

Work Practice Instruction (WPI0046)

For

Engineering Branch RTI Processing

Updated December 11, 2017

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1. Background

The ROC Hotline continuously receives calls from field sites requesting help with solving problems they are experiencing with WSR-88D, TDWR SPG, or NOAA Profiler Network (NPN) hardware, software, or communications. In most instances, Hotline staff members easily resolve such problems using their extensive knowledge of the system. At other times, Hotline staff members may identify failed hardware and even send technicians to the operational site to correct problems. Infrequently, a problem may not easily be resolved by the Hotline staff or they identify a problem that requires further investigation and research. In this case Hotline staff will initiate the Request for Technical Information (RTI) process.

2. Scope

This RTI Work Practice Instruction (WPI) outlines the administrative processing and procedures and associated timeframes that ROC Engineering Branch will implement in order to provide the Hotline and field sites with a rapid response to problems identified in the field. This is in keeping with the ROC philosophy that "Support to the Field is our #1 Priority." RTIs can be sent to other ROC Branches. This WPI only covers Engineering Branch related processes.

3. Purpose/Objective

The purpose of a RTI is for the ROC Hotline to obtain rapid technical assistance from ROC Engineering Branch to problems identified in the field using a documented process.

RTIs are requests for “rapid response” technical information. Therefore, to the maximum extent possible, engineers should consider RTIs to be high priority tasks (schedule constraints for other time sensitive work being considered.) Engineers should thoroughly investigate RTIs and respond to RTIs in an expeditious manner by completing a Final Report. This procedure establishes the method for handling RTIs within the Engineering Branch.

4. RTI Process

4.1 Administrative In-Processing

The following steps are taken to get the RTI into the administrative system:

1. ROC Hotline will initiate the RTI process by filling out a ‘Request For Technical Information’ form and forwarding this form by email or internal mail to the ROC Engineering Branch Administrative Officer. This form consists of the following critical information:

.Suspense Date Requested <for completing this RTI>

.Hotline Points of Contact (POCs)

.RTI Questions & Instructions <details of the question or problem>

.Caller’s Email Address

2. Upon receiving the RTI, the Engineering Branch Administrative Officer places an electronic copy in the files, logs the RTI into the Engineering Branch RTI database, and forwards the RTI to the Engineering Branch Chief or respective Team Lead if the Branch Chief is not available.

3. The Engineering Branch Chief assigns the RTI to either the Hardware, Software, or Systems Engineering sections for resolution.

4. The Engineering Branch Administrative Officer delivers a hardcopy of the RTI to the assigned engineering section Team Leader.

4.2 Assignment to an Engineer

The next step in the RTI process is to assign the RTI to an action Engineer.

1. The Team Leader assigns an Engineer to the RTI and delivers the RTI to the Engineer.

2. The Team Leader notifies the Engineering Branch Administrative Officer of the RTI assignment.

3. The Engineering Branch Administrative Officer logs this information into the Engineering Branch RTI database.

4.3 Duties of the Action Engineer

Upon receipt of an RTI, the action Engineer should make the RTI a high priority and attempt to respond to the RTI as soon as practical. In some instances, during the course of the RTI investigation, the engineer may need additional information to ensure he/she understands the problem, the circumstances under which the problem occurred, etc.

The action engineer should use the Hotline technicians to the maximum extent possible to obtain additional information that may assist in understanding the problem. If contact with site personnel is necessary under these circumstances, the Engineer should do so, and it is critical to follow up to report site communications made with Hotline staff. Also, once any site contact is made, a summary of that communication needs to be documented in the RTI response.

When a RTI cannot be readily closed, status updates need to be provided to the Hotline and to the site. The action Engineer should provide updates to the site when a significant amount of time must be taken for analysis. Under these circumstances, the action Engineering also provides updates to the Hotline, as well. Good customer service will alleviate concern and ensure site personnel that the ROC is actively working the request for information.

During the RTI investigation, the action Engineer should:

A. Keep track of all time spent performing research into resolving this RTI (including phone calls, meetings, etc). This time should be recorded in the Time Management System (TMS) database under:

Project # OPS400-2003-10001, Customer Support/Service, Subtask 290,
Request for Technical Information (RTI).

B. Perform all necessary research into the problem. Upon completion of the RTI investigation, a Final Report representing ROC Engineering's response should be drafted (see Attachment 1.) This Final Report should be forwarded to the Engineer's Team Leader for initial approval. If the assigned Engineer should determine that extensive research is required that will take longer than the 'Suspense Date Requested' in the RTI form, he/she should notify the Engineering Branch Administrative Officer by email and provide (1) an estimated date of completion, and (2) the reason for the delay or extra time required. This information is for tracking and reporting purposes and to keep the Hotline advised of the status of the RTI.

C. In case of an extension, the Engineering Branch Administrative Officer will notify the Hotline of the extension and the reason for doing so.

4.4 RTI Closure

There are several ways RTIs come to closure.

1. An RTI can come to closure if an answer is found to the described problem. At this point, the action Engineer should close the RTI by drafting a Final Report.
2. If the problem requires submission of a Configuration Change Request (CCR), the Final Report should identify that a CCR will be submitted against the problem and when it is projected to be corrected (e.g., if the problem describes a software issue, the software build release the CCR will be implemented.)
3. A RTI can come to closure if the action engineer makes the determination that "no further action is required." The Final Report should document any events or circumstances beyond ROC control and conversations with the Hotline or site staff that resolved the RTI.
4. If the problem is a one-time or short-term event that cannot be reproduced (such as interference that was observed, reported, and has since disappeared), the Final Report should state what actions were taken, that the action Engineer reviewed logs and could find no evidence of an ongoing problem, discussed the situation with the site, and that the site understands no further work will be accomplished unless the event occurs again. The action Engineer should explain to the site that they will need to call the Hotline to initiate a new request for information if it occurs, again, and to document the communication in the Final Report.

Team leaders should make every effort to ensure RTIs are closed within a reasonable amount of time; the length of time to keep an RTI open is at the discretion of the Team Leaders.

4.5 Administrative Out-Processing

The following process shall be used to close RTIs:

1. The Engineer shall write a Final Report Memorandum using the format example shown in Attachment 1. For simplicity, an electronic template of the Final Report Memorandum is located at **S:/RTI_LOGS/RTI Final Report Template**. The requested naming convention for the saved file should be the letters "RCN" followed by the Reference Control Number from the original RTI form (for example: RCN48057).
2. The Engineer should save a copy of the completed Final Report Memorandum under the directory **S:/RTI_LOGS** for archival purposes.
3. The Engineer should send a copy of the Final Report Memorandum to the Team Lead for approval. If the solution is not approved by the Team Lead, the RTI should be sent back to the engineer for additional work.
4. If the solution is approved, the Team Lead forwards the Final Report Memorandum to the Engineering Branch Chief for signature. Upon signature, the Engineering Branch Chief forwards the 'signed' Final Report Memorandum to the Engineering Branch Administrative officer and the Operations Branch Chief. The Engineering Branch Chief also files the copy in the S/RTI_LOGS folder.

5. The Engineering Branch Administrative Officer logs the RTI as complete in the RTI database. The Engineering Branch Administrative Officer will also notify the assigned Engineer that the Final Report Memorandum was approved by providing him/her with a signed electronic copy.

6. The Operations Branch Chief sends the Final Report memorandum via email to the ROC Hotline.

5. Additional Engineering Administrative Officer Responsibilities

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, the Engineering Branch Administrative Officer shall also send monthly reminders via email to the Engineering Team Leads listing all open RTIs and assigned suspense dates. The Engineering Branch Administrative Officer shall also send a quarterly reminder via email to the Engineering Branch Chief.

6. Additional Team Lead Responsibilities

In addition to the tasks above, the Engineering Team Leads shall place the highest priority practical on completing RTIs, provide sufficient resources to engineers to complete the task, and ensure RTIs are completed by the suspense date on the RTI.

7. Attachment 1: Final Report Memorandum Sample Format

MEMORANDUM FOR: W/OBS11 - Michael Miller

FROM: W/OBS13 – Christina Horvat

X

Christina Horvat
ROC Engineering Branch Chief

SUBJECT: Engineering Response - RTI xxxxx

DATE: Month/Day/Year

1. Background Information - Put any background information here.
2. Recommended Corrective Action - Put any recommended corrective action here.
5. Interim Solution - Put any interim solution, if applicable.

Action Engineer:	Your Name
RTI Hours:	Hours worked
Equipment Group:	Area of Responsibility