

AMS Positions (Statements, Best Practices, Rapid Responses, and Letters) Overview and Procedure (adopted January 25, 2026)

Positions of the American Meteorological Society speak with the full institutional weight of the organization. They are adopted through one of four pathways: 1) directly by the AMS Council itself, 2) through the [Council Committee on AMS Positions and Statements](#) (CCAPS), 3) by the AMS Executive Committee of Council (ECC), or 4) by the AMS Executive Director (ED), most often in consultation with the AMS President, the ECC, CCAPS, or the Council itself.

There are three types of AMS positions: 1) statements (including best practices), 2) rapid responses, and 3) letters. AMS may generate each of these internally or adopt them from external sources (e.g., sign-on letters that AMS joins or “signs on to”). This characterization does not restrict AMS from taking positions that come in other forms through any of the four mechanisms listed above.

In general, AMS positions are a means of communicating with members of the AMS community and/or external audiences such as the public, policy makers, the media, and other beneficiaries of AMS information and services. Positions may seek to convey scientific information and the potential of using it, advance strategic priorities, and provide a foundation of shared understanding of AMS and its values and practices. Ideally, each AMS position should stand alone and contribute to a more comprehensive body of scientific information and/or its application on behalf of AMS and for the benefit of humanity.

AMS positions are created and maintained with oversight by the AMS Council, which is the representative and elected governing body of the organization. This oversight often includes the active participation of the Council. It is through the authority of the AMS Council and its designated authorities (the ECC, the ED, and CCAPS) that AMS positions are adopted and how they can speak with the full weight of the Society.

Any member or AMS group can [propose a new AMS position \(most often a Statement or a Rapid Response\) or recommend the revision](#) of an existing AMS position. The standard sequential process of statement creation (described below) incorporates opportunities for any AMS member [to review and provide feedback](#) on statements being developed along with opportunities for any member of the AMS community to [volunteer for service on a statement drafting team](#).

AMS statements are categorized by their primary objective and audience:

1. information statements promote understanding of key topics in weather, water, and climate to broad audiences (internal and/or external),
2. professional guidance statements support the conduct and performance of members of the AMS community,
3. Best Practices are statements that support practitioners and service providers (internal audiences) or external communities that benefit from the AMS community by describing how to use information and services most effectively, and
4. policy statements provide information about the earth and environmental system sciences directly to decision-makers for the purposes of speeding the uptake and use of our science and services (e.g., policy-makers).

As deemed appropriate by the Council (or its designated representatives); statements may also advocate on behalf of: the advancement of science; the application and use of science; or with respect to societal issues informed by and related to science (note the latter is generally rare because it involves subjective value judgments that go beyond scientific issues).

The guidelines and procedures for statement creation (described below) serve two primary purposes: 1) to ensure the creation of statements that advance the AMS mission, and 2) to provide clear instructions for anyone who wishes to propose a statement, participate in the process of creating a statement, or use an AMS statement. The specific standardized procedures seek to: ensure rigor, accuracy, validity, and credibility of AMS statements and to thereby protect and enhance the scientific integrity and standing of the AMS.

Procedures for the adoption of new AMS Positions generally fall into two broad categories:

- 1) **Standard sequential process** (typically 8-12 months). This includes active Council/CCAPS oversight (i.e., multiple points for deliberation and voting); a group of subject matter experts; and open external member review. **These guidelines constitute the most robust set of procedures that AMS has for taking a position as an organization and are preferred any time there is sufficient time for them.** Statements typically are in force for 5 years and can be extended or updated.
- 2) **Rapid Responses** (positions needed more quickly than possible through the standard sequential process—in a period of hours to weeks). Described below.

The Standard Sequential Procedure for Statement Creation:

- 1) *Proposal development and submission.* Anyone from the AMS community can [propose a new AMS statement or the revision of a statement](#) that is already in force. Typically, proposals will be 300 words or less and identify: A) the subject of the proposed statement, B) what type of statement is being proposed (if known), C) an initial scoping of the statement (this may change with input from Council or its designated authority¹ throughout the process of drafting the statement, accordingly), D) why the topic is important and appropriate for consideration as an AMS statement, and E) an initial list of subject matter experts who might contribute to the statement (including a potential chair(s) of the drafting team).
- 2) *Proposal review by Council or its designated authority (typically CCAPS)*¹.
Proposals will be initially reviewed by appropriate members of the AMS staff, commissioners, and the AMS President as a potential AMS statement. If potentially appropriate, proposals will then be forwarded to Council or its designated authority for consideration. Typically, the process moves forward with the identification of a chair for the drafting team, a Council liaison, and possibly others who can help scope the statement (e.g., AMS commissioners, subject matter experts, or staff). Note that The Council liaison is a unique and crucial role. They are the only person who serves both as an active member of the drafting team and as a member of Council. In this role, they communicate the perspective of the drafting team to Council and the perspective of Council to the drafting team. They contribute substantively to the content of a statement as a member of the drafting team.
- 3) *Precis development and call for volunteers.* The designated statement chair, in partnership with the Council liaison, relevant AMS commissioners and staff, will develop (or revise) a brief precis (300 words or less) describing the scope of the intended statement (see these [sample précis](#)). The *précis*, once approved by Council or its designated authority, will serve as the basis of an open call for volunteers from the AMS community to serve on the drafting team (note that those volunteers who are not selected will have a chance to comment during the open comment period).
- 4) *Formation of the drafting team* (i.e., volunteer selection) and initial statement scope. The chair, if identified, in partnership with the Council liaison and appropriate volunteers and AMS staff will consider the volunteers and propose a drafting team for the statement. The drafting team typically includes 6-12 individuals who, collectively, are as representative as possible with respect to the

¹ The AMS Council delegates authority with respect to the adoption and management of AMS positions and statements to: 1) the Council Committee on AMS Positions and Statements (CCAPS), 2) the AMS Executive Committee of Council (ECC), and 3) the AMS Executive Director (ED) as described above.

relevant subject matter of the statement, range of credible scientific viewpoints on the topic, and breadth of backgrounds and experiences among the AMS community and the larger society that we serve. The proposed drafting team needs to be approved by the Council, or its designated authority, prior to drafting the statement. **Approval of the drafting team begins an eight month clock for the creation of the statement.**

- 5) *Initial drafting team work (i.e., creation of statement draft) and iteration with Council or its designated authority.* The drafting team creates an initial draft of the statement and provides it to AMS for review (step 6).
- 6) *Review and input prior to open member comment. **This is the initial review by Council and/or its designated authority of the statement draft and it is the preferred moment for significant substantive input, to identify additional issues for the drafting team to consider, or to make major course corrections.*** Steps 5 and 6 can involve several iterations of revision by the drafting team and review. In general, the Council liaison communicates between the Council or its designated authority and the drafting team in coordination with the chair of the drafting team.
- 7) *Approval for member comment.* When (and if) Council or its designated authority approves a draft for member comment (i.e., the draft is deemed to be ready) the statement is available to the AMS membership for a [30-day open comment period](#).
- 8) *Drafting team revision based on member comments.* All comments go to the drafting team for consideration. Once considered and appropriately addressed (i.e. incorporated, or rejected with justification) an updated draft of the statement is submitted to Council, or its designated authority, along with a complete list of comments and responses from the drafting team to those comments.
- 9) *Council, or its designated authority, may approve, reject, or request modification of the draft statement.* Requests for changes may be major or minor. Approval of the statement can be as is, or with a request for minor edits (subject to review by the drafting team). The drafting team can also be disbanded without adoption of the statement. When revisions are requested, this step may be repeated until the statement is approved or the drafting team is disbanded. If approved, the statement is copyedited and posted. It is considered in-force from the day of approval by Council or its designated authority.

Rapid Response procedures and approach

Rapid Responses are AMS positions that are needed on a timeline that cannot be met through the standard sequential procedures described above.

Although each of the four pathways for AMS to adopt a position or statement are possible, in principle (i.e., by vote of the full AMS Council, CCAPS, ECC, and the ED), in practice, organization procedures (as of November 2025) limit the capacity of CCAPS and the full AMS Council to respond rapidly. Therefore, Rapid Responses typically result from the action of the ECC and/or the ED. In both cases, the development of a rapid response incorporates opportunities for Council involvement to the maximum extent possible. The potential for Council engagement is determined, primarily, on the amount of time needed for the response characterized by increasing levels of time urgency, as described as follows:

- a) **"Timely"** (needed as soon as reasonably possible). This includes sufficient time (roughly 1 week or more) for multiple periods of Council input through the Council community and/or a virtual discussion, if needed.
- b) **"Urgent"** (needed within roughly 72 hours): At least one opportunity for Council input and deliberation through the community or an in-person video conference, when possible.
- c) **"Time Critical"** (needed immediately/less than 24 hours): No Council deliberation but Council is an informed non-participant, typically through the Council community.

Rapid responses are in force for a 2-year period unless otherwise specified at the time of their adoption (or through subsequent action by Council or its designated representatives).

Whereas most proposals are brought to the attention of CCAPS and considered at the first available discussion, a proposal for an AMS rapid response will be brought to the attention of AMS leadership (e.g., Pres, ED, AED, or an EC member) and, as appropriate, to the attention of the ECC, ED, or CCAPS. This will allow an initial determination whether a rapid response is needed and, if so, which pathway is most appropriate. At that point, Council shall be informed and incorporated into the discussion as described above.

The development of a rapid response typically begins with the identification of a drafting team (a Rapid Response Team–RRT). The ECC and CCAPS constitute potential standing RRTs but the ECC, ED, CCAPS, and Council may serve as a RRT or establish a RRT as they deem appropriate for any particular response.

Previously, the Tiger Team on AMS Statements and Rapid Responses recommended the use of guidelines for determining whether there is a need for an AMS response and whether such responses need to be rapid. [This Harvard Business Review article](#) proposes a rubric based on three questions: 1) Does the issue align with AMS' strategic priorities or core values?; 2) Can AMS meaningfully contribute to the issue; and 3) To what extent will AMS' constituencies agree with speaking out?

Some factors that might influence how those questions are answered and whether an AMS response is appropriate, include whether the issue: involves subject matter expertise of the AMS (e.g., the issue is related to weather, water, or climate; the practice of science; or the application of science for public benefit); may directly impact the organization or the enterprise; connects in some other way to a core purpose or value of the AMS.

Factors that might contribute to a determination as to whether a rapid response is needed (rather than the standard sequential procedures) include: requirements of the news cycle; a risk (or opportunity) to AMS' reputation, credibility, or standing; an urgent societal (or Societal) need or opportunity.

In short, three questions may help inform the RRT and Council's decision: Does it need to be said? Does it need to be said by AMS? Does it need to be said right now by AMS?

CCAPS shall have the authority to conduct "after action reports (AARs)" following the release of any rapid response. The AAR will typically consider lessons learned and opportunities to improve the process. CCAPS is charged with making recommendations to Council and implementing approved improvements to the process.