

Severe Storm Spotter's Reporting Guide

MetroSkywarn - Minneapolis/St Paul

More at: <https://metroskywarn.org> > Spotter Resources

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WHAT to report:

TORNADO	Visible debris cloud or ; Funnel in contact with the ground: Report Immediately ! (Break in if necessary)
FUNNEL CLOUD	Visible funnel cloud not in contact with the ground and no debris cloud. Report Immediately !
ROTATING WALL CLOUD	Wall cloud with obvious, sustained rotation on a <i>vertical</i> axis and rising motion Observe 1 - 3 minutes, and report if still rotating
WIND DAMAGE	Large branches off trees (3"+ dia); trees uprooted; significant damage to well-built structures; billboards or road signs damaged or knocked down
HAIL	Report any sized hail; amount, and maximum size Estimates: <i>measure</i> when possible – 1" and larger is severe "pea-sized" - 1/4 inch "golfball-sized" - ~ 1-3/4 inches "penny-sized" - ~3/4 inch "tennis ball size" - ~ 2.5 inches "quarter-sized" - ~ 1 inch 
SIGNIFICANT FLOODING	Report large amounts of moving water which poses a threat to life or property; <i>ponding</i> (standing water in intersections, etc.) not usually reportable
MEASURED RAINFALL	Greater than 1" of rain in less than 60 minutes (must use rain gauge!)
ANY CONDITION(S) ASKED FOR BY NET CONTROL	Report conditions observed from your area, including conditions not normally reportable if asked for by the Net control operator.
REMEMBER	Don't report the same conditions already reported in your area . Multiple reports for the same event/condition can prevent others from making reports of new conditions. If net control requests confirmation of a report from your area, and you can confirm or deny that report, you should do so.

<u>SAFETY TIPS</u>	All spotting, including spotters who are mobile should be done while the vehicle is stationary . Trying to observe storm features while driving can cause accidents. Park your vehicle in a safe place, completely off the road, then look. Preferably, you should be in position prior to the storms' arrival so as to reduce the risk of driving in close proximity to severe weather.
Work in Spotter pairs	Two sets of eyes are better than one. Be aware of what's happening around and BEHIND you. Whenever possible, match new spotters with experienced spotters. However, spotting with someone who is not a trained spotter is better than working alone !
Do nighttime spotting from home	Very difficult to see storm and storm features at night, or to see conditions such as flooding, downed trees and power lines, in the dark. DO NOT increase your risk by driving into the dark.
Leave at least TWO escape routes	BEWARE of traffic jams, dead-end roads, streets, or roads without limited alternative access in all compass directions.

MetroSkywarn "Chase" vs "Spot" Policy (Rev A1) **a)** MetroSkywarn neither advocates nor encourages the "chasing" of tornadoes or other severe weather. MetroSkywarn does not consider the training of severe weather *spotters* sufficient to allow spotters to safely engage in the dangerous task of chasing tornadoes. **b)** MetroSkywarn NCS's provide information as to where severe weather is located as a safety measure for those involved in the Skywarn spotter network. MetroSkywarn and the participating NCSs do not "dispatch" spotters. NCS's may, from time to time, ask for reports from specific areas affected, or about to be affected, by severe weather. If spotters *chose to move* to those areas, they do so at their own risk and responsibility. **c)** Safety of Skywarn spotters is the **FIRST** priority. Spotting should be done while your vehicle is stationary. Trying to observe storm features while driving can cause accidents. Park your vehicle in a safe place, *then* observe, and report if necessary. Observe traffic laws and speed limits. You have no special privileges as a Skywarn spotter ! Nighttime spotting should be done from home, work or other safe place. Storm features are very difficult to see at night, as are dangerous road conditions such as flooding, and downed trees or power lines. Do not increase your risk by driving into the dark. **d)** This policy is to be included on MetroSkywarn registration materials, and announced at each Skywarn class.

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HOW to report:

<p>Skywarn Amateur Radio Network</p> <p>REPEATERS</p> <p>PRIMARY: 146.70- MHz PL127.3 147.21+ MHz PL100</p> <p>(MSW Partner Nets) 147.00+ MHz (West Metro) 145.21- MHz PL114.8 (Isanti County)</p> <p>Use the ONE repeater you access best.</p> <p>BACKUPS: 146.670- PL114.8 146.760- PL114.8 145.170- PL100</p> <p>Backup repeaters will be used as required, and ANNOUNCED by the Duty NCS based on storm track and availability of the repeaters</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Access the net with your Skywarn ID number, and a brief (one or two word) description of the reportable condition. ex: "1119, hail." or "1119, wind damage."2. When Net operator acknowledges with your ID number, for example; "1119" or "1119, go ahead", give a brief and complete report that ends with your call sign. ex: "I'm located at I-35W and I-694. Pea-sized hail is covering the ground. Some the size of a dime. NOXXX."3. One of two things will happen next:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Net Control operator may ask you questions to clarify your report. End each reply with your Amateur Radio callsign. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Net Control Operator will respond with time in 24-hour format. This means your report has been received and understood, and that the Net is available for reports from other spotters. ex: "1732" <p>This reporting format is intended to reduce the "on air" time for each report. Use of your callsign is required to be legal with the FCC.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED RADIO & ANTENNA: 25 watts power & external antenna. Hand-held radios with "rubber duckies" just can't get through the storm. If you must use a hand held, use high power, and try to get at least a quarter - wave antenna on top of the car, or outside of the building.</p>
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<p>Alternative Reporting Methods</p>	<p>Even if you are not an Amateur Radio operator or there is no net, you can still report your observations to the National Weather Service. The NWS has 4 options for reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storm Report Web Form https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report/• Facebook https://www.facebook.com/NWSTwinCities• Twitter @NWSTwinCities
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<p>'9-1-1', Police and Sheriff, Fire Department</p>	<p>It is generally NOT a good idea to try to make reports of severe weather to the '9-1-1' emergency system. '9-1-1' operators do not know about Skywarn, nor Skywarn ID numbers. They will often be swamped by calls from the public. Additionally, Police and Sheriff's offices must respond to calls related to storm damage.</p> <p>It is suggested that you use '9-1-1' <i>only for damage which poses an immediate threat to life or property</i>, such as fires, natural gas or LP gas leaks, medical emergencies, blocked roads, downed wires near people, or in the road, or significant flooding.</p> <p>When necessary to use 911, it is preferable that you do so from a landline telephone as near to the event as possible and safe. This increases the chances of reaching the correct agency the first time. When you dial 911 from a <i>cell phone</i>, you may be talking to a State Patrol dispatcher rather than a local city or county 911 operator.</p> <p>You must be able to describe where you are and where the event you are reporting is located. Street addresses, city names and street/road/highway intersections are a good way to do this.</p>
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<p>Sign up for MSWAlert and MSWInfo Email Lists</p>	<p>Sign up for MSWAlert (notification of nets and expected times) and MSWInfo (announcements from the board and the newsletter announcement) email lists by going to www.MetroSkywarn.org. Scroll down the page and you'll see "Subscribe". You can also email the subject of "Subscribe" to msswinfo+subscribe@googlegroups.com and msswalert+subscribe@googlegroups.com</p>
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