

Guidelines for Submitting Coastal/Oceanic Data to the NOAA Posterity Archive

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Thanks for your potential contributions to the NOAA oceanic and coastal data archives, where your important data will be saved for posterity and utilized by future generations for educational and scientific applications.

We make transfer of data to NOAA as easy as possible. There are no format requirements—just provide us your data files as you have them stored.

We will prepare an information sheet for explaining your data to future users. Likely you already have prepared documents to describe your data for proposals, web sites, technical reports, peer-reviewed publications, etc. Please just pass along references to published literature, links to web sites, or explanatory documents, preferably in electronic form, and we'll sort through them and pull out pertinent details.

Data transfer could be by email attachment, diskettes, zip disks, CDROM, FTP, etc. Let us know what is most convenient for you.

Here are some guidelines:

What type of data?

Physical, biological, and chemical in situ measurements and observations in the coastal zone (to the head of the tide) and oceans are desired.

Which version of the data?

We would like to archive your finalized, science-ready data that have received calibration and quality control. There is no need to send raw data, or data from intermediate steps of processing. If only raw data are available, and they were taken with calibrated instruments and well-established procedures, then it is acceptable to send them. If you are unsure, please contact NOAA data center staff.

What granularity?

If the data were sampled at very high resolution in time and/or space, and a decimated or filtered subset version is available, the subset is typically preferred for the NOAA archive. This issue is resolved on a case by case basis. Please contact a NOAA data center staff if in question.

What about sensitive data?

All data that enter the NOAA archive become public. If you have sensitive or classified data, then do not send them. There are special projects in NOAA that allow management of sensitive data, but not the NOAA posterity archive. Contact NOAA data center staff if concerned.

Which file formats are accepted?

Any format that allows an output to ASCII is accepted. This includes spread sheet and relational databases such as MS Excel, Quattro Pro, or MS Access. When the data arrive at NOAA, if the format is not ASCII, the first task is to make a redundant ASCII copy. The original and the redundant copy are stored in the archive. If your data are in a non-ASCII format that is not either MS Office or Corel compatible, please confirm with NOAA data center staff if NOAA can read your files.

If your data are combined with a report in a PDF document, that is fine, however, provide a copy with security settings (e.g. self-sign security,

user passwords, and/or permissions) de-activated and with all referenced fonts embedded.

Image files should be .tif or .jpg (TIFF or JPEG).

A full listing of the National Archives and Records Administration's E-Government guidelines is available at

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/erm-guidance.html>

What metadata should accompany the data?

METADATA is information about the data. If the information below is embedded in a document, please just forward it and we will pull out the pertinent information.

I. Describe file naming conventions and data file formats:

If directory or file names have particular significance, please elaborate.

If data are stored column-wise in text tables or spread sheets, please describe each column in regards to the content and scientific units. If codes are used, please provide a code explanation (which could be a separate file or a reference to standard codes).

If the data are in a database system, please do as above for each field in each relational table.

II. Geo-referencing of data locations

1) Names and coordinates of collecting sites

Station identifiers such as geographical names or project-based codes (site A, B, etc) should be indicated. Latitude and longitude are desired, but if not available, please provide a map of the locations or a station area description, from which NOAA will estimate latitude/longitude positions. Any convention of coordinates is fine (fraction of a degree, or in minutes, seconds, ect.) Please indicate how the position was determined (GPS, estimate from atlas, etc.)

2) Depth of observation or measurement

Please indicate depth and if possible, resolution of depth measurement.
Please indicate how depth was derived.

3) Depth of ocean/estuary bottom at location of data

Same as above.

III. When

Please give the dates and times of observations. Any convention is fine.

Please indicate the sampling interval of the instrument and if different, the temporal interval of the finalized data (decimated or filtered). If the data are filtered, please describe the filter.

IV. How

a) Platform type (ship, pier, mooring, drifter, SCUBA, etc):

b) Instrument types (make and model), resolution of each parameter if possible:

c) Data acquisition system (manual, analog, digital recording, etc):

d) Field work methodology:

e) Laboratory work techniques(if applicable):

(d or e should include methods for calibration, processing, and quality control)

f) If sampling interval (time or space) of finalized data is different from the original sampling, please describe decimation or filtering technique:

V. Why

Name of project

Purpose of project

Program (if project is a subset of a larger program):

VI. WHO:

Principal investigators, and optionally, participants

Include affiliations of each (agencies, institutes, etc.)

Funding Agencies:

Thanks very much for your attention. As mentioned above, if this sort of documentation **already exists** in a data report or other document, just send it along and we will fish it out.

Thanks for your support of the NOAA archives. If you have any questions or if we can be of any service to you in accessing data from the NOAA holdings, please let me know.