



ARES Training Synopsis: #32-11 SKYWARN 1 Dec 2011

This training information is provided give refresher training to ARES members during the weekly ARES Net activation. Subjects covered are taken from FEMA based emergency management training sources, local established emergency plans, and technical information applicable to amateur radio operations. Specific procedures discussed in this training session are directly applicable to North Central Montana ARES members. For non NCM-ARES members, contact your Emergency Coordinator to determine applicability.

Training Subjects for this net:

1. SKYWARN Program and SKYWARN Recognition Day overview (NWS & ARRL)
2. Scenario Discussion:

What is Skywarn™?

Skywarn™ is a National Weather Service (NWS) program of trained volunteer severe weather spotters. Skywarn™ volunteers support their local community and government by providing the NWS with timely and accurate severe weather reports. These reports, when integrated with modern NWS technology, are used to inform communities of the proper actions to take as severe weather threatens. The key focus of the Skywarn™ program is to save lives and property through the use of the observations and reports of trained volunteers.

What does a Skywarn™ Spotter report?

Although all reports are welcome, the National Weather Service is particularly interested in the weather elements described below.

Weather Phenomena	Call The NWS if...
Wind	50 mph or stronger
Hail	3/4 inch (penny size) or larger in diameter
Tornado	Any tornado or rotating cloud
Flooding	Any significant amount of water in normally dry areas
River Flooding	Any river rising above their normal bank level
Heavy Rain	Rain rates of 1 inch per hour or greater And - Rain greater than 1 inch in 24 hours
Heavy Snow	Call while snowing at a rate of 1 inch per hour or greater And - Call with total snow fall if \geq 1 inch accumulates when the snow ends
Low Visibilities	Visibility less than 1/2 mile due to fog, dust, rain, or snow
Freezing Rain	Any freezing rain

How Do I Become a Skywarn™ Weather Spotter?

The National Weather Service welcomes volunteers with an interest in severe weather spotting. Since the NWS instituted the Skywarn™ Program, there has been a significant decrease in the death rate due to tornadoes and other severe weather. The Skywarn™ program is completely voluntary. You may have the opportunity to call our office several times a season depending on the weather pattern in your neck-of-the-woods. If you agree, we may occasionally call you for a "ground truth" as to what is actually happening near your house. Most likely our phone call will be to confirm an element of potentially severe thunderstorms, like large hail, or damaging wind. Other calls may be to verify heavy snowfall or peak wind speed associated with large winter storms. **If you are interested in becoming a SKYWARN volunteer, please contact the NCM-ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinators for SKYWARN; Ken/W7WOF or Ray/AE7JN.**

Skywarn Recognition Day

This year SKYWARN Recognition Day begins at 0000 **UTC on December 3, 2011**. It will last 24 hours. SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer SKYWARN radio operators make to the National Weather Service. During the day SKYWARN operators visit NWS offices and contact other radio operators across the world. Information regarding SRD is updated at <http://hamradio.noaa.gov>.

The NWS and the ARRL both recognize the importance that amateur radio provides during severe weather. Many NWS offices acquire real time weather information from amateur radio operators in the field. These operators, for example, may report the position of a tornado, the height of flood waters, or damaging wind speeds during hurricanes. All of this information is critical to the mission of the NWS which is to preserve life and property. The special event celebrates this special contribution by amateur radio operators.

SKYWARN™ Recognition Day Operating Instructions

- 1. Object** For all amateur stations to exchange QSO -information with as many National Weather Service Stations as possible on 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meter bands plus the 70 centimeter band. Contacts via repeaters are permitted. SKYWARN™ Recognition Day serves to celebrate the contributions to public safety made by amateur radio operators during threatening weather.
- 2. Date** NWS stations will operate Saturday, December 3, 2011, from 0000 - 2400 UTC.
- 3. Exchange:** Call sign, signal report, QTH, and a one or two word description of the weather occurring at your site ("sunny", "partly cloudy", "windy", etc.).
- 4. Modes:** NWS stations will work various modes including SSB, FM, AM, RTTY, CW, and PSK31. While working digital modes, special event stations will append "NWS" to their call sign (e.g., N0A/NWS).
- 5. Station Control Operator:** It is suggested that during SRD operations a non-NWS volunteer should serve as a control operator for your station.
- 6. Event and QSL Information:** The National Weather Service will provide event information via the internet. Event certificates may be requested from:

Discussion Question: How can ARES members support Skywarn activities?