releases should be referred to the Press Office or to LWC in the case of operational forecasting news releases, unless all that is required is local amplification of the expected major event. It is not the intention of operational forecasting news releases to undermine the ability of PS forecast offices to sell services to

commercial customers. Used sparingly, when confidence is high, they can highlight the Office's medium-range forecasting capabilities and emphasize to potential customers the extent of the skills available. There is clear evidence to indicate that considerable increases in accesses to recorded telephone forecasts occur as a result of these releases.

3.4 Articles for publication, lectures and broadcasts by members of staff

3.4.1 Articles for publication *Met O OM* section 3.6 lays down formal conditions for the publication of all material on matters related to meteorology or to the public service, and stipulates procedures for obtaining approval. Staff at PS offices should submit material to the appropriate Assistant Director who will seek Directorate approval as appropriate.

3.4.2 The writing of articles on meteorological topics is a useful activity which is encouraged. Advice and help from Headquarters should always be forthcoming on application. Reference is made in paragraph 3.3.1 to the useful publicity which can be gained from the publication of articles relating to the provision of services.

3.4.3 Lectures The official procedures concerning approval for talks and lectures are set out in *Met O OM* section 3.8. A distinction is drawn between for example, formal lectures to professional and higher educational bodies and the more relaxed presentations to the Women's Institute, Rotary Clubs, etc. Officers-in-Charge must use their discretion in a sensible way when deciding under which of these two categories a particular request should fall. Cases of doubt may be discussed with the appropriate Head of Branch when submitting preliminary applications for approval; if the lecture is not to be read from a full script this should be stated. Unless the text of the lecture is intended for subsequent publication it is not necessary to submit it for approval.

3.4.4 Staff are also encouraged to give talks and lectures to social, educational, commercial and professional organizations and to broadcast on radio or television. These occasions are excellent opportunities from the public relations point of view and can help to increase understanding of Office services for the community.

3.4.5 Non-routine broadcasts The subject of non-routine broadcasts generally is discussed in chapter 25. Official procedures for obtaining clearance are set out in *Met O OM* section 3.7. Many such broadcasts involve an element of discussion or unscripted question and answer; when applying for permission to participate in such broadcasts as much information as possible should be given about the type of programme, presenter/interviewer, subject matter, etc. Where the programme is likely to be of general interest within the Office, sufficient notice should be given to allow the broadcast to be publicized.

3.4.6 In the special circumstance of additional broadcasts (which are unrelated to the weather) made by the BBC and ITN national TV 'Weathermen' or regional 'Weathermen', clearance is required from CCM, D(OS) and the television authority. A special procedure has been set up to expedite approvals in this case using the proforma illustrated at Annex D.

3.5 Visits to meteorological offices

3.5.1 General policy on visits is given in *Met O OM* section 3.2.9. Further discussion of visits for educational purposes may be found in chapter 10 of this Handbook, while procedures for dealing with visits by the Press, radio or television crews are amplified in chapter 25. In the case of PS offices, visits from actual or potential commercial customers will figure prominently. Such visits give the client the opportunity to see at first hand the resources which might be put at his/her disposal and often enable a much closer rapport to be established. They are strongly encouraged. No authorization is needed other than whatever may be necessary locally to ensure access.

3.6 Official entertainment

3.6.1 *Met O OM* section 5.21 discusses briefly the availability of limited funds for the reimbursement of expenses incurred on official entertainment. In the PS area this expenditure will be primarily associated with the provision of refreshments including business lunches in the course of meetings with commercial customers or potential customers.

3.6.2 The appropriate source of funds for S&B staff is SEVENTAIN under the control of S&B. Prior approval is required from S&B, the form at Annex 5T of *Met O OM* being used for seeking such approval. As funds are limited, commercial staff are required to exercise discretion. Financial limits are promulgated by F&A as necessary. In many instances, where the commercial relationship is long-standing, it will be no more than courtesy to reciprocate previous hospitality received from the client.

3.7 Gifts and hospitality

3.7.1 The subject of the offer of gifts or hospitality is covered in *Met O OM* section 5.23, which describes the procedures to be followed by all staff.

3.8 Dealing with enquiries

3.8.1 The primary objective of PS offices is to provide services on repayment. For the majority of commercial services this involves the provision of a routine service by prior arrangement often as the result of direct approaches made to the companies or individuals concerned by the commercial staff either locally or centrally. Ad hoc requests for services will also be received via listed telephone, telex or fax numbers or from personal callers. When the weather is of major interest a large number of enquiries may be received from the Press and broadcasting media in addition to any routine services provided. These enquiries are discussed further in chapter 25. The scope of services which may be provided in response to enquiries on the free public telephone is discussed in chapter 21. This line should also be regarded as the first point of contact for a number of potential paying customers, and all staff answering it need to be capable of recognizing the opportunities.

3.8.2 Many callers do not have a clear idea of the services which are available or of the best form of service to deal with their problem. When dealing with commercial enquiries the first priority must be to obtain the name, affiliation, contact telephone number and location of the caller. The nature of the query can then be discussed and an immediate response given if appropriate. Where the possibility exists for a longer-term service or the requirement is more complex the caller should either be transferred to the Officer-in-Charge or Commercial Manager if immediately available or agreement reached that the appropriate person should return the call. It is better that calls are returned rather than keep the caller waiting or ask him to ring a separate number or office.

3.8.3 All general enquiries, whether by telephone or in writing, received at Headquarters are directed to the Enquiries Officer in the first instance. Resources for dealing with enquiries are very limited and in particular no forecast information can be provided. Calls requiring forecast information will usually be directed to premium rate telephone numbers. Calls related to potential repayment services will usually be directed to the appropriate commercial staff. Where the scope of a commercial enquiry extends beyond the capabilities of a particular forecast office and an immediate response is not required, the appropriate Market Sector Manager should be contacted and asked to follow up the enquiry.

3.9 Complaints

3.9.1 All commercial complaints should be investigated and promptly answered in a courteous and tactful manner. In all cases the aim in responding must be to restore the confidence of the complainant in the service provided. Complaints received at outstations from commercial customers should be dealt with personally by the Commercial Manager, Manager or Regional Manager of the office providing the service, giving an explanation and, when appropriate, an apology for errors or omissions. It may appear tempting to offer some form of rebate of charges received when the quality of the service is questioned. This must be firmly resisted, unless there are exceptional circumstances, within the control of the office, which prevented normal delivery. No rebate should be offered for incorrect forecasts. Charges are based on the premise that a certain level of accuracy is all that reasonably can be expected and the Office cannot guarantee 100% accuracy.

3.9.2 An important class of complaint comes from Members of Parliament (MPs), the House of Lords or other Very Important Persons (VIPs). All such matters can only be dealt with by MD(Ops). Under no circumstances may Managers or Regional Managers reply directly to MPs. All correspondence should be referred immediately to the Head of the parent Branch with full details and copies of any relevant material issued locally. The Headquarters Branch concerned will investigate fully and as expeditiously as possible and provide information to MD(Ops) through the appropriate Director so that an appropriate reply can be formulated.

3.9.3 Response to criticism in the media is discussed in paragraph 3.3.2. Further discussion of complaints from the media is discussed in chapter 25.

3.9.4 All public complaints other than the trivial must be forwarded to the Enquiries Officer in the Press Office at Bracknell. It is his responsibility to answer them and monitor the subjects which concern the public most, in order that problem areas may be identified and solutions found. He is also responsible for reporting the number of complaints handled by the organization as a whole.

3.10 The use of language

3.10.1 Effective use of the English language is essential for the presentation of forecasts. There are generally no difficulties with forecasts prepared for commercial customers, if care is taken to understand the customer's requirement and tailor the information accordingly. The same cannot be said of forecasts aimed at a more general audience where, because of the large range of uses to which the forecast might be put and the different levels of comprehension of individual members of the audience, much more care is required. The style and content of forecasts varies with the medium. In the case of those for the Press, broadcast media and other distributors this is discussed further in the appropriate chapters of this Handbook. Consideration is given here to more general aspects such as units, meteorological terminology, and the problems associated with the use of certain words which may be misinterpreted.

3.10.2 Units As general policy and in accordance with WMO agreements, the Office uses the International System of Units (SI) as defined by the British Standards Institution publication *SI Units and recommendations for the use of their multiples and of certain other units*, BS 5555, 1976, in all scientific work, e.g. for articles in scientific journals. However, not all the SI units are of a convenient size, and by custom and long usage, especially in marine and aviation matters, certain other units have an accepted place in meteorological services (e.g. the knot). The notes below give general guidance on units to be used in public issues. For commercial services, where the information will not be passed on to a wider audience units should be as required by the customer.

3.10.2.1 Temperature In general the Celsius scale (°C) should be used, consistent with standard scientific usage in the United Kingdom. Two further factors need to be taken into account, however, in considering the additional inclusion of values in degrees Fahrenheit (°F):

- a. General comprehension Whilst schools have for many years taught the Celsius scale there is still a substantial section of the population who prefer to think in °F. In this they are abetted by the media.
- b. Market forces In most cases while the information is free or at low cost to the recipient, the Office receives payment for the service from the distributor. Given the relative ease of competitors to enter this market, some recognition of the wishes of the customer must be taken into account.

The result is that in most cases °C (using Celsius rather than Centigrade) will be given prominence but that where required by the customer equivalent values may be given in °F, either in parentheses as on certain press maps, by verbal conversion of a selection of values as on BBC radio and television or by the use of conversion tables.

3.10.2.2 Pressure WMO has adopted the hectopascal (hPa) as the standard (the SI unit is the Pascal). This is equivalent to the millibar. Pressure should continue to be quoted in millibars, at the same time recognizing that many barometers are graduated in inches of mercury and staff should be prepared to convert when requested. Some laboratories have barometers graduated in millimetres of mercury and requests for this should also be met.

3.10.2.3 Wind Directions should normally be given in compass points (true) and speeds in miles per hour, but in a marine context knots or Beaufort Force are more appropriate. Knots, and also degrees, are used for aviation purposes. If metric units are requested the SI unit of metres per second should be used rather than kilometres per hour. In many public issues it is appropriate to specify wind speed in qualitative terms based on the standard Beaufort Scale, e.g. light, fresh, gale force (see Annex C to chapter 18), though care should be exercised as there is not widespread comprehension of the quantitative equivalents of these terms. Miles per hour will continue as the normal unit for public services as long traffic speeds remain in m.p.h.

3.10.2.4 Rainfall Normally values should be given in millimetres but equivalents in inches may be given until 31 December 1999.

3.10.2.5 Snow depth Centimetres are usual, though again inches may be given until 31 December 1999.

3.10.2.6 Sunshine Durations are given in hours and tenths.

3.10.2.7 Visibility In public issues visibilities should normally be quoted in kilometres or metres, but equivalents in miles or yards may be given until 31 December 1999. In a marine context visibility is expressed in nautical miles but metres are used for distances less than one nautical mile. In an aviation context visibility is expressed in metres up to 5000 m, and in whole kilometres in excess of 5000 m.

3.10.2.8 Cloud height This is not normally needed in public issues but when required hundreds or thousands of feet should be used.

3.10.2.9 Topographical height Normally metres will be used but equivalents in feet may be given until 31 December 1999.

3.10.3 Meteorological terminology

3.10.3.1 Forecasts for the general public are intended to communicate weather information succinctly and without ambiguity to recipients who range from those with a professional interest, and understanding to match, to a large majority that is much less well informed. Meteorology is, in common with most other scientific subjects, full of technical jargon perfectly understandable between colleagues but a mystery to most laymen. The use of technical language, however great the desire to educate the public, must therefore be somewhat limited, unless space or time permit some form of explanation. The use of graphical information in the Press and on television, and in particular the use of satellite imagery, does allow the simpler concepts such as warm and cold fronts to be illustrated. As a result such expressions have become more widely understood and may be used also in non-visual media. More complex jargon such as 'triple point', 'warm occlusion' or 'potential instability' is firmly excluded. The risk of misunderstanding should never be overlooked; there was a case some years ago when mention in a radio forecast of a 'deepening wave approaching from the Atlantic' led to sandbagging of the promenade in a west coast resort. Before using technical terms the forecaster should consider carefully whether or not they are likely to be understood by a substantial proportion of the recipients, and if not, the terms should be avoided.

3.10.3.2 Whether or not the public understand precisely the meanings meteorologists attribute to particular words and phrases there should be uniformity of practice, and to ensure this Annex E to this chapter gives a set of definitions and conventions which should be followed.

3.10.3.3 The precise definitions of terms used to describe temperature need great care (see Annex E); in particular, frost is strictly defined by category (see Appendix A to Annex E). Unqualified references to 'average temperature' should be avoided because the layman probably does not know its value, but the relationship to average remains central to the definitions because this reflects the way public perception of, for example, 'a warm day' varies with the season. Other factors can, of course, be very important, including the 'conditioning' of recent weather, where a less cold day after a long spell of intensely cold weather may not seem 'very cold'. In cases such as the one quoted above it is often more appropriate to use comparative expressions such as 'milder' or 'less cold than yesterday'. Care should be taken to avoid the use of unseasonable expressions such as 'warmer' in winter. The table in Appendix B to Annex E indicates the strict seasonal variation in the terms 'warm, cold, cool, mild' (as used in SRs from CFO) and the comparative expressions should reflect this.

3.10.3.4 A further factor greatly influencing the perception of temperature is the strength of the wind. It is common experience that at most temperatures it feels colder when the wind is blowing than when it is not. This is because in a wind the flow of cooler air past a body maintained at a near constant temperature increases the rate at which heat is lost from that body. In the case of the human body, several formulae have been published to quantify this heat loss. Appendix C to Annex E gives a table indicating the 'equivalent temperature', i.e. the temperature in still air for which the rate of heat loss is the same as that for the observed wind and temperature, for different values of 10-metre wind and screen temperature derived by R.G. Steadman ('Indices of windchill of clothed persons': *J Appl Meteorol*, 1971, Vol. 10, and 'A universal scale of apparent temperatures': *J Clim Appl Meteorol*, 1984, Vol. 23) which have been adopted as standard for using in PS forecasting. A nomogram is also given for the depression of equivalent temperatures below screen temperature.

3.10.3.5 It is important to note that these calculations relate to the rate of heat loss of a human body which is maintained by internal heat sources at a constant relatively high temperature. They are not therefore applicable to the cooling experienced by objects not so maintained, e.g. car cylinder blocks or plants which cannot in general be cooled advectively below the ambient air temperature. In particular care must be exercised in situations where the screen temperature is above freezing point and the equivalent temperature is below, not to imply that frost will occur. Use of the expression 'human wind-chill' is advocated to reinforce the distinction. These points are not well understood by the public at large and opportunities should be sought to explain matters.

3.10.3.6 To retain impact human wind-chill equivalent temperatures should normally be used only when the effect is significant, say a depression of greater than 5 °C below screen temperature. Care must be exercised to avoid confusion between actual and equivalent temperatures. In particular where on television symbols are used to represent equivalent temperatures these should be shown on a separate chart in distinctive colours. Simultaneous display of winds with equivalent temperatures should be used to emphasize their relevance.

3.10.3.7 Humidity, insolation and wetting may also be significant to perceived temperature levels. Steadman's method uses as a base a relative humidity of 80% and no incident direct solar radiation. Equivalent temperatures are lowered with drier air but the effect is relatively small at those temperatures for which human wind-chill should normally be used, say with screen temperatures below 15 °C. At higher temperatures (above 25 °C) sweating becomes important and the humidity effect predominates over wind effects. Insolation can be important, especially when there is no wind, raising equivalent temperatures by up to 8 °C in full summer sunshine. However, the effect decreases with increasing wind speed to, for example, below 4 °C at 20 knots. The increase is directly proportional to incident radiation and for winter sunshine levels will be small. Moreover the humidity and insolation contributions may be expected to oppose each other in many typical situations. Thus for most applications where great precision is not required these effects can be ignored.

3.10.3.8 The equivalent temperatures given in Appendix C to Annex E assume an appropriate amount of clothing for the season. Heat loss will be considerably greater when there are large areas of bare skin, or precipitation considerably reduces the insulative properties of non-waterproof clothing. This latter factor is an important contributor to hypothermia, e.g. for ill-equipped hill walkers.

3.10.3.9 Great care should be used in describing frost and its severity (see Annex E). Temperature and frost references are normally to screen level and the word 'air' should not be inserted in front of 'frost'. However when screen temperatures are not expected to fall below 0 °C but those on the ground are, specific mention should be made of 'ground frost' but without qualification as to severity because of the wide variations that occur due to local topography and soil. Moreover, radiational cooling of plants such as grass (whose stems will insulate them from the soil) will often be considerably greater than of bare soil or roads which have a large heat capacity. The question of forecasting road temperatures is discussed further in chapter 17. For climatological purposes frost is defined as a temperature below 0.0 °C.

3.10.4 Certain words in the English language are ambiguous or are widely used in an incorrect sense. In Annex E some notes are given about the use of particular words where misunderstandings could occur or complaints arise. The main purpose of this list is to ensure uniformity of practice throughout the Office, rather than encourage use of hackneyed expressions. However, the public toleration of new developments in language is increasing and there will be many situations where a relaxed, but not sloppy, style is appropriate.

PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

3A.1 Promotional material indicating services available may be obtained from the appropriate MSM.

Further details and information on any other promotional material in the process of publication may be obtained from Corporate Communications.

3A.2 The booklet "The Met. Office Publications" carries a very comprehensive list of publications covering textbooks, tables, weather and climate summaries and various Metforms, and may be obtained from Headquarters.

VIDEO CASSETTES OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

3B.1 The following titles of video cassettes in VHS format are available:

- a. The Met. Office. Making the weather work for you.
- b. A question of weather.
- c. Services to business — V18.
- d. Services to the retail trade — V19.
- e. Services to the construction industry — V20.
- f. Services to the offshore industry — V21
- g. Met. Office Corporate video (1991).

Note that a. to f. are rather out of date.

There is a series of 35 mm slide, OHPs and VHS videos which may be used for promotional purposes. These may be obtained through the appropriate MSM.

PROFORMA FOR ADDITIONAL BROADCASTS BY NATIONAL TV WEATHERMEN

REQUEST FOR TV/RADIO APPEARANCE APPROVAL

<p>NAME OF PRESENTER</p>		<p>Approved by Television Presentation</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Signature</p>
<p>TV COMPANY OR RADIO STATION</p>		<p>Approved by DD Met O(F)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Signature</p>
<p>NAME OF PROGRAMME</p>		
<p>NATURE OF REQUIRED APPEARANCE (PLEASE BE REASONABLY SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN REQUESTED TO DO)</p>		
<p>WILL THE WORK BE IN YOUR OWN TIME?</p>		
<p>DATE AND TIME OF RECORDING</p>		
<p>DATE AND TIME OF BROADCAST (IF KNOWN, OTHERWISE AN ESTIMATE)</p>		
<p>ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (E.G. IF THE PROGRAMME IS FOR CHARITY)</p>		<p>NOTES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval must be given by both the Television Authority and the Met. Office prior to acceptance. 2. A copy of the completed form can be sent directly to DD Met O(F) by docfax (use the Met O 7 machine). 3. Completed copies must be given to the Senior Weatherman and Television Presentation.

METEOROLOGICAL TERMINOLOGY

- “Accumulations” Used mainly in relation to snow. If snow is expected to lie, then expected depths could be given as “a few inches” if, in SR jargon, moderate accumulations are expected, “about an inch” or “a dusting”, etc. could be used in place of slight accumulations.
- “Affect” Best avoided by the use of a more descriptive phrase, e.g. “spread to”, “continue over”, “develop in”.
- “Afternoon” Should be used to refer to the period noon to 6 p.m. LCT.
- “Appreciable” “Capable of being measured” NOT “substantial”.
- “Approximate” Means “very near” or “fairly correct”; thus “very approximately” implies greater not lesser precision.
- “Bad” One of a group of terms which imply a subjective judgement. They should not be used where it is likely that a substantial body of recipients will disagree. “Good”, “better”, “worse”, “improvement”, “poor”, “deterioration”, “chance” (implying good fortune) and “risk” (implying misfortune) all come into this category.
- “Better” See “Bad”.
- “Blizzard” The simultaneous occurrence of moderate or heavy snowfall and winds of at least Force 7 (28 knots mean speed) which cause drifting snow and reduction of visibility to 200 m or less. If winds are expected to reach at least Force 9 (41 knots mean speed) and visibility to be reduced to near zero the reference should be to “severe blizzard”.
- “Bright” This word should be used to indicate considerable diffuse sunshine and perhaps some direct sunshine. As certain people, especially photographers, consider “bright” and “sunny” as synonymous, it is advisable to include an amplifying phrase, e.g. “bright with only thin high cloud”. The comparative “brighter” can be useful to indicate thinning of cloud layers with (perhaps) breaks developing.
- “Chance” This word relates to unspecified probabilities of occurrence. It is better to indicate the degree of probability in qualitative terms, e.g. “a small chance”, or, better, to use percentage.
- “Cloudy” With cloud nearly or completely covering the sky and thick enough to prevent the sun from casting shadows (i.e. it would not be used with only cirrostratus cloud being expected).
- “Conditions” Means “circumstances”, especially those essential to an entity’s existence. It is thus incorrect, though common, to refer to “weather conditions”, and “conditions” should not be used alone to mean “weather”.
- “Country” A misleading and frequently misused word, given the composition of the United Kingdom. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales should be referred to as such. Great Britain is the name of the islands comprising England, Scotland and Wales.
- “Deterioration” See “Bad”.
- “Dry” Used to indicate no precipitation or fog. The word should be used with care because although technically correct, a day following overnight rain would be considered to be wet by many farmers; “becoming dry” might be more appropriate in these cases, but best of all “no rain today” could be used. “Dry” should not be used to describe a misty anticyclonic winter’s morning after overnight fog.
- “Dull” A complete cover of cloud dense enough to create an impression of darkness and gloom during daylight hours. It is not necessarily restricted to cases where smoke is trapped beneath

an inversion.

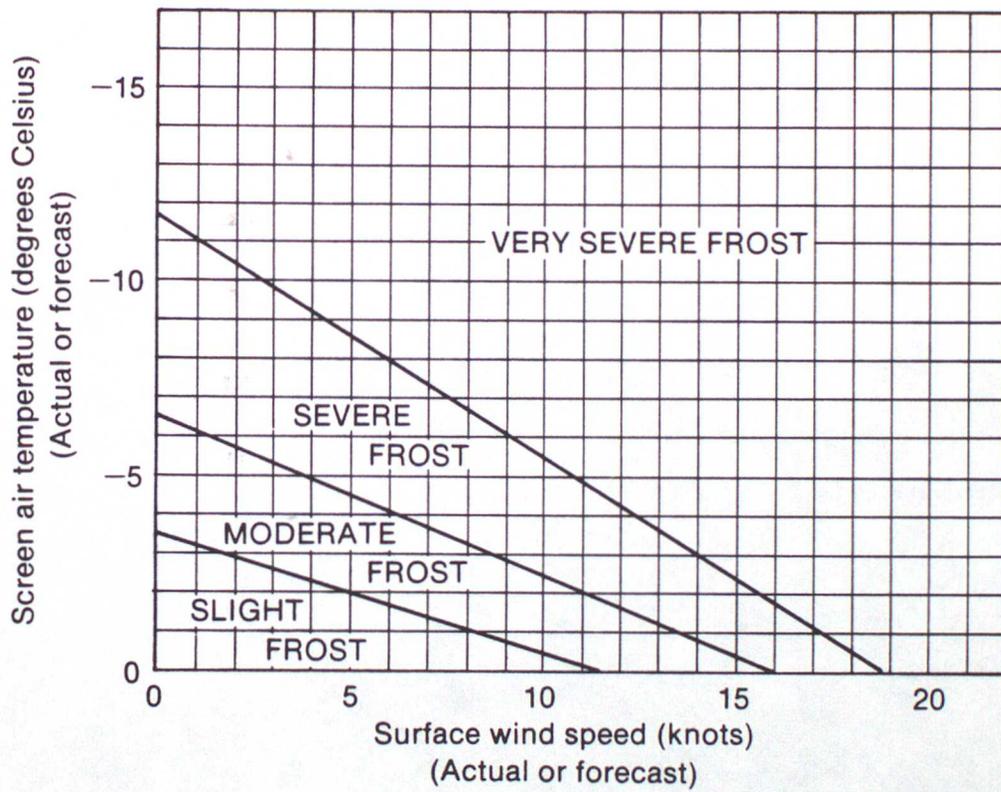
- “Elsewhere” Best avoided in spoken forecasts because the area can be identified only if the listener/viewer remembers which previous areas were identified. Similarly “otherwise” and “in the remaining areas” should not be used.
- “Evening” Should be used to refer to the period 6 p.m. to 10p.m. LCT.
- “Fair” In a general sense this word has no widely accepted meaning and should be avoided, especially in conjunction with “chance” or “risk”. In the specific instance of shipping forecasts, it means no significant weather (i.e. no precipitation or fog).
- “Fine” No precipitation or dense fog; some sunshine by day or moon/stars at night. This word can be particularly useful in forecasts for a period of time covering both daylight and darkness or the latter only, but if both “fine” and “sunny” are applicable by day then “sunny” is to be preferred.
- “Floods” The Office is not responsible for flood forecasts, which are the responsibility of the NRA, nor is it competent to comment on the likelihood of flooding. The word should not, in general, be used, except as “localized flooding” in severe weather warnings of heavy rain (see chapter 24).
- “Fog” Visibility in the range 50 to 200 m. If the visibility is less than 50 m the reference should be to “dense fog”. In aviation and shipping forecasts, “fog” is defined as a visibility of less than 1000 m.
- “Fresh” A useful word for describing the combined cooling effect of temperature and wind. In shipping forecasts “fresh” has the specific meaning of a Force 5 wind strength.
- “Frost” The technical difference between “air frost” and “ground frost” can lead to misunderstanding and the two phrases should not be used in the same sentence. Frost occurs when the temperature of air at screen level (air frost) or in contact with the ground (ground frost) is below 0.0 °C. In the case of ground frost this is said to occur when 0.0 °C or less is recorded by the “grass minimum thermometer”. In winter, it is not normally necessary to distinguish between “air frost” and “ground frost” or to make use of the adjective “air”; at other times of the year the phrase “ground frost” should be used when temperatures at ground level are expected to reach or exceed the critical value but the screen temperature will remain above 0.0 °C, since this is important for many market gardeners and the general public with an interest in gardening. The severity is determined by temperature and wind speed and is described by terminology according to the diagram at Appendix A to this Annex.
- “Gale” Except in gale warnings, the simple description of “gale”, “gale force”, “(gale) force” and stronger winds must be used only for the steady winds described in the Beaufort Force scale.
- “Good” Used in shipping forecasts to qualify visibility, over 5 nautical miles. See “Bad”.
- “Gust” A sudden short-lived change from the mean wind speed. Purists regard this word as a noun only. There is widespread colloquial use as a verb in meteorological circles which is recognized by some dictionaries. As a verb, it is safer to avoid it in more formal issues.
- “Gust to gale”
(or near gale) This phrase is proscribed.
- “Haze” Visibility reduced to the range 1-5 km brought about by non-aqueous obscuration.
- “Hurricane” Intense tropical cyclone. Normally the word “hurricane” is only used in United Kingdom weather forecasts for shipping when mean winds exceeding 63 knots are expected.
- “Imminent” In gale warnings it has the specific meaning “within the next 6 hours”. To avoid confusion it should not be used in other contexts.

<u>"Improvement"</u>	See "Bad".
<u>"Intermittent"</u>	Not readily understood by the public and should not be used.
<u>"Later"</u>	In gale warnings this word has the specific meaning "more than 12 hours after the time of issue". It is too useful to be excluded from general forecasts, where it should be used in its natural sense, i.e. in relation to some event or time specified at the same moment, for example "later in the night".
<u>"Locally"</u>	An unpopular word with many listeners and often used in a tautological way. It has a natural meaning when used in relation to a specific place but otherwise should be avoided by the use of phrases such as "in some places" or "here and there".
<u>"Mainly dry"</u>	A phrase used commonly, and often wrongly. In describing likely events for a given area "mainly dry" is best replaced by "dry apart from a small chance of a shower". In a spatial sense "mainly dry" means "dry in many places" so that the phrase "mainly dry in most places" is tautological and should not be used.
<u>"Mist"</u>	Visibility 200 m to 1 km.
<u>"Moderate"</u>	Rarely appropriate except perhaps as a description of wind strength. The public do not describe rainfall or snow as "moderate". In shipping forecasts "moderate" wind equates to Force 4, and for visibility covers the range 2 to 5 nautical miles.
<u>"Morning"</u>	The period dawn to noon LCT. Note that the time of dawn varies greatly from summer to winter in our latitudes.
<u>"Night"</u>	The period from 10 p.m. to dawn. Note that dawn varies greatly from summer to winter in our latitudes.
<u>"Normal"</u>	Averages are rarely known by the public, so care is needed. See "Temperature".
<u>"Of late"</u>	This is a useful phrase to indicate a recent period of more than one day, as, for example, "cooler than of late".
<u>"Outbreak"</u>	Frequently used to describe precipitation events which have no temporal or spatial distribution than can be described in a simple way, for example, "outbreaks of thundery rain".
<u>"Poor"</u>	In shipping forecasts it is a strict definition for visibility in the range 1000 m to 2 nautical miles. See "Bad".
<u>"Precipitation"</u>	Rarely used by the public. It is better to indicate the form of likely precipitation.
<u>"Rain"</u>	Liquid precipitation lasting for more than one hour without a break, or, if falling for more than half the time in each of several consecutive hours. See "Shower".
<u>"Scattered"</u>	Means "wide apart" or "well spread-out". The expression "widely scattered" is tautological though frequently used in the USA to mean "everywhere". "Well scattered" is similarly tautological, and even ambiguous. Such qualifying adjectives should be avoided.
<u>"Sheltered"</u>	A useful word in forecasts if the cause of the sheltering is indicated and the listener/viewer is left in no doubt in which direction the shelter extends. The expression "frost in sheltered places" is a contradiction in terms.
<u>"Shower"</u>	Although to a meteorologist the word "shower" implies precipitation falling from convective cloud, popular understanding is sensibly "a brief fall of rain etc." The key word here is "brief"; and a decision as to whether "shower" is appropriate depends not on cloud type but on duration. Anything up to about an hour in duration may be described as a "shower", particularly if blue sky can be seen either side, but anything over 20 to 30 minutes should be qualified by the word "prolonged". If durations exceeding an hour are likely then "periods of

rain" should be used. If falls of both less than and more than an hour are expected then "showers or longer periods of rain" or "showery rain" is acceptable, but "showers or intermittent rain" would be considered tautological and should not be used.

- "Sleet" A temporal and localized phenomenon, thus its use should be minimized.
- "Soon" In gale warnings this means "between 6 and 12 hours after the time of issue". It has no specific meaning elsewhere but might be interpreted as "within 2 to 3 hours" so it is better to avoid the word and be more precise.
- "Spell" Relates to two or more days of a similar type of weather, e.g. dry or wet weather situations, but see "Sunny spells".
- "Sunny" With sunshine most of the time.
- "Sunny intervals" With broken sunshine for a total of less than half of that theoretically possible in a day.
- "Sunny periods" Mostly sunny for an hour or two at a time and in all more sunshine than cloudiness.
- "Sunny spells" Same as "Sunny periods".
- "Temperature" Perhaps more than any other weather element, "temperature" needs care in its description because the effect of temperature on comfort is related also to wind strength and humidity. The strict definitions of departures of temperature from the normal are listed in Appendix B to this Annex and are used by, for example, CFO in SRs. However, the public is served best, when trying to describe temperature levels, by a comparison with the previous day's values using phrases such as "colder than yesterday by a degree or so" or "much warmer than of late". Descriptive terms such as "fresh", "raw", "humid" have a considerable value when used with care (but see "wind-chill"). Temperatures are normally given in degrees Celsius unless specifically requested otherwise by the customer.
- "Thundery showers" Although this phrase may be understood by many people, there are other (better) ways to introduce the likelihood of thunder, for example, "showers, even some thunderstorms in East Anglia". The phrase "thundery showers or thunderstorms" is to be avoided.
- "Ulster" The geographical area consisting of the 6 counties comprising Northern Ireland plus 3 counties in Eire. Therefore the word "Ulster" should not be used.
- "Visibility" Note that visibility terms used in this Annex differ from those used in the code for observing the element.
- "Wet" The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition is "rainy". It is a useful term to describe a period of rainy weather, e.g. a morning, but see also "Dry".
- "Wind-chill" See paragraph 3.10.3.4 and Appendix C to this annex for diagrams of equivalent temperatures.
- "Wintry" "Pertaining to winter or resembling winter". As such it may be tautological to use this in any forecast during the winter season. However it can be a useful shorthand, where space or time do not permit a longer explanation to describe the mixture of rain, hail, rain and snow, and snow which can occur. If snow is likely to predominate then the word "snow" should be mentioned specifically; the phrase "wintry showers, some falling as snow" is tautological and should be avoided. "Wintry" should not be used for widespread precipitation, and "becoming wintry" in particular, should not be used for temporal or spatial variations of such precipitation.
- "Worse" See "Bad".

DIAGRAM FOR DETERMINATION OF SEVERITY OF AIR FROST



(Above 0.0 °C: ground frost only)

TERMS USED TO INDICATE TEMPERATURE

Departure from average (°C)	Spring (mid-March to mid-May)	Summer (mid-May to mid-Sept.)	Winter (mid-Nov. to mid-Mar)
	Autumn (mid-Sept to mid-Nov.)		
more than +7)	Very hot)
+6 to +7) Very warm	Hot) Exceptionally mild
+4 to +5	Warm	Very warm	Very mild
+2 to +3	Rather warm	Warm	Mild
-1 to +1	Normal	Normal	Normal
-2 to -3	Rather cold	Rather cool	Rather cold
-4 to -5	Cold	Cool	Cold
more than -5	Very cold	Very cool or cold*	Very cold

* "Cold" for use when a marked fall in temperature is expected.

WIND-CHILL EQUIVALENT TEMPERATURES (STEADMAN)

10-METRE WIND (KNOTS)

SCREEN TEMP (°C)	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
20	19.1	17.4	15.9	14.9	14.0	13.3	12.8	12.3
18	17.0	15.2	13.7	12.5	11.5	10.8	10.2	9.7
16	14.9	13.0	11.4	10.1	9.0	8.2	7.6	7.0
14	12.9	10.8	9.1	7.6	6.5	5.6	4.9	4.2
12	10.8	8.6	6.7	5.2	4.0	3.0	2.1	1.4
10	8.7	6.4	4.4	2.7	1.4	0.2	-0.6	-1.4
8	6.7	4.2	2.0	0.2	-1.2	-2.5	-3.4	-4.2
6	4.6	2.0	-0.4	-2.3	-3.9	-5.2	-6.3	-7.0
4	2.5	-0.3	-2.8	-4.8	-6.5	-7.9	-9.1	-10.0
2	0.4	-2.5	-5.2	-7.3	-9.1	-10.7	-11.9	-12.9
0	-1.7	-4.8	-7.5	-9.9	-11.8	-13.3	-14.6	-15.8
-2	-3.7	-7.1	-9.9	-12.3	-14.4	-16.1	-17.4	-18.6
-4	-5.8	-9.3	-12.3	-14.8	-17.0	-18.8	-20.2	-21.4
-6	-7.9	-11.6	-14.6	-17.3	-19.6	-21.3	-22.9	-24.2
-8	-10.0	-13.9	-17.0	-19.9	-22.2	-24.0	-25.6	-27.0
-10	-12.1	-16.1	-19.4	-22.4	-24.7	-26.6	-28.3	-29.8
-12	-14.2	-18.3	-21.7	-24.9	-27.3	-29.3	-31.0	-32.6
-14	-16.3	-20.6	-24.1	-27.3	-29.9	-31.9	-33.8	-35.3
-16	-18.3	-22.8	-26.5	-29.7	-32.4	-34.6	-36.5	-38.0
-18	-20.4	-25.0	-28.9	-32.2	-34.9	-37.2	-39.1	-40.8
-20	-22.5	-27.2	-31.2	-34.7	-37.4	-39.7	-41.7	-43.5

