

PART 403 - SNOW SURVEYS AND WATER SUPPLY FORECASTING

NM403.4 Responsibilities in New Mexico

(a) Administration

- (1) The conduct of the snow survey and water supply forecasting program is a part of the assigned duties of all line officers and others where this activity is applicable to their operations. Line officers are to provide leadership and responsibility for the snow survey and water supply forecasting program within their areas as may be assigned.
- (2) The Snow Survey Supervisor for Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and the southern part of Wyoming is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and considered to be part of the New Mexico State Office when snow survey and water supply forecasting activities are being performed.
- (3) The Snow Survey Supervisor for this area is responsible to the New Mexico State Conservationist for the snow survey activities within the state. The routine snow survey activities in the state will be carried out by the State Water Supply Specialist.
- (4) The Snow Survey Supervisor for this area is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a snow course and soil moisture station network to meet the water supply forecast needs of the state of New Mexico. It is also incumbent upon the Snow Survey Supervisor to ensure the collection and processing of an acceptable quality of measurements and data from all measuring stations.
- (5) Stream flow forecasts, water supply outlook, appropriate reports, and publications are to be prepared by the State Water Supply Specialist in coordination with the Snow Survey Supervisor for release by the State Conservationist.
- (6) Technical guidance is to be provided by the Water and Climate Center.
- (7) Since the Snow Survey Supervisor for this area is headquartered at Denver, technical responsibility for coordination and performing certain details in the snow survey program has been assigned to the State Soil Scientist. Responsibilities of the State Soil Scientist include coordinating and directing the routine phases of the snow survey and water supply forecasting program with other activities carried out in New Mexico. In carrying out these responsibilities, the intent is to provide assistance to the Snow Survey Supervisor in keeping the snow survey program coordinated with the activities of NRCS and provide support to line officers in carrying out their responsibilities.

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- (8) The installation of snow courses, soil moisture stations, aerial markers, or other data-collecting devices will be done under the direct supervision of the Snow Survey Supervisor. The Snow Survey Supervisor will oversee the inspection and maintenance of snow courses and other installations during the off-season periods. The foregoing will be accomplished in cooperation with the State Water Supply Specialist and local line officers.
- (9) Schedules for measurements of snow courses and soil moisture stations will be prepared by the State Water Supply Specialist in consultation with the Snow Survey Supervisor and other line officers involved with the snow survey program as well as with the several cooperating and water-using organizations.
- (10) Form NRCS-ENG-708A is to be used to record measurements of snow courses, soil moisture stations, and precipitation gauge readings. Agricultural Handbook Number 169 (Snow Survey Sampling Guide) is a reference guide designed for snow surveyors and a copy is available on the New Mexico web site.

(b) Cooperation

Snow activities in New Mexico are closely related and integrated into a cooperative program with state, federal, and private agencies. These cooperative arrangements and agreements will be made by the State Conservationist.

(c) Forecasts

- (1) Forecasts are used in water management planning for irrigation, reservoir regulation, power, flood control, and municipal purposes. Forecasts are prepared in terms of volume and peak flows depending on available data and the need of the water users.
- (2) Forecasts for seasonal flow of streams in terms of acre-feet or other volumetric measurements will be prepared by the Snow Survey Supervisor.
- (3) Special forecasts, such as high flow in years of above-normal snow conditions, will be provided for the benefit of landowners in predominantly agricultural valleys subject to flood damage.

(d) Publications

- (1) A formal snow report will be prepared by the State Water Supply Specialist in cooperation with the Snow Survey Supervisor reflecting snow conditions on the various courses on or about the 1st day of each month beginning in January and ending in May. Reports are to be issued no later than the 10th day of the respective month.

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- (2) Special snow reports of less formal nature will be published at other times as the need arises.
- (3) Title pages of all reports will reflect credit to the major cooperating agencies.
- (4) Reports will include present and comparative data on snow measurements, reservoir storage, and soil moisture condition. For March 1 and later dates, numerical water-supply forecasts for major streams will be presented, along with past records of stream flow. The report will also contain narrative descriptions of water supply outlook as of the date of the report. Cooperating agencies are to be consulted to the maximum extent possible when preparing the report.
- (5) Snow reports will be sent to any organization or individual requesting the material. The direct mail list will be maintained by the State Water Supply Specialist. Additions or deletions to the list will be made as the State Water Supply Specialist is informed of the necessary changes by NRCS personnel, district cooperators, or others. Field personnel are requested to advise soil conservation district cooperators in irrigated areas that the reports are available upon request.

(e) New Releases

- (1) The State Water Supply Specialist will prepare statewide news releases for dissemination by the State Conservationist. News releases will be coordinated with other agencies when directed by the State Conservationist.
- (2) General information on the snow survey program of statewide interest will be prepared under the direction of the Snow Survey Supervisor.
- (3) Area Conservationists and District Conservationists are encouraged to issue timely local news releases reflecting current and significant historical snow survey data. To avoid the possibility of being misquoted through telephone or personal interview, news releases should be submitted in writing. No raw snow measurement data will be made available to the public until the raw data has been checked for accuracy by the State Water Supply Specialist or the Snow Survey Supervisor.
- (4) When the formal "Water Supply Outlook" or other publications having statewide distribution do not provide adequate local coverage, supplemental news stories should be prepared to amplify local conditions and to provide additional interest to the affected water users. The Public Affairs Specialist will provide such releases to the Albuquerque news media. Where snow survey assistance or information is provided by other agencies or organizations, a joint news release should be considered. To be meaningful, data on snow measurements should be released as soon as possible after the measurements are made.

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(f) Equipment

- (1) The State Soil Scientist has line responsibility for the operation and maintenance of all machines and equipment assigned to the snow survey and water supply forecasting program. Vehicles designed to be operated over snow, trucks, and other snow survey equipment will be assigned to a specific member of the snow survey team for active responsibility for operation and maintenance.
- (2) The State Soil Scientist is the accountable property officer for vehicles designed to be operated over snow and special equipment assigned to NRCS personnel in New Mexico.
- (3) Measuring equipment, skis, ski poles, snowshoes, varnish, waxes, goggles, and other essential items for over-snow travel will be furnished by the Snow Survey Supervisor as required.
- (4) Authorized personal clothing will be supplied to personnel making snow surveys. See Title 360 - General Manual, Part 420 - Safety and Health Management Program, Subpart K - Field Policy for Snow Survey, Snow Pack Telemetry (SNOTEL), Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) for more information.
- (5) Protective headgear will be worn while operating or riding on over-snow equipment that does not have an enclosed cab.
- (6) Equipment issued for snow surveys shall not be used for other than official purposes. The Snow Survey Supervisor will coordinate requisitions, determine requirements, and distribute the above-mentioned and special equipment. Requisitions for the procurement of snow survey equipment and supplies not furnished by the Snow Survey Supervisor will be prepared and justified by the State Soil Scientist. Individuals will be required to perform routine maintenance on snowshoes, skis, and other equipment in their possession.

(g) Physical Examinations

- (1) Physical examinations from private or public facilities are required and are available at government expense to all NRCS employees assigned to make snow surveys. See §420.101 (Physical Fitness for Duty) of Subpart K of Part 420 (Safety and Health Management Program) of Title 360 - General Manual. Electrocardiograms will be authorized by the State Conservationist for all employees if the physical examination should indicate the need.
- (2) Physical examinations will be taken annually, not later than December 1.

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- (3) Standard Form No. 78 (United States Civil Service Commission - Certificate of Medical Examination) shall be completed during the examination and filed at the State Office.

(h) Training

In addition to the training identified in §420.102 (West-Wide Snow Survey Training) of Subpart K of Part 420 (Safety and Health Management Program) of Title 360 - General Manual, training of individuals will be conducted through written instructions, personal conferences and demonstrations, area training meetings, and through special area, state, and regional snow survey training schools.