Jackson County Skywarn

SPOTTERS GUIDE

A NWS spotter guide is also available, Click Here

NET ACTIVATION

Whenever the threat of sever weather occurs, or the NWS issues a warning or watch for Jackson County, a Skywarn net will be activated. This will be evident by the letter "W" as the courtesy tone on the 146.88 repeater.

Skywarn nets will be brought up in one of two modes, *standby* or *directed.* This decision is up to the person in charge of net control, by direct order of the NWS or OEM/EMD.

In *standby,* you are encouraged to watch, listen and report. Most likely, NWS has issued a watch for a county and there is a potential for severe weather. While in standby, you are welcome to use the repeater, we that you keep your conversations short, and leave long pauses between key-ups, in the event someone should need to make a report.

In a *directed* net, it is most likely NWS has issued a warning for our county. The net control station will be responsible for collecting reports from spotters and relaying critical weather information to the NWS. At this time, only weather related traffic will be allowed on the repeater.

WHAT TO REPORT

The following information should be used as a guideline for determining the different types of severe weather conditions that should be reported to net control. Measured readings are most preferred, however using this guide, you will be able to give reasonably accurate estimates.

WIND SPEED MPH

25 - 31 Large tree branches in motion; whistling telephone wires.
32 - 38 Whole trees in motion.
39 - 54 Twigs break off trees; wind impedes walking.
55 - 72 Shallow trees uprooted and slight structural damage.
73 - 112 Major structural damage. Large trees uprooted.

HAIL SIZE

Pea Size	**1 / 4 inch.**
Marble Size	**1 / 2 inch.**
Dime Size	**3 / 4 inch.**
Quarter Size	**1 inch.**
Golfball Size	**1 3 / 4 inch.**

RAIN

Use a coffee can and a ruler against a measured period of time, if a rain gauge is not available, also report distance of visibility.
Other items of concern are: Tornadoes, Funnel clouds, Wall clouds, Flooding and Frequent Lighting. Report any damage from a storm such as downed trees and power lines, and any structural damage.

HOW TO REPORT

For reporting purposes, we suggest you use the widely accepted "TELE" system of reporting.

T - Time of observation.
E - Effect (hail, wind, rain, etc.)
L - Location
E - Measured or Estimated report

An example of a good report would be:

This is N8WHH, spotter number 148-38. At 2:40 PM, we had heavy rain with pea sized hail, winds from the west at about 40 miles per hour and moderate cloud to ground lighting. I am located 2 miles southeast of the Jackson County Airport in Summit Township, and these observations are estimated.

Your report will be taken under advisement by net control locally. Use your "new" spotter number if you have one. If the information you provide is severe enough, it will be forwarded on to NWS by the net control or a liaison station. Occasionally, NWS will want a status report from a specific area. If you are in that area, you are encouraged to contact net control and relay your report.
Please note that nowhere in this list is there any mention that we want reports of "the sun is out here" or "it has quit raining here." If the net control operators want these types of reports, they will specifically ask for them.

SPOTTING TIPS

All thunderstorms contain lighting. That is what differentiates a thunderstorm from a rain shower.

A thunderstorm is considered severe if it produces sustained winds in excess of 58 MPH or 3 / 4 inch hail. Sustained winds are winds sustained for greater than 15 seconds.

The first gust of wind to reach you from a thunderstorm is usually the strongest.

Intense rain and possibly hail are the next effects you will see.

A rain-free base, which is found in the rear quadrant of the storm, denotes the updraft area - a place to watch very closely.

Wall clouds form from the rain-free base often 15-20 minutes before a tornado occurs.

Tornadoes will generally form from either a wall cloud itself, or very close to it.

The best place for a spotter to be located to watch for a wall cloud or tornado developing is behind, or southwest of the storm.

Storms and tornadoes generally move toward the northeast, from the southwest at 25-35 MPH, however they can move as fast as 70 MPH.

When mobile spotting, it is best to find a high spot such as the top of an overpass. Park there and observe.

SPOTTER SAFETY: Please remember this when spotting - your family and loved ones, as well as Skywarn, want you to be alive and well to spot another day!

Have a safe place to protect yourself from wind or hail. Cars are safe places in case of lighting, but not in case of tornadoes. Don't try to outrun a tornado. Seek shelter in a strong building or ditch. THINK SAFETY!

SKYWARN FREQUENCIES

Jackson County (Primary)	**146.880**
Jackson County (Backup)	**147.360**

THANK YOU

Amateur Radio is a hobby, but it is also the Amateur Radio Service. Skywarn is a program which requires us to take on a professional look and feel. Severe weather is serious and threatens life and property. Your involvement in this program proves your dedication toward the hobby and shows your civic pride.

A big thank you to the members of the Cascades Amateur Radio Society, the National Weather Service for providing quality training and their continued cooperation, net control stations who run the nets, and most of all you - the amateur radio operators that make up the severe storm spotters for your dedication.