

longer needed to support field office operations. The Decommissioning Report shall be based on the scientific and technical criteria contained in the NWS' Radar Decommissioning Plan, which criteria shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER as the final decommissioning criteria in accordance with the requirements of sec. 704(b)(1) of the Act.

(d) If the final commissioning criteria significantly modify the criteria upon which the previous commissioning of a NEXRAD and/or ASOS were based, the NWS shall confirm that the relevant system conforms with the final criteria adopted. The NWS shall not decommission any NWS radar until the final criteria have been adopted.

§ 946.6 Change in operations—transferring responsibility and moving field offices.

(a) After providing any notification required by § 946.3(b), NWS may change operations at a field office to implement the Strategic Plan, including:

(1) Transferring official responsibility for taking radar observations to a NEXRAD Weather Service Forecast Office (NWSFO) or a NEXRAD Weather Service Office (NWSO) that is being established as a future Weather Forecast Office following commissioning of the NEXRAD at the new office;

(2) Transferring official responsibility for taking observations from a Category 1 radar to a backup radar or radars prior to constructing and/or operating a replacement NEXRAD. Before transferring responsibility, the Responsible Meteorologist shall document that technical coordination with users has been completed and that the transition to the replacement NEXRAD can be completed expeditiously;

(3) Transferring its service responsibility for issuing watches, warnings, forecasts and other products to a NWSFO or NWSO;

(4) Significantly reducing its staffing level by transferring or reassigning personnel to support the service responsibilities transferred under paragraph (a)(3) of this section provided that the field office continues to assign the appropriate number of positions established by the NWS Operations Man-

ual to carry out its observation responsibilities; and

(5) Moving an entire field office to a location within the local commuting and service area of that office.

(b) A field office may not significantly reduce its staffing level assigned to support any observation responsibility, including those responsibilities transferred under paragraph (a)(2) of this section and those retained under paragraph (a)(4) of this section, until the Secretary has certified that the automation and/or consolidation will not degrade service in accordance with § 946.7.

§ 946.7 Preparation of proposed certification for restructuring.

(a) Whenever it becomes appropriate to restructure a field office identified in the National Implementation Plan, but prior to taking such action, the Responsible Meteorologist shall make a determination that there will be no degradation of service based on the final criteria published in the FEDERAL REGISTER in accordance with sec. 704 of the Act and recommend a proposed certification. The proposed certification may address all related restructuring actions that occur as part of a coordinated step described in the National Implementation Plan.

(b) The proposed certification shall include:

(1) A description of local weather characteristics and weather-related concerns which affect the weather services provided within the service area;

(2) A detailed comparison of the inventory of services provided within the service area prior to such action and the services to be provided after such action;

(3) Any recent or expected modernization of NWS operations which will enhance services to the affected area;

(4) An identification of any area within any state which will not receive NEXRAD coverage at an elevation of 10,000 feet;

(5) Evidence based upon operational demonstration of modernized NWS operations which support a determination that no degradation in service will result;