SKYWARN Net Control Info

The wx5fwd.org website sates: *During SKYWARN events, you are reporting information to the NWS warning forecasters. Three goals of a storm spotter are to **safely observe, identify and report conditions.***

Weather spotters provide what's called "ground truth" to the National Weather Service and emergency weather management. Spotters are needed because, while radar is very good at helping the National Weather Service see what's going on in the upper atmosphere, it's unable to detect what's actually happening on the ground because of the curvature of the Earth. Knowing the "ground truth" about a weather event from the location can be the deciding factor to issue a warning.

With that in mind, here is a breakdown of events that the SKYWARN Net Control for Anderson County should do so that the best and accurate reports can be given to the NWS in Ft. Worth, Texas. So, if YOU are called to activate spotters, this is what you do:

1. When a call is received from the EC, Asst. EC, or an Emergency Official (Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, or the NWS), transmit a LiTZ (Long Tone Zero). Key the microphone and push the 0 DTMF button for approx. 5-10 seconds.

2. Announce your call sign and the reason you have activated a LiTZ. Ex., *"This is KB5YUE calling all amateurs. The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Thunderstorm Warning for Anderson County and has requested the activation of trained storm spotters. At this time I am activating the Anderson County SKYWARN net. The National Weather Service has advised that these storms have the potential for high winds, large hail, heavy rain, as well as the potential for possible tornadoes. All spotters are requested to check in if available. This is a directed net so please direct all inquiries and comments through net control. The time is now 6:00 PM."*

3. Begin writing down a log of events and, if possible, keep track of the time (especially when beginning/ending the net and when a serious report is given, ex: funnel cloud spotted).

4. If YOU are Net Control then YOU are in charge of the net. If necessary, tell spotters to slow down, speak up, or relay messages for you.

5. Write down spotter information as it is given to you making sure you understand what they

are saying. That way you can read it back to the NWS. If conditions are bad or you cannot understand a spotter, get them to slowly repeat it. Spotters with extreme weather reports go first. All other stations hold their traffic until the Net Control asks for any other reports.

6. When you have a reportable event, contact the **Ft. Worth NWS at 1-800-792-2257** and report to them exactly what you were told by the spotters. A "reportable event" is very high wind, hail (typically quarter [the coin, not the measurement] size or greater), extremely heavy rainfall (flash flooding), wall cloud, funnel cloud, and/or tornado.

7. The NWS also has web pages that can be filled out and submitted to them. They are http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/spotter.php and/or this one http://www.srh.noaa.gov/StormReport/SubmitReport.php?site=fwd Find one or both of these and set them as a Favorite/Bookmark so that you can get to them quickly if you need to use them.

8. If a spotter gets into an area behind a storm, after it has already passed and they observe storm damage, that information is valuable to the NWS as well. Trees down. Do they look as if they are old and rotten or still big, strong trees? Are they broken in two on the trunk, or did they fall over and the roots are exposed? Is the ground saturated from lots of rain and it fell over because of a gust of wind, or is it because the wind was so strong it knocked it over completely? A roof removed from a house, a destroyed house, cars turned over, etc. can also be reported to the NWS to give them an idea of how strong the winds were.

9. IF you have internet capability it is a good idea to bring up a weather radar site and watch it animated in real time over Anderson County, Texas. This is NOT mandatory, but it is a good tool to use once you understand how to read it. It will allow you to keep an eye on a certain cell or area of the storm so you can warn spotters who may be in that immediate area. ***DO NOT TELL THE NWS WHAT YOU ARE SEEING ON YOUR RADAR SCREEN!*** Only tell them what the spotters in the field are telling you. There are several good radar sites. They are:
    - www.weatherunderground.com
    - http://www.accuweather.com
    - http://radar.weather.gov

10. Before the storm leaves Anderson County, it is a good idea to run down the net check-in list to see who is out spotting mobile and who is stationary at their home QTH. As the storm passes through, spotters can stand down from their duties or can be mobilized to other areas of the county for new reports. Do not close down the SKYWARN net until the storm is no longer a threat and ALL SPOTTERS have checked in and advised they are standing down and going home. If a spotter called in a report of a tree on a house and will be rendering assistance to the people there, be sure to check in with them every few minutes until they are "clear" from that area and continuing with their assignment.

11. Once ALL spotters that checked into the SKYWARN net have checked that they are clear and finished spotting, then close the net and "return the repeater to other amateur use." Also, be sure that throughout the course of the net that you, as the Net Control Station (NCS), identify with your call sign every 10 minutes. As you identify, also explain that you have a SKYWARN net in effect. EX: *"This is KB5YUE, Net Control for the Anderson County SKYWARN weather net. Are there any other reporting stations wishing to check in?"*