OCS Public Safety Outreach
User Certification Policy

OK-First Program
Updated January 2010

Purpose*:* This document sets forth the policy used by the Oklahoma Climatological Survey (OCS) to certify public-safety officials to use the OK-First web sites. This policy specifically addresses the problems of attrition, continuing education/training, and multiple users per agency.

Rationale*:* OCS believes that the service provided by the outreach program known as OK-First is essential to maintaining the public safety of citizens of Oklahoma. To that end, OCS receives a state appropriation every year to administer this decision-support service. Because of the technical nature of the information provided by the OK-First web sites, it has been strongly recommended by existing OK-First users, by OCS staff, and by the National Weather Service offices in Norman and Tulsa, that training of all OK-First users is an essential and critical portion of these public safety outreach programs. The motivation behind these policies is to guard against misuse/misinterpretation of the information provided by these web sites. Misuse/misinterpretations of this information can place public safety officials and the public at grave risk.

Initial Agency Certification: Access to the OK-First web sites (including software plus username and password) will only be granted following the completion of a 4-day data interpretation workshop. Typically, these workshops are held once per year in late Summer or late Winter. If demand for these workshops grows, more workshops may be offered, pending available funds and facilities. Completion of the data interpretation course provides the participant with certification to use the web site.

Continuing Training: Because the potential for misuse of the information provided by OK-First is high, and because the OK-First system is upgraded frequently, there exists a need for continuing education/training. **Access to the OK-First system will be terminated for agencies that have not completed at least one refresher training course provided by OCS in an 18-month period**. To that end, OCS staff will conduct multiple training courses per year, on a regional basis, to permit users continued certification to use the system. If a user chooses not to be re-certified, the agency's user account will be terminated.

Multiple Use Per Agency: It is desirable for multiple users at an agency to receive OK-First certification. This additional certification allows the system to be used effectively in the event that the primary user is unavailable. In addition, multiple certified users per agency provide a mechanism to address the problem of attrition. OCS offers regular "Assistant's Workshops" that are specifically designed to provide instruction for personnel who are familiar with the system, but require additional details on data interpretation. **Graduates of the OK-First Assistant's Workshop are not considered fully certified participants.** Only graduates of the 4-day data interpretation workshop are fully certified.

Passwords: The Certified Participant may not share the agency's OK-First username and password with non-trained personnel. **The Certified Participant may provide the agency's username and password only to individuals who have attended an Assistant's Workshop**. Agency personnel may attend Assistant's Workshops **only with the approval** of the Certified OK-First participant. OK-First passwords will be provided at the Certification course. **OCS staff will provide the agency's password only to the Certified Participant.** Assistants must obtain the agency password directly from the Certified Participant. Assistant **may not share** the agency username and password with anyone. **The agency's password must be changed every 18 months.** This time frame coincides with the requirement that Certified Participants attend a recertification course every 18 months. The need to change passwords more frequently arises from personnel (particularly assistants) leaving an agency but continuing to access the OK-First system.

Data and Images: Data and images obtained from the OK-First or Mesonet web sites are to be used only by the Certified Participant or trained assistants in his/her official capacity. Data or images obtained from the OK-First or Mesonet websites, including but not limited to radar, lightning, or surface weather conditions, may not be distributed without prior written authorization from OCS. Data or images may not be displayed on any website or other media without prior authorization from OCS.

Mesonet Data: The Participant agrees that he/she has read and understands the Mesonet Conditions of Account and will be bound by the terms of that document. Mesonet data and products provided on the server are proprietary to the Oklahoma Mesonet or related projects. Mesonet data or files may not be re-distributed without the prior written consent of OCS.

1-800 Dial-in Access: OCS has provided Certified OK-First participants with a list of 1-800 numbers for accessing the OK-First website **ONLY in EMERGENCY** situations. Agencies using the 1-800 numbers are not charged for the long distance call. However, OCS is responsible for the cost of the incoming calls. Any agency **using the 1-800 numbers for non-emergency or non-OK-First reasons will be asked to reimburse OCS** for any calls made by agency personnel. Send an email to okfirst@mesonet.org with the amount of time and the reason you used the 1-800 number. EMERGENCY use is defined as loss of Internet access through the agency's local provider when severe weather or hazardous conditions threaten the agency's jurisdiction. High phone bills limit the number of workshops we can host during a year. Be JUDICIOUS in your use of this service. OCS reserves the right to discontinue the 1-800 phone lines if the cost becomes prohibitive.

Attrition: When a certified user leaves an agency, it is the agency's responsibility to ensure a smooth transition between the certified user and the replacement user. When a certified user leaves an agency, it is recommended that the certified user work with the replacement user to provide certain information about the system. This information includes instructions on how to use the system, system documentation, and data interpretation training. When this occurs, the new user may obtain temporary certification from OK-FIRST, **but should plan on attending the next regularly scheduled OK-First Certification Course**. If a replacement user does not receive training from the previous user, access to OK-First will be terminated. When this access is terminated, the replacement user may apply to participate in the next Certification Course.

Computer Policy: Any computer equipment provided to an OK-First user by OCS on extended loan remains the property of OCS. OCS staff shall be notified if this equipment is relocated. OCS retains the right to retrieve the equipment at any time as deemed necessary by OCS staff.

Statement of Cooperation: Local National Weather Service (NWS) offices have the authority to produce warnings for hazardous weather conditions. In addition, local officials have the authority to implement policies to protect the public safety, including local implementation of NWS warnings. Furthermore, this mission of protecting the public safety by local officials may also include monitoring weather conditions that do not fit NWS warning guidelines. The legislative mandate of OCS includes the dissemination of weather and climate data of benefit to decision makers, including both NWS and local officials. In order to fulfill these respective missions to protect the public safety, a philosophy to maintain cooperation and communication between the NWS, OCS, and local officials is necessary. OCS staff reserves the right to intervene in situations when cooperation between NWS and local officials is violated, including, but not limited, to revocation of OK-First certification.

I agree to follow the conditions listed in the policy above and I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to maintain my certification in a timely fashion, keep my contact information that is listed on OK-First current, and to check the OK-First website for upcoming courses.

_____

James Hocker
Program Manager, OK-First

Participant Signature: _____

Printed Name:_____

Agency:_____

Date: _____

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OK-First
Certified Participant

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Please provide the contact information for your first-line supervisor (i.e., mayor, city councilman, county commissioner) who has approved your participation in OK-First. **Supervisor's signature is required.**

Supervisor's Name:_____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Supervisor's Signature:_____

Please return this page to:

**Oklahoma Climate Survey
ATTN: OK-First
120 David L. Boren Blvd., Suite 2900
Norman, OK 73072**

or fax this page to:

(405) 325-2550