

# Spot Forecast Request Information

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## Overview

The NWS Spot Forecast Request and Dissemination System provides users a way to request fire weather spot forecasts and National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters a way to post those forecasts to a national web server. It was developed with three main design principles: 1) ease of use for the spot forecast requestor, 2) quicker production of spot forecasts at the NWS office, and 3) provision of a "one-stop-shopping" location on the web for weather information pertaining to a particular burn or wildfire.

## Features

NWS Spot centers around a daily spot forecast "monitor" page that shows all the spot forecast requests for a particular office on a particular day. Links are provided on this page to (1) request a spot forecast, (2) view detailed information about each spot forecast, and (3) view information for other days. The 'detailed' web page for each spot forecast contains information about the request, maps of the area, and the completed forecast, and is set to automatically update on most browsers as information is released.

## Spot Requestor Instructions

▶ [Submit a Spot Forecast Request](#)

From this webpage, enter your latitude and longitude next to the "Request Spot Forecast" line above the map. Once you hit the "Go" button, it will bring up a smaller scale map which should show the area of your request. If the image looks correct, then hit "Click Here to Submit a Spot Forecast Request" and you will be taken to the proper weather service office that issues spot forecasts for that area.

The main spot forecast page updates every minute and shows you the location and status of any spot forecasts that have already been requested for today. You can view these other forecasts, as well as request a new spot forecast of your own.

Each request has its own webpage where all the information about that request is displayed, including maps, information about the request and, eventually, the forecast. Sensitive information about the request (such as phone numbers, names of contact persons, and the exact location of the burn) are NOT visible by everyone, but only on the computer that made the original request and NWS computers.

When you request a new spot forecast, you provide information in a web-based form. The information you provide on the form is checked for consistency, and after you complete the form, the NWS is notified of a new request and a new webpage is created for this burn.

Once you have submitted a request, you will probably want to view the webpage for your burn, or check back frequently to view it's status. To view the webpage for any burn or wildfire, go to the main spot forecast webpage, click either on the name of the burn in the listing, or on the dot on the map for the burn. This page will also automatically update every minute so that when new information becomes available, you will see it right away. If we find any errors in your request, we might even send you a question that will show up on this page. You can answer the question, or make other changes to your request from this webpage, but ONLY from the computer that made the original request. Since the forecast screen is automatically updated very minute, you will see the forecast within a minute of it being issued.

When the forecast is complete, you can print the webpage, or do whatever you want with the information. From the main spot forecast page, you have the ability to switch to a similar screen for days other than today. You can use this to send us feedback on earlier forecasts, or to copy the information from one request to a new request for today.

## Spot Forecast Monitor Page

The main spot forecast monitoring page shows you all of today's spot forecasts on the map and also in the list at the bottom of the page.

This page auto-updates every minute, so as new spot forecasts are requested or their status changes, you immediately see the changes on the page.

The dots on the map show the locations of the burns, and the status of the spot forecast requests. Green squares indicate requests that are still pending. Purple squares indicate burns where questions have been asked. Red squares indicate burns where the forecast has been completed. You can either click on the dots on the map, or the list of spot names at the bottom of the page to view the individual webpage for each request.

You can use the arrow buttons next to the date to view spot requests from other days, or you can use the "CALENDAR" link to move to other days more quickly.

To request a spot forecast, click on the button labeled "Submit a new Spot Request", and you will be taken to the Spot Request Form.

## Spot Request Form

You fill in this form with the information needed to request a spot forecast.

The first time you fill out a spot request, almost all the boxes will be empty. After that, many of the boxes will be filled in with information that shouldn't change very much from one request to another (such as your name and phone number).

The elements highlighted in red are required for us to complete your spot forecast. While the other items may not be necessary, they are very important to our ability to make an accurate and useful forecast.

The form is broken down into seven sections. Let's look at each section individually, and the parameters you will need to fill in:

### 1. Project Name Section

You need to provide a name for your project. The name cannot be the same as any other project for the same day. You will be alerted if you pick a name the same as an existing burn.

You should use the buttons to indicate whether the fire is a Wildfire, WFU or Prescribed Fire (Prescribed fire is chosen by default when you enter the form). For prescribed fires, you should indicate the ignition time and date using a 24 hour clock (and the time zone if necessary). The form defaults to an ignition time about ½ hour in the future.

### 2. Requesting Agency Section

You need to tell us who you are! Here you provide your agency name, your phone number for both voice and fax (please include the area code) and your name. All this information will be helpful to us if there are problems or questions and we need to contact you. You will only need to enter this information the first time you request a spot forecast. After that, it will be filled in with the same information as your last request.

**Please note that no other people other than the user and the NWS will see this information!**

### 3. Location Section

In this section you tell us the precise location of the burn. You can either specify the legal location or the latitude/longitude. If you use the legal method, you should provide something like: T5N R12E Sec24. If you use the latitude/longitude method, you can either specify degrees like: 45.1486 or degrees/minutes/seconds like: 45 13 34.

If you can, please specify the name of the 7 ½ minute USGS quadmap where the burn is located. We will check that against the legal or lat/lon location that you give. The elevation (in feet) at the top and bottom of the burn should be entered in the "Elevation" boxes. If the burn is on flat ground, you can enter a value in only one of the boxes. Enter the name of the nearest drainage in the "Drainage" box. This helps us further locate the burn when the legal or lat/lon location still leaves some ambiguity. Enter the slope aspect, such as NE or S (or possibly FLAT) in the "Aspect" box. This helps us further locate the burn. Also, please enter the size of the burn (in acres) in the "Size" box.

### 4. Fuel Section

Please indicate the type of fuel, either using fuel model numbers, or a description of the fuel such as "grass", "ponderosa pine", etc. Also, if you can indicate the amount of fuel sheltering, it helps us tremendously in providing accurate wind forecasts.

### 5. Observation Section

In this section you provide us with local observations near the burn. For each observation we need where it is in relation to the burn (for example, "base camp", "1 mile NW" or something like that), the elevation (in feet) and the time (preferably using a 24 hour clock). The wind (in miles per hour) can be specified as "N12 Gust 25" or something like that. The temperature and wetbulb values (in degrees F) should be entered and the RH (in percent) and Dewpoint (in degrees F) can also be entered if known (they will be calculated from the Temperature/Wetbulb/Elevation if you do not provide them). Finally, any remarks about clouds, weather or other important information should be entered in the final box. If you have more than 4 observations (and we like that!) please put them in the comments section below (or fax them to us!).

#### 6. Forecast Elements Section

Not all spot requests are created equal! In this section we are asking you to tell us what are the forecast elements you need, or are particularly important. If you have a grass fire that will be out by later today, we don't want to waste time worrying about the temperature for tomorrow, unless you really need it. Likewise, if the wind direction is particularly important for you, we want to know about it. Pick the parameters that you need for today, tonight and tomorrow. If we think something is particularly noteworthy, we will let you know - even if you didn't request it. If you are submitting a request in the evening for the next day - keep in mind that you are requesting parameters for the day of the burn. For wildfires, we will provide all parameters (except smoke dispersion), so you do not need to waste time filling this in, unless you have a parameter that is particularly critical for you (in which case, this is a good place to indicate that).

#### 7. Comments Section

If there is something else that you think we need to know, or something you couldn't fit elsewhere on the form, please enter it here. There is virtually no limit to what you can put here.

### Submit the Form

When you are ready to submit the form, just click on the "Submit Request" button at the bottom of the page. If you want to cancel the request you can click on the "Cancel Request" button, and if you want to clear the form and start over again, you can click on the "Clear Form" button.

When you submit the form, various checks are performed on the data you have entered. Some problems make it impossible for your request to be accepted (for example, if you forget to enter a name for the burn), while others will produce warnings and messages for your information. If an error is found, you will be given the opportunity to go back and fix the form, or cancel the request. Once you are confident there are no more errors in your request, it will be submitted and we will be automatically notified through our computer systems. If you have the time, we appreciate it if you could still call us, just in case something goes wrong on the web and we don't get notified of your request.

### Spot Forecast Webpage

After you have submitted a spot forecast request, an individualized spot forecast webpage becomes available for that burn. This page automatically updates every minute so that as new information becomes available for the burn, you see it immediately. Detailed maps of the area around the burn are generated and displayed when they become available. **Keep in mind that "sensitive" information like your name, phone number, and the exact location of the burn are NOT visible to others - only to you and the NWS.**

If we have questions about your request, we may send you back a question about it. If this happens, you will see a big red box in the forecast page, with our question. Usually, there is some problem with the request that you can probably fix (use the links at the bottom of the page to change the request) or you can call us.

When your forecast is complete, it will show up in the spot forecast webpage automatically, and a box to provide feedback will become available. We hope that you can provide us feedback with how the forecast worked out, perhaps later in the day or several days down the road. This feedback helps us tremendously in improving our forecasts.

At the bottom of the forecast page are links for actions that you can take. For example, you can go "Back to Spot List" to return to the monitor page. If you are at the same computer that made the original request, you can click on "Change Request" to change the details of your request, or "Delete Request" to delete the request.

You can also click on "Copy Info to New Spot Request". This is helpful for burns that last over several days. Rather than having to re-enter the data in the form in order to get a new forecast - you can view the previous forecast and then copy all the location parameters to a new request using this link. This will save you some time when filling out the request form.

Invariably, something will go wrong at some point, and you might not be able to request or receive spot requests via the webpage (for example, your computers might go down, or our web server may fail). In such cases, we would like you fill out the paper version of the request form and fax it to us. We will fax you back the forecast when it is complete. Please keep in mind that this should be used as a last resort. Spot Forecast Requests received via the webpage will be completed more quickly.