District 3 SkyWarn

Spotter Tool Kit

District 3 Skywarn **DOES NOT** encourage ***storm chasing* – In English NONE…** that is, the constant movement of following of a storm to remain close to the severe core. As spotters, we recommend finding a safe location that has multiple escape routes that you can stop at and remain stationary while the storm moves through. This is especially true if you are spotting alone. You may find it necessary to move from time to time as the storm system moves, but you are not in a constant "chase" of the storm movement. If you are mobile while spotting, we recommend spotting in pairs so the driver can focus on road safety, while the passenger can monitor the storm activity, and navigate around hazards.

SPOTTER FIELD TOOLKIT

When in the field, there are some tools that can assist in making better reports that help provide more pertinent and reliable information. Having these items in your field toolkit help you prepare for a variety of situations.

Printouts

DISTRICT 3 SKYWARN SPOTTER REPORT SCRIPTS

When you make reports to Net Control, these Spotter Report Scripts will help guide you through proper reporting procedures to ensure concise, accurate reports.

SEVERE STORM SPOTTER'S REPORTING GUIDE

Carry a printout of the Severe Storm Spotter's Reporting Guide as a reference of reporting guidelines.

DISTRICT 3 SKYWARN SPOTTER ID CARD

Your District 3 Skywarn Spotter ID Card has a hail ruler, frequency reference chart (in case the net moves to a backup repeater, and you don't hear the announcement, perhaps the primary were struck by lightning, and an announcement could not be made), and it has your 3- or 4-digit MSW Spotter ID number.

WEATHER NOTEBOOK

Know what to say during your report on the radio by writing your observations on an all-weather notebook before you key up your radio. Bring an all-weather pen to write in the rain.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO

A **NOAA Weather Radio** will keep you updated with instant alerts directly from the NOAA NWS radio broadcasts. Emergency broadcast alerts for warnings will ensure you have instant safety information. Use a hand crank power supply, or bring plenty of batteries.

LIGHTNING DETECTOR

Ensure your safety is a priority with a **lightning detector**. If you can hear thunder, you can be struck by lightning. Lightning can strike up to 25 miles from the top of a thunderstorm.

Equipment

A **calibrated anemometer** is a device with small fan blades that measure actual wind speed. *A human cannot measure or estimate wind speed.* Valid wind reports rely on an anemometer. The anemometer should be stationary; holding it out the car window while driving will skew the wind speed because of the speed of the car. *A phone app alone cannot measure wind speed.*

Dash cams are useful to provide constant recording of storm events. You never know when a unique or rapidly developing situation may occur, so continuously recording the severe event ensures you capture any and all activities. Having a dash cam mounted to your windshield is a hands-free and safe way to record video.

Outdoor Drones can be used to capture unique views of storms, but also review storm path and damage once the threat has passed. Because they may be flying in storm winds, you could lose control or the drone itself. Drone use may require licensing and registration with the FAA and/or require an FCC amateur radio license.

A **mobile hotspot** with data service from a cellular provider can provide extra bandwidth for phones, laptops, tablets, and streaming cameras. Data charges and limits may apply. Service coverage may be limited in rural areas.

Using a mobile hotspot and a tablet or laptop, a **webcam** will let you stream live video of your spotting experience.

Various **GPS (Global Positioning System) and Navigation** devices help you determine and report your exact location. This is especially useful when reporting from rural locations where major crossroads are few and far between.