

May 9, 2011

To: Custodians of oceanographic data
FROM: Steven Rutz, Oceanographer/Data Officer
NOAA/National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC)
SUBJECT: Guidelines for submitting data to NODC

Here are some guidelines for submitting your data to NODC. If you have any questions, please e-mail NODC.DataOfficer@noaa.gov.

DATA TYPES: NODC will archive most oceanographic and ocean-surface meteorological data that are in engineering units (e.g., degrees Celsius for temperature, not Volts for temperature or other such raw data) and that we can distribute to the public without restrictions. NODC prefers to archive your final, science-ready data, which someone has calibrated and quality controlled. You do not need to send raw data or data from intermediate steps of processing. However, NODC will accept such data, especially, if higher-quality data are not otherwise available.

FILE FORMATS: NODC will archive data in almost any type of file format. However, to ensure that you lose no information in translation from your native format to a submission format and that NODC can port your data to new systems over the coming decades, we recommend:

1. If your data is in a standard or well-documented non-proprietary format, you should submit your data files as they are. For example, if you manage your data in netCDF or plain ASCII/text files, you should submit those files to NODC along with documentation describing the file format, data parameters, and file naming convention.
2. Alternatively, if you do not manage your data in such a format, you should submit your data files in netCDF that follows CF metadata conventions, which is our preferred community-standard format. To facilitate your submission, NODC has started to develop templates for creating netCDF, CF-compliant files.
3. Alternatively, if you cannot feasibly translate your data to netCDF, you should submit your data files in a well-documented plain ASCII/text file format or some other non-proprietary file format.

Note: If resources permit, you may submit your data in multiple formats (e.g., your native ASCII/text files along with netCDF files that follow CF metadata conventions).

METADATA: NODC recommends that you submit your data with information about the data that comply with the FGDC or ISO 19115 metadata standards (for tools to create such metadata, see <http://www.ncddc.noaa.gov/metadatarresource/metadata-tools>). If this is not feasible, NODC recommends that you submit the following information about the data with the data files:

1. First and last dates of data collection;
2. Sea areas where data were collected (e.g., Gulf of Maine)
3. Western and eastern longitudinal boundaries and northern and southern latitudinal boundaries within which the data were collected;
4. Instrument types used to collect the data (e.g., CTD or XBT);
5. Ocean properties measured (e.g., salinity or dissolved oxygen);
6. Organizations that collected the data (e.g., NOAA/NMFS/Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution);
7. Platforms from which the data were collected (e.g., moored buoy and NOAA ship HENRY B. BIGELOW); and

8. Projects that funded the collection of these data (e.g., World Ocean Circulation Experiment).

You may use the Electronic Data Documentation Form to submit this information to NODC. This form is online at http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/General/NODC-Submit/dirsubmit_eddf.html.

In addition, NODC welcomes any documents such as cruise reports that further describe the data.

FILE TRANSFER: The two primary methods of transferring files to NODC are:

1. FTP:
 - a. "Zip" all the data files to be uploaded.
 - b. Login to NODC's anonymous FTP server (<ftp.nodc.noaa.gov>).
 - c. Go to the incoming directory on the FTP server. Enter **cd pub/incoming**.
 - d. Upload the zip file(s) (e.g., enter **mput *.zip**), and then enter "quit" to log off.
2. CD or DVD-R:
 - a. Copy all the data files to CDs or DVD-Rs.
 - b. Mail the disk(s) to this address:

Data Officer
NOAA National Oceanographic Data Center, E/OC1
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

For data sets of a similar type and format that you plan to submit to NODC frequently (i.e., more than once a quarter), please send an e-mail to NODC.DataOfficer@noaa.gov and ask about arranging a periodic automated transfer of the files to NODC.

NOTIFY NODC: After FTPing (or mailing) the data files, send an e-mail to NODC.DataOfficer@noaa.gov to notify NODC that you FTPed (or mailed) them. In your e-mail notification, please include the following information:

1. Your name, organization, address, and phone number;
2. Names of the zip file(s) you uploaded (or the number of disks you mailed); and
3. Information about the data (follow the guidelines in the METADATA section above).

YOUR OCEAN ARCHIVE: After NODC receives the data, a Data Officer (a.k.a., data archivist) will assign an Accession number to your data, notify you of this number, and then copy the data files to the Ocean Archive. Information about your data will then be available via the online interface to the Ocean Archive (<http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/Archive/Search>) and a Customer Service Rep (NODC.Services@noaa.gov) will deliver the data on request. After further reviewing the data, creating any necessary versions of the data that are more preservable in the Ocean Archive (e.g., exporting an MS Excel spreadsheet to a plain ASCII/text file), and developing the necessary tracking metadata, a Data Officer will publish your data online. Your data will then will be available for downloading directly via the online interface.

Note: Please reference the NODC Accession number when corresponding with NODC about these data or when submitting corrections/updates to these data. In addition, please cite the NODC Accession number in any publication where you analyze or present these data.

MORE INFORMATION: You can find online more information about submitting data to NODC at <http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/General/NODC-Submit>.