

Date: 9/20/02 9:21 PM  
To: Bulletins  
From: Luis Soltero  
Copy:  
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Subject: How to Receive Weather via Marine Net

Hello All

This is the first of a multi part bulletin on receiving weather information via e-mail through Marine Net.

As you all know there are 3 basic types of weather products available via the Internet. They are regional text based forecasts, weather fax(wefax), and grib files...

In this set of bulletins we describe how to request, download, and display these weather products using your Sat phone, or HF radio and our e-mail service.

Let's start with textual forecasts and wefax.

The national weather service has setup up a mail robot that accepts e-mail requests for some of it's weather products including textual forecasts and wefax.

The interface to the mail robot is very simple. You send it mail requesting 1 or more weather products and it sends you back weather via e-mail as attachments.

To access the robot simply send mail to ftpmail@weather.noaa.gov. the subject line in your mesg is ignored so you can leave it empty and the body of the mesg contains the request.

In your initial request you should simply have the word "help" in your mesg body. The robot on receiving your mail will e-mail back to you instructions on the use of the service.

Please note that many of you have signatures that automatically get attached to your outgoing mail. Mesgs that state that mail should only be sent in text, etc... ftpmail does not like signatures. It thinks they are invalid commands and will report back to you about invalidly formatted e-mails. You should disable your signature when sending mail to ftpmail. In Calypso while composing an e-mail if you look at the bottom of the compose window you will see a pull down list box labeled "Signature". Simply clock on the list box and select none to eliminate the signature.

Moving on...

One of the things you might want to request from ftpmail is a list of products that can be retrieved using the service. To get a list of all the textual off shore and Atlantic wefax products you would send an e-mail with the following content in the body for example

open

```
cd fax
get rfaxatl.txt
get marine4.txt
quit
```

ftpmail will then e-mail you back a listing of products. Note that each get request (2 in this example) results in a 1 e-mail. So this example results in 2 e-mails sent to you by ftpmail. Note that the help file contains a complete list of product listing files. It tells you that marine4.txt is the offshore listing of products by zones for example. ftfaxatl.txt is the listing of wefax products for the Atlantic.

To actually receive weather you might send an e-mail which contains the following for example

```
open
cd /fax
get PYEB86.TIF
get PWEI88.TIF
get PWEE89.TIF
cd /data/forecasts/marine/offshore/am
get amz082.txt
quit
```

pyeb86.tif is the tropical surface analysis, pwei88.tif is the 48 hour wind wave, and pwee89.tif is the 24 hour wind wave forecast. amz082.txt is the off shore forecast of the Caribbean. Again look at the help file and the product listings to determine which files to request.

A few comments on the above example...

Each weather product type lives in a different folder. You can mix and match product types in a single request as long as you specify the folder prior to making the get request. "cd /fax" for example tells ftpmail that PWEB86.TIF and friends is to be extracted from the "fax" folder. "cd /data/forecasts/marine/offshore/am" tells ftp mail to send the off shore forecast from the /data.../am folder. Also note textual products can live in folders named (an, am, gm, etc.) The folder the product lives in is included in the file name. So, amz082.txt resides in the /data.../am folder. ANZ083.txt (the off shore forecast for England) would be in /data.../an. Note that the directory structure for text products is not described very well in the ftpmail instructions.

finally note that in the ftpmail instructions folders are specified as a number of individual commands. The instructions in ftpmail would have used

```
cd data
cd forecasts
cd marine
cd offshore
cd am
```

for the above example. It's much simpler to put them all in one line as I have done above. Either will work. Note that

when requesting multiple product types the "/" after the cd is important. If you leave this out you will get an error for when retrieving the second product type. Using the long format you would enter

```
cd /data
cd forecasts
cd marine
cd offshore
cd am
```

note that the "/" only occurs after the initial cd in the folder sequence.

OK now it's time to give it a try. Send the following e-mail to ftpmail@weather.noaa.gov

help

and don't forget to "turn off" your signature.

A note on size...

\*\* HF USERS \*\*

Note that simple wefax products like the wind wave forecast is about 35K to download. On a good pactor III connect this should take between 3-5 minutes. On a poor connect it could take forever... You definitely want green lights on your modem when downloading these. If you have poor propagation and the speed and error indicators on your pactor modem are mostly red then you should cancel the download and try again on another frequency. The e-mail on the server will not be deleted until you have successfully downloaded the product.

Also keep in mind that as part of your subscription you are limited to on average 20 minutes of connection time a day (10 hours a month). Although we give you the freedom to use these hours as you see fit the pop server will terminate a connection that takes longer than 20 minutes. If this happens re-connect and the remainder of your mail will be downloaded.

Some products like the tropical surface analysis are bigger than 50K. For most of you this means that the mail will be directed to your BigMail folder. If you need to receive weather products that are larger than 50K then you will have to log on to the MarineNet webmail program and modify the cutoff side in the BigMail filter.

Our preference here at MarineNet is that you use your wefax program to get the weather products. We know that at times this is impractical (or impossible do to propagation, USCG failure to xmit, etc) and under these conditions we welcome you to use our service to download wefaxes.

\*\* SAT USERS \*\*\*

You can expect a typical wefax to download in about 1 minute for Globalstar users and 2 minutes for Iridium. The larger faxes might take 2 minutes and 4 minutes for S\* and IR users respectively. MarineNet imposes no time restrictions on

Sat users.... Download away if you like.

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Textual products are very small and will not greatly impact your connect times. Feel free to get these any time you see fit.

That's it for this bulletin. In the next one we discuss how to view the weather products you just received and how to automate the weather request procedure.

One last note... Your friends using SailMail can not use ftpmail to receive wefaxes since SailMail does not permit attachments and limits the size of incoming e-mails to 5K. SailMail users are also limited to 10 minutes a day and can not use lump sums of time like you can.

And... if you are still using pactor II then please upgrade to pactor III. MarineNet users can upgrade from II to III for free as part of their subscription service. Do not download wefaxes unless you are using pactor III.

Thanks,

--luis