

# 09 NOV 04 – KJ2N (Net Control) Training Material

## What is Skywarn?

SKYWARN is a nationwide network of volunteer weather spotters who report hazardous weather to local National Weather Service (NWS) offices. Amateur radio operators and weather observers, generally operating through local organizations, are ideally equipped to contribute to the SKYWARN program. However, the general public is also an integral part of this program.

SKYWARN Volunteers are trained by NWS personnel to recognize features associated with rapidly developing, mature, and dissipating thunderstorms which cause hazardous weather. SKYWARN spotters also provide reports of heavy snow, heavy rain and flooding.

SKYWARN Spotters provide ground truth on the atmosphere that NWS meteorologists observe from radar, satellites and various reporting stations. They are National Weather Services' eyes and ears, helping to provide better forecasts and warnings to the Tri-State Region.

The NWS Office in Upton is responsible for issuing forecasts and severe weather warnings for Southeastern New York (including New York City, Long Island and the Lower Hudson Valley), Southern Connecticut and extreme Northeastern New Jersey...or for approximately 18 million people. This includes the following counties...

**In Southern Connecticut:** Fairfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London

### **In Southeastern New York:**

(Lower Hudson Valley) ... Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester  
(New York City) ... Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond  
(Long Island) ... Nassau, Suffolk

**In Northeastern New Jersey:** Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, Union

## History of Skywarn

### How the program began:

During 1942 and 1943, the Weather Bureau cooperated with the military in setting up volunteer storm spotter networks to protect military installations and recognized the value of first hand, real time information. The primary concern was for lightning near ordnance plants, but the program grew substantially during the war, and the spotter mission expanded to include other hazardous weather, including tornadoes. After WWII, spotter networks were maintained for military installations.

On May 25, 1955, a tornado in Udall, Kansas killed 80 people and injured 273. The NWS decided to train severe weather spotters to provide real time data. The NWS decided to recruit severe weather spotters to help obtain real time severe weather information in order to help extend lead time and increase accuracy of severe weather forecasts. On March 8, 1959, the NWS held the first training course in Wellington, Kansas for 225 severe weather spotters.

In 1965, the Natural Disaster Warning System (NADWARN) was established to coordinate the natural disaster-related emergency functions of various Federal agencies. A special, tornado-specific plan called SKYWARN was created, under the guidance of the National Weather Service.

## **The SKYWARN Program today:**

SKYWARN consists of a network of all-hazard weather spotters (not just tornadoes). NWS has over 167,000 trained all-hazard weather spotters in the SKYWARN program. These spotters work with the Warning Coordination Meteorologists (WCMS) at the 122 NWS offices throughout the United States. Some Weather Forecast Offices offer additional classes in winter storm watch, hurricane watch, floods, thunderstorms, tornadoes, use of radar, and amateur radio networking.

## **The Tri-State Skywarn Group:**

The Tri-State Skywarn Group serves the NWS Upton County Warning Area, and currently numbers over 1500 trained spotters.

Basic and Advanced level training classes are offered across the region, typically during the late winter and spring months.

## **How to check-in to the Essex County Skywarn Net**

### **#1 ALWAYS Follow the *specific* instructions of the net control station.**

Due to the circumstances that caused the activation, the net control station may need to alter the check-in procedures.

After the net control station asks for check-ins, wait for the courtesy tone. Listen to make sure that the frequency is clear. Then, key your transmitter and give the net control's call sign (or simply say "net control").

Then un-key and listen to make sure that you are not doubling with another station.

After you hear the courtesy tone and if the frequency is still clear, key your transmitter and clearly state:

- Your call sign (phonetics are not necessary unless requested by net control).
- Your present location (town, county and state)
- Indicate if you are portable or mobile

Then un-key and stand by for further instructions from net control.

During a severe weather event, brevity is required during transmissions to allow net control to collect the necessary information as quickly as possible from all the reporting stations and relay it to the National Weather Service.

To assist the net control in achieving this goal:

- Do not give your name or spotter ID number during check-in
- Do not give your spotter report during check-in
- Only give the specific information requested by net control during check-in
- Only speak to the net control station unless directed otherwise by net control
- If the net control asks for a specific group to check-in, do not check-in unless you meet the criteria specified by net control

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **New Essex County Skywarn Coordinator**

**Stan Rogacki - WA2EXX** has been appointed Skywarn coordinator for Essex County by the National Weather Service in Upton, NY. He can be reached on this repeater or via email at [wa2exx@essexskywarn.org](mailto:wa2exx@essexskywarn.org). There is also a link to his email address on the Essex County Skywarn web page.

### **Essex County Skywarn on the Internet**

Essex County Skywarn has a new web site. The URL is <http://www.essexskywarn.org>. The site contains information about NOAA weather radio, severe weather reporting criteria, and links to the Upton, NY NWS web site.

### **Special Event: SKYWARN Recognition Day December 4, 2004 (0000 - 2400 UTC.)**

SKYWARN Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. The object is 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.

For more info goto: <http://hamradio.noaa.gov/>

## **Next Weeks Net Topics**

Skywarn Activation and Reporting