

CHAPTER 9

SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS

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SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Services are not included in this market sector if the Government Department, local authority or other research or administrative body is using the information to meet the needs of another specific market sector. Examples of market specific organizations are ADAS (agriculture), local authority highways maintenance departments (road transport), local education authorities (education), the TRRL (road transport) and the BRE (construction).

9.2 Market sector

9.2.1 The sector includes Government departments such as the Department of Social Security (DSS), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Education and Science (DES), administrative or research bodies such as Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and international organizations including foreign governments and national meteorological services, ECMWF and WMO. Most aspects of local authority work, except highways maintenance and local education authorities are included in the market sector.

9.3 Services for MOD

9.3.1 The provision of services to MOD and other Government departments is a primary responsibility of the Meteorological Office. Except as described in chapter 24, the responsibility for providing services to MOD lies with Defence Services (DS). However, the M Met O at Belfast International Airport retains responsibility for meeting the military requirement in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere certain CS offices provide a limited amount of support on behalf of DS as directed by Headquarters. Requests from MOD(PE) or military units should be referred to the appropriate DS office, or to Headquarters if not urgent.

9.3.2 Services required by civilian contractors working on MOD sites will be provided, when appropriate, by the parent DS office. When services are requested by civilian contractors working on other MOD sites they should be provided on normal repayment terms appropriate to the market sector (i.e. building, construction and civil engineering).

9.4 Services for DSS

9.4.1 Cold weather payments scheme The DSS operates a 'cold weather payments scheme' each winter, which provides a method of providing financial support to certain categories of the general public depending on pre-determined meteorological criteria. The criteria may vary from winter to winter but are set by DSS each year and circulated by CS(PSP) through the parent Branch, so that appropriate data from observing stations are made available in a timely fashion.

9.4.2 Typically the DSS is supplied with a 7-day running mean temperature for a given list of observing stations, which has been agreed by DSS in consultation with CS(PSP), as representative of a given area of the United Kingdom for which a cold weather payment might be made. These temperatures

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would be computed, using NCM returns, as the mean of the seven 24-hour maximum and the seven 24-hour minimum temperatures. The data could be supplied to the DSS several times each week and give the mean temperature for the 7-day period on each of the preceding eight days. It is necessary therefore that observing stations whose data are being used in a particular way ensure they are received correctly, as well as in a timely way.

9.4.3 On receipt of the data, the DSS may authorize payments to qualifying members of the public living in an area represented by a particular station which has a 7-day mean temperature at or below 0.0 °C.

9.4.4 In abnormally cold weather, media interest and enquiries are likely to increase and need be handled carefully. At the start of each winter before the scheme commences, CS(PSP) provides details as to where in DSS enquiries should be sent. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the nearest enquiry bureau (Bracknell, Belfast or Edinburgh).

9.5 Services for MAFF

9.5.1 These are covered in chapter 6.

9.6 Services for Department of Transport

9.6.1 These are covered in chapter 17 for road transport and in chapter 18 for sea transport.

9.7 Services to other Government departments

9.7.1 Where the provision of services is proposed to other Government departments, whether market specific or otherwise, the matter should be referred to CS(Sales) with full details. In general the "full cost" of provision of these services should be recovered unless the cost of raising the charge, and paying it, is likely to be larger than the cost of the service itself. The costs should be calculated by reference to the instructions in the latest Meteorological Office Order Series B covering the subject, F&S being consulted as necessary.

9.8 Services for the Police and Fire Service

9.8.1 Enquiries from the Police in connection with legal investigations, Certified and Witness Statements, attendance at court, etc. are discussed further in chapter 12. The provision of motorway warnings etc. to the Police and the reception of reports from Police patrol vehicles is discussed in chapter 17. The Police are also, in many cases, the main line of communication for advice in the event of civil emergencies. This is discussed further in chapters 22, 23 and 24. Except for legal matters (see paragraph 12.15.3) all other information requested by the Police should be provided free of charge.

9.8.2 Requests for meteorological information from the Fire Service are mostly in connection with severe weather which could lead to abnormal demands on their services or cause them difficulties in carrying out their normal duties. In some circumstances Fire Services may request routine warnings services such as notification of strong winds which cause difficulties with the operation of turntable ladders. In other cases contact tends to be much more infrequent and brigades may rely on contacting a WC on the normal public line. This is clearly unsatisfactory as this line will be switched to a recorded message when work-loads prevent

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its normal answering, as will be the case at the onset of severe weather. A more satisfactory arrangement is for emergency access to be provided via an ex-directory line. Services in a genuine emergency should be provided free but routine warnings should attract the standard charge.

9.8.3 Details of the provision of services to the emergency authorities will be found in chapter 24.

9.9 Support for authorities and organizations dealing with emergencies due to severe weather

9.9.1 The National Severe Weather Service provides support for authorities and organizations which may be involved with emergencies due to severe weather. This service is covered in chapter 24.

9.10 International services

9.10.1 Services may not be provided to customers based outside the United Kingdom without the customer having first approached the national meteorological service of the country concerned (such a procedure is unnecessary if the international customer has a base organization in the United Kingdom). This proviso is made in order to facilitate the continued free exchange of meteorological data, especially observations, between countries, which is fundamental to the operation of the World Weather Watch. This does not apply to services to international shipping or other marine operations outside territorial waters.

9.10.2 All requests for services to which paragraph 9.10.1 may apply should be referred to Headquarters. The appropriate parent Branch will contact the authorities concerned through BD(I&P).

9.10.3 Requests for services from other national meteorological services will normally be met free of charge. Any such request received by outstations should be referred to the parent Branch.

9.10.4 The United Kingdom, through the Meteorological Office, is a contributor nation to ECMWF. DD(C) is the representative on the Technical Advisory Committee and The Chief Executive represents the Office on the ECMWF Council. Forecasts or other information from ECMWF may only be supplied to organizations within the United Kingdom with the consent of the Office (see Met O O M section 2.5.5).