

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration



Privacy Threshold Analysis for the National Climactic Data Center
Local Area Network (NOAA5009)

U.S. Department of Commerce Privacy Threshold Analysis

NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC LAN

Unique Project Identifier: NOAA5009

Introduction: This Privacy Threshold Analysis (PTA) is a questionnaire to assist with determining if a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is necessary for this IT system. This PTA is primarily based from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) privacy guidance and the Department of Commerce (DOC) IT security/privacy policy. If questions arise or further guidance is needed in order to complete this PTA, please contact your Bureau Chief Privacy Officer (BCPO).

Description of the information system:

The E-Government Act of 2002 defines "information system" by reference to the definition section of Title 44 of the United States Code. The following is a summary of the definition: "Information system" means a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, use, sharing, dissemination, or disposition of information. See: 44. U.S.C. § 3502(8).

NOAA's National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI) maintains the world's largest climate data archive and provides climatological services and data to every sector of the U.S. economy and to users worldwide. NCEI operates data centers in Asheville, NC, and Boulder, CO, with additional offices at Stennis Space Center, MS and Silver Spring, MD.

The NCEI archive contains more than 37 petabytes of data, equivalent to about 400 million filing cabinets filled with documents. NCEI facilitates the acquisition of these environmental data collected by NOAA, by other agencies and departments of the U.S. government, as well as by other institutions, organizations, and governments in the U.S. and around the world.

NCEI, as part of the data stewardship mission of providing access and dissemination of the archive holdings, offers users access to tens of thousands of datasets and hundreds of products. NCEI provides search and discovery web platforms to enable the user community to efficiently find and retrieve data through a number of interfaces and services.

NCEI resources are used for scientific research and commercial applications in many fields, including agriculture, forestry, marine and coastal ecosystems, tourism, transportation, civil infrastructure, energy, transportation, water resources, energy, health, insurance, litigation, and national security. NCEI scientists work as lead contributors to the National Climate Assessment, as well publish periodic publications such as the Annual and Monthly State of the Climate Reports.

As part of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), NCEI coordinates with other data centers in related scientific and technical areas to provide standardized, robust, and efficient service.

Address the following elements:

a) *Whether it is a general support system, major application, or other type of system*

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is a General Support System (GSS).

b) System location

North Carolina location:
Veatch-Baley Federal Building
Asheville, NC

Mississippi location:
Mississippi State University Research and Technology Corporation (MSURTC) Building 1021 at Stennis Space Center (SSC), MS

Maryland location:
Silver Spring Metro Center 3
Silver Spring, MD

c) Whether it is a standalone system or interconnects with other systems (identifying and describing any other systems to which it interconnects)

NOAA5009 interconnects with the following general support systems to support information sharing and collaboration:

- NOAA0100, NOAA Security Operations Center
- NOAA0201, Web Operation Center
- NOAA0550, NOAA Enterprise Network
- NOAA5006, NESDIS Headquarters Information Technology Support Local Area Network
- NOAA5011, National Geophysical Data Center Data Archive Management and User System
- NOAA5040, Comprehensive Large Array-data Stewardship System
- NOAA5050, Geostationary Environmental Operational Satellite Series-R Ground System
- NOAA8102, Automated Surface Observing System*

*The interconnection with NOAA8102 is not new. NOAA5009 pulls the weather data from NOAA8102's national ASOS units by dialing into those units through modems, and has been doing so for many years. An audit finding on the NWS side during a recent SCA prompted them to add an entry into CSAM. This addition does not affect anything privacy related.

d) The purpose that the system is designed to serve

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)-NC, which encompasses the NCDC LAN, maintains the world's largest climate data archive and provides climatological services and data to every sector of the U.S. economy and to users worldwide. Records in the archive range from paleoclimate data to centuries-old journals to data less than an hour old. The Center's mission is to preserve these data and make them available to the public, business, industry, government, and researchers.

NCEI-NC develops national and global datasets, which maximize the use of our climatic and natural resources while also minimizing the risks caused by climate variability and weather extremes. NCEI has a statutory

mission to describe the climate of the United States and it acts as the “Nation’s Scorekeeper” regarding the trends and anomalies of weather and climate. NCEI-NC’s climate data have been used in a variety of applications including agriculture, air quality, construction, education, energy, engineering, forestry, health, insurance, landscape design, livestock management, manufacturing, national security, recreation and tourism, retail, transportation, and water resources management.

As part of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), NCEI-NC coordinates with other data centers in related scientific and technical areas to provide standardized, robust, and efficient service. NCEI-NC manages and contributes to a variety of climate service partnerships including the Regional Climate Services Directors, Regional Climate Centers, State Climatologists, and the Cooperative Institute for Satellite and Earth System Studies– North Carolina. To facilitate a global data and information exchange, the Center also operates two World Data Centers—one for meteorology and one for paleoclimatology—and plays an active role in professional societies and user engagement activities. Data available through these partnerships does not require access accounts.

e) The way the system operates to achieve the purpose

The system operates in the traditional client server model. Data is hosted on servers and made available via various protocols such as HTTPS, FTP, SFTP, and SSH.

f) A general description of the type of information collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the system

Employee Info: The information is generally non-sensitive PII with the exception of Date of Birth.

Environmental observations and products are associated with the following type of data:

Climate:

- Monitoring & Extremes
- Models
- Radar
- Satellite
- Land-based stations
- Interactive maps

Ocean:

- Marine & Ocean surface
- Ocean Climatology
- Bathymetry

g) Identify individuals who have access to information on the system

NCEI-NC has approximately 300 users that connect within the NOAA5009 security boundary. The NCEI-NC user environment consists of web developers, scientists, system administrators, administrative assistants, managers, customer service representatives, database administrators, graphic designers, order

fulfillers, and computer operators

h) How information in the system is retrieved by the user

Information in the system is retrieved by non-organizational users using the following protocols in a client/server model: HTTPS, SFTP, SSH, and FTP.

Organizational users authenticate using GFE (Government Furnished Equipment) and their Common Access Card to access the information system. This provides users secure access that is managed by the program and supported by NOAA5009.

i) How information is transmitted to and from the system

NOAA5009 has implemented the Trusted Internet Connection (TIC) via NWAVE for all external network connections which provides reliable, secure, skilled, and a highly available network infrastructure for data transmission.

Information is transmitted to and from the system using the following protocols using a client/server model: HTTPS, FTP, SFTP, and SSH.

Additionally, NOAA5009 receives some data from data submitters via shipped external hard drives.

Questionnaire:**1. Status of the Information System****1a. What is the status of this information system?**

☐ This is a new information system. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*

☒ This is an existing information system with changes that create new privacy risks.
Complete chart below, continue to answer questions, and complete certification.

Changes That Create New Privacy Risks (CTCNPR)					
a. Conversions		d. Significant Merging		g. New Interagency Uses	
b. Anonymous to Non-Anonymous		e. New Public Access		h. Internal Flow or Collection	X
c. Significant System Management Changes		f. Commercial Sources		i. Alteration in Character of Data	
j. Other changes that create new privacy risks (specify): Video surveillance that was present in and around the computer room were removed in FY22 There is also a new interconnection with NOAA8102, but this interconnection does not create new privacy risks as the interconnection collects weather data via modem.					

☐ This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is not a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*

☐ This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*

1b. Has an IT Compliance in Acquisitions Checklist been completed with the appropriate signatures?

☐ Yes. This is a new information system.

☐ Yes. This is an existing information system for which an amended contract is needed.

☐ No. The IT Compliance in Acquisitions Checklist is not required for the acquisition of equipment for specialized Research and Development or scientific purposes that are not a National Security System.

☒ No. This is not a new information system.

2. Is the IT system or its information used to support any activity which may raise privacy concerns?

NIST Special Publication 800-53 Revision 4, Appendix J, states "Organizations may also engage in activities that do not involve the

collection and use of PII, but may nevertheless raise privacy concerns and associated risk. The privacy controls are equally applicable to those activities and can be used to analyze the privacy risk and mitigate such risk when necessary.” Examples include, but are not limited to, audio recordings, video surveillance, building entry readers, and electronic purchase transactions.

 Yes. *(Check all that apply.)*

Activities			
Audio recordings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building entry readers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video surveillance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic purchase transactions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify):			

 X No.

3. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate business identifiable information (BII)?

As per DOC Privacy Policy: “For the purpose of this policy, business identifiable information consists of (a) information that is defined in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as “trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential.” (5 U.S.C.552(b)(4)). This information is exempt from automatic release under the (b)(4) FOIA exemption. “Commercial” is not confined to records that reveal basic commercial operations” but includes any records [or information] in which the submitter has a commercial interest” and can include information submitted by a nonprofit entity, or (b) commercial or other information that, although it may not be exempt from release under FOIA, is exempt from disclosure by law (e.g., 13 U.S.C.).”

 X Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates BII.

 No, this IT system does not collect any BII.

4. Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

4a. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate PII?

As per OMB 17-12: “The term PII refers to information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.”

 X Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII about: *(Check all that apply.)*

- X DOC employees
- X Contractors working on behalf of DOC
- Other Federal Government personnel
- Members of the public

 No, this IT system does not collect any PII.

If the answer is “yes” to question 4a, please respond to the following questions.

4b. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate Social Security numbers (SSNs), including truncated form?

☐ Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates SSNs, including truncated form.

Provide an explanation for the business need requiring the collection of SSNs, including truncated form.

Provide the legal authority which permits the collection of SSNs, including truncated form.

☒ No, the IT system does not collect, maintain, or disseminate SSNs, including truncated form.

4c. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate PII other than user ID?

☒ Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII other than user ID.

☐ No, the user ID is the only PII collected, maintained, or disseminated by the IT system.

4d. Will the purpose for which the PII is collected, stored, used, processed, disclosed, or disseminated (context of use) cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level?

Examples of context of use include, but are not limited to, law enforcement investigations, administration of benefits, contagious disease treatments, etc.

☐ Yes, the context of use will cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.


☒ No, the context of use will not cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.

If any of the answers to questions 2, 3, 4b, 4c, and/or 4d are "Yes," a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) must be completed for the IT system. This PTA and the SAOP approved PIA must be a part of the IT system's Assessment and Authorization Package.

CERTIFICATION

X The criteria implied by one or more of the questions above **apply** to the NOAA5009 and as a consequence of this applicability, a PIA will be performed and documented for this IT system.

_____ The criteria implied by the questions above **do not apply** to the NOAA5009 and as a consequence of this non-applicability, a PIA for this IT system is not necessary.

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