



District 3 SkyWarn®

Reporting Criteria & Procedures

(per NWS Cleveland SkyWarn® office)

When the six meter backbone is operational, we take reports from county liaisons, who participate in local county nets. They filter the reports and pass them to the backbone.

This is the ideal situation – However, we are all volunteers, so some nets may not be up during severe weather events. If that is the case, here are some guidelines to follow:

- If you are a spotter in the field
 - Please make your reports directly to your local county Skywarn® net.
 - If your county net is not up, you may report directly to the District 3 SkyWarn® net on 146.94.
 - If the backbone is not up, call the National Weather Service office by phone using the unlisted number you were provided during spotter training.
- If you are a county net control operator or liaison
 - Ensure reports meet the criteria below. Do not forward them if they do not.
 - Pass spotter reports to the backbone net.
 - If the backbone is not up, call the National Weather Service office on the phone using the number printed on your spotter card.

We take reports of:

- Tornadoes
- Funnel Clouds
- Wall Clouds
- Winds in excess of fifty miles per hour
- Hail dime size or larger
- Flooding in progress
- Storm damage.

Please do not report other kinds of weather unless asked.

Passing Storm Reports

- Please pass only the above reports unless asked.
- When receiving a report from the field, it is the Liaison Station's responsibility to "clean it up" – many spotters may not know all the details required, so your job is to ensure you get all of that information before passing the report.
- Call Cleveland Weather, and after waiting for acknowledgement, pass your report.
 - If we require more information, we will ask.

Also, some of the reporting criteria should receive higher priority communication than others. You should report the following weather events.

Urgent Priority

1. Tornado
2. Funnel cloud

3. Rotating wall cloud
4. Flash flooding/ Excessive flooding

High Priority

1. Hail $\frac{3}{4}$ - inch diameter or larger
2. Wind speed greater than 58 mph (estimated or measured)
3. Persistent non-rotating wall cloud
4. Rainfall 1 inch or more per hour (estimated or measured)

Lower Priority

1. Hail $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter or smaller
2. Wind speed greater than 30 mph (estimated or measured)
3. Cloud features suggesting storm organization
4. Other locally-defined criteria

NOTE: When reporting 1/2-inch diameter hail, do not use the term “marble” since marbles can come in a variety of sizes. In areas prone to severe weather.

Contact your local NWS office for specific adjustments to the criteria suggested above. If you have a lowering, watch if for 10 minutes before placing a report. Net control has the authority to modify the reporting criteria as needs dictate. This can be either the addition of or reduction in restrictions.

Information **NOT REQUIRED** for reports:

- Clear Sky reports
- Rain fall (Per National Weather Service Office Cleveland, Ohio)
- Level of lightning activity

Information NOT permitted:

Reports of weather you have heard from the media, law enforcement or citizens. These types of reports are not always from trained spotters. Repeating media reports is redundant at best. All 3 of these can prevent emergency traffic from being passed to the appropriate people. Please do not relay this type of information. The only purpose this serves is to delay the net. Net control has the authority to dispatch someone to verify a citizen or law enforcement report.

Activity that is NOT APPROPRIATE for a Net:

1. Troubleshooting of technical problems. If you know you are having issues with your equipment or are advised of it. Take your station off the frequency in use and troubleshoot the problem on a discrete frequency or at another time.
2. Announcements of non-event related activity.
3. Asking if a Net is in progress. If in doubt, exercise the “Release to Listen” method. Listen for either Net control to state a net is in progress or for the repeater to announce it.
4. Deviating from minimum reporting criteria. Clear sky, rain fall, lightning, and light winds reports are **NOT** wanted. The NWS has specifically stated that they do not want reports of rainfall. Rainfall estimates are guesses at best, and the NEXRAD radar can indicate rainfall. Flash flooding reports are requested at the appropriate time.

5. If you are not in or will be able to get to the area of concern in a reasonable time, **DO NOT CHECK IN.** If you can get to the area(s) of concern but it requires some extended drive time (excess of 15 minutes). Do not check into the net until you are in the area of concern. Checking in for checking in sake creates unneeded traffic and can impede the flow of relevant information. District 3 does not keep track of who joins a net for record keeping. It is however sent to the NWS in Cleveland.
6. Circumventing Net control for placement of spotters. While it is recommended that you use your best judgment when spotting, Let Net Control set the guidelines.
7. If Net control is in the process of receiving a report, allow Net control to finish the exchange before you try to contact Net Control (about 10-15 seconds). If a correction to a report is required, let the report be completed before contacting Net Control to make a correction.
8. Profanity. **IS NEVER ALLOWED, EVER....** And if you are part of a club or group, we **WILL** report you to them in a timely manner, and to the National Weather Service in Cleveland.

The reason for SkyWarn® nets, is to gather and send relevant weather event data as observed by trained spotters to the National Weather Service. The collection of this data needs to happen in a timely fashion with minimal delays. This information is used to issue local weather warnings. Those warnings can potentially save peoples lives or keep them from getting hurt. Delaying the data flow is similar to delaying an emergency vehicle from getting to the hospital.

The more advanced notice the NWS and local emergency management have in the activation of sirens, barricade placement etc., the better we are at doing our jobs as volunteers. Your participation as a volunteer is greatly appreciated. These guidelines are intended to help make the District 3 SkyWarn® nets run smoothly and get needed information to the correct people. The more professional we appear in operation improves our value to the public and government agencies. While Amateur is in our title, behaving “amateurish” is a detriment to that value.