Illiana Skywarn

Serving West Central Indiana and East Central Illinois

Spotters - Working with Net Controls

- Clear all traffic through the Net Control. Do not take it upon yourself to call anything in to NWS or other agencies unless directed by net control.
- The net is designed to operate with multiple net controls. Call for "Net Control" and the operator in charge will answer. If you call for a specific station as net control and another station answers you as net control do not be confused or upset.
- Net chatter should be kept to a minimum. Keep your transmissions short and sweet. Others may have important, time-sensitive information as well. Also, if your signal is marginal, net control may not be able to hear what you are saying and you are therefore dominating repeater time with meaningless half-syllables and noise.
- If you have a weather event to report put your radio on high power before you start your transmission. Additionally, remember that 300mw that may work on a clear day from your location may not work at all during bad weather band conditions.
- Have backup power available, be it a case of AA batteries or a deep-cycle marine battery. If you lose power, we lose you unless you have a backup.
- Know your repeater etiquette. See the separate handout by Dave Pifer N9YNF, A Guide to Repeater Etiquette.
- If you receive information from an Internet source or other means, contact Net Control and determine if they have that information on hand already. If we already have the information don't repeat it over the air and don't feel like you have wasted your time. We appreciate your efforts to help gather data but if we already have the information there is no need for you to repeat it over the air tying up systems. However, when things get busy we could miss some updated weather statements or other information. If it is new information to net control, the net control will ask for the information.

Suggested General Storm Statements and advice to the spotter...

Storms may generate any or all of the following conditions:

- Damaging Winds
- Dangerous Lightning
- Heavy Rain leading to ponding of water and flooding
- Damaging Hail
- Funnel clouds and tornados

Weather spotters in the affected area should be watchful for such conditions but should not compromise their own personal safety or that of their family! Any severe weather damage or injuries should be reported to your local law enforcement agency and the Illiana Skywarn Net.

Stations are reminded when they report in, to provide the following information:

- Who you are
- What condition(s) you are reporting
- Where the condition occurred
- When the condition occurred
- Direction of travel if relevant

Stations are also advised to only report the following severe weather conditions, which are of interest to the National Weather Service.

- Pea-Size Hail (0.25") or larger
- Wind Speed either measured or estimated at 50 MPH or greater
- Wall Cloud and / or rotation of a sustained duration of 5 or more minutes
- Funnel Cloud (Aloft)
- Tornado (On the Ground)
- Significant number of healthy trees or tree limbs down larger than 5" (Size of your thigh)
- Structural damage including downed utility poles and lines
- Ponding of water or flooding
- Torrential rain at a rate of 1" per hour or greater (zero visibility for several minutes)
- Personal Injuries

Stations reporting any of the previous conditions should contact Net Control and/or your local Law Enforcement agency immediately.

One more thought...

Know your weather facts! I have heard this time and time again. It is an easy mistake to make, but there is a major difference in the following 2 terms that some people think are interchangeable. This is a good example of why you need to take refresher spotter classes and why some things are named one way but don't appear like you think they would.

- A **Shelf Cloud** may appear like a "wall" of clouds moving towards you on the leading edge of the storm. It can be very turbulent in appearance and may even have signs of some rotation. Generally this cloud formation does nothing more than indicate a large storm and where a wind gust front of the storm is located.
- A **Wall Cloud** is a lowering cloud of the storm, typically at the rear of the storm, from the rain free cloud base. This is an indicator of where there is the most updraft or intake into the storm. This formation also will take a cylindrical shape and have general rotation about a vertical axis. From this formation a funnel cloud and ultimately a tornado can form.

Information Resources on the Internet

- National Weather Service Indianapolis, Indiana Office - http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ind/
- National Weather Service Lincoln, Illinois Office- http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/
- Illiana Skywarn - http://www.illianaskywarn.net

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