

Timeliness of ship weather observation

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Weather reports from Voluntary Observing Ships (VOS) provide vital information on the weather conditions in the oceans. They are vital for forecasters to issue forecasts and warnings to help ships avoid severe weather conditions in the oceans as well as for input to regional and global numerical weather prediction models to predict the future state of the atmosphere for reference by forecasters. However, a weather report from VOS would only be considered useful for these two purposes if it is disseminated and received in a timely manner. According to the operational requirements of major forecasting centres and numerical weather prediction centres worldwide, the weather reports have to be disseminated and received within 2 to 3 hours after the observation time. Thanks to the shipmasters, about 95% of the weather reports could meet this requirement according to the monitoring results compiled by the UK Meteorological Office (Figure 1). Shipmasters are encouraged to continue and even enhance further their efforts to report their weather observations in a timely manner.

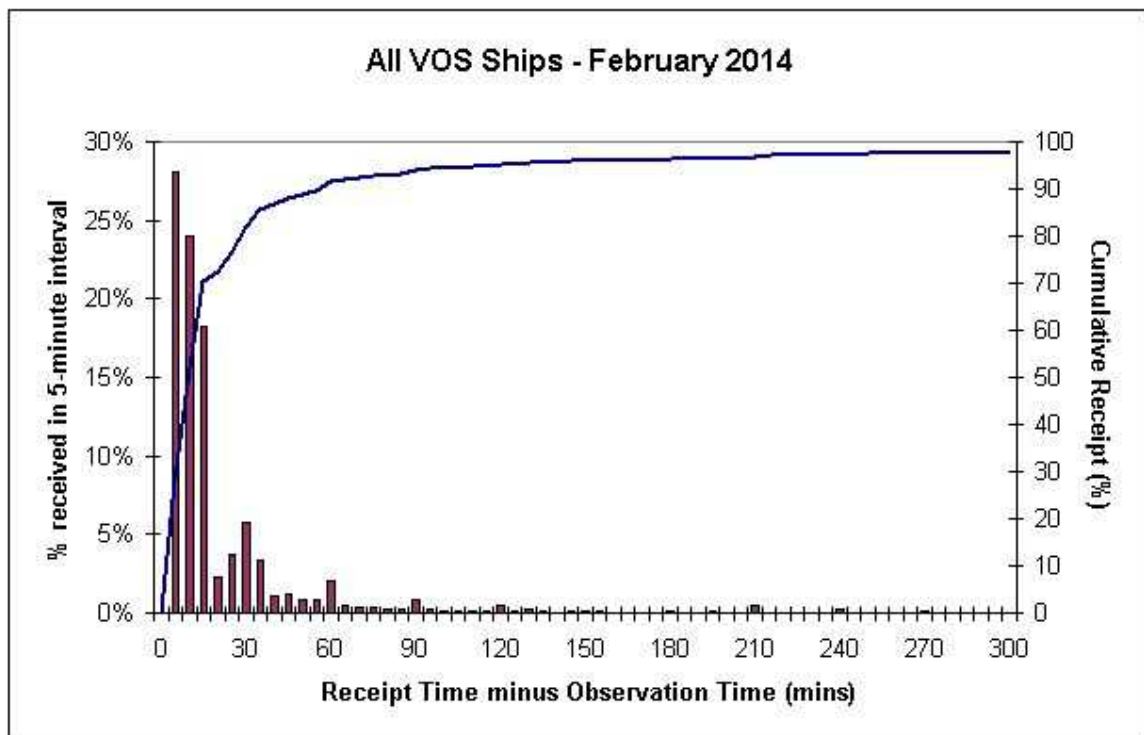


Figure 1 The timeliness of weather reports from all VOS ships received at the UK Meteorological Office in February 2014 (Source: UK Met Office)