Start: 1952 L – Stop: 2012 L

SKYWARN®

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank-you Bob. Good evening to the net. Tonight, we'll be reviewing the Pinellas County SKYWARN program. This is a good time to review our SKYWARN® procedures because, first, according to the National Weather Service, the cooler months in Florida are the months that are most likely to spawn the strongest tornados. On average, Florida reaches a peak of severe tornado activity during the month of March. And second, we had a tornado warning on Sunday morning at 0630.

The sole purpose of the SKYWARN® program in Pinellas County is to provide the National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office at Tampa Bay with timely and accurate reports of severe weather phenomena so that a timely warning can be issued to the public of impending dangerous weather including tornadoes, hail, flooding, and damaging thunderstorm winds.

Pinellas SKYWARN® will activate when one or more of the following events take place.

a.   A Tornado watch has been issued for Pinellas County.

b.   A Tornado warning has been issued for Pinellas County.

c.   A Severe Thunderstorm warning has been issued for Pinellas County.

d.   A Tropical Storm warning has been issued for Pinellas County.

e.   A Severe weather event has been reported by a trained SKYWARN® spotter.

f.   The Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Tampa Bay Forecast Office has requested activation.

g.   During annual statewide Tornado Drills.

h.   During Pinellas ACS/ARES® drills and exercises if the scenario includes a weather event.

1.2 ACTIVATION LEVELS

When activated, Pinellas SKYWARN® will operate on the W4ACS repeater system at one of four activation levels.

1.2.1 SKYWARN® Activation Level 4 – GREEN.

Normal amateur radio operations. No specific action required.

1.2.2 SKYWARN® Level 3 Activation – YELLOW.

Pinellas SKYWARN® will be activated to level 3, **YELLOW,** when weather that has the potential to be severe is approaching or has entered the county, but no warning has been issued by the NWS and no severe weather has yet been reported by a trained SKYWARN® spotter. Although net check-ins are accepted during level 3 activation, this is an informal net in which other amateur traffic may be passed and is considered a Watch Net. Any station may call any other station without the permission of the NCS.

1.2.3 SKYWARN® Level 2 Activation – RED.

Pinellas SKYWARN® will be activated to level 2, **RED**, when a severe weather warning has been issued by the NWS or severe weather has been reported by a trained SKYWARN® spotter. This is a directed net, and all traffic should be directed to the net control station. Net check-ins will not be requested. Net traffic should be limited to reports of severe weather only.

1.2.4 SKYWARN® Level 1 Activation – BLACK.

Pinellas SKYWARN® will be activated to level 1, **BLACK**, when a tornado or funnel cloud is reported by a trained SKYWARN® spotter. While in Condition **BLACK**, ONLY REPORTS OF TORNADOES and FUNNEL CLOUDS WILL BE ACCEPTED by the NCS. No other reports of severe weather should be sent to the NCS until after the net reverts to level 2, **RED**.

1.3 MAKING A SEVERE WEATHER REPORT.

The accuracy and reliability of the severe weather reports that Pinellas SKYWARN® provides to the NWS is wholly dependent on the quality of the information reported to the SKYWARN® NCS

by individual SKYWARN® spotters. Therefore, when calling net control with a severe weather report, the SKYWARN® Spotter should provide the following information.

a. FCC Call sign

b. SKYWARN® Spotter number (if applicable) or if SKYWARN® trained.

c. The spotter's geographical location. Include detailed street address if possible.

d. Time that the severe weather event was observed; not the time that it was being reported.

e. A description of the severe weather event that includes the location of the event relative to your position.

The following severe weather events should always be reported by SKYWARN® spotters.

a. Tornados. Report if the tornado is on the ground and any visible damage. Be sure to include its approximate location relative to your position and the tornado's direction of travel.

b. Wall clouds and funnel clouds. Report if cloud is rotating and how long it has existed.

c. Waterspouts.

d. Measured winds in excess of 50 mph, or winds causing significant damage. Damage reports should detail the tree and/or structural damage observed.

e. Hail of any size. Report the size of the largest stone and any damage. Estimate the size by comparing the stone to a common object; but don't use a marble for your comparison.

f. Rain fall accumulations of _two_ or more inches in a single hour or _four_ or more inches in a single day.

g. Unusual and severe street flooding. Report if the flooding is standing water or flowing. Also report if the water level is continuing to rise, is steady, or is falling.

h. Unusual or severe coastal flooding.

So now that I've described what goes into a severe weather report, I'll provide the net with two examples. The first example is a report that could be used to describe hail stones. As a reminder to the net, this is an exercise report.

EXAMPLE 1

"This is WA1RYQ, I am SKYWARN® trained. At 1330 hours local my windshield was damaged by baseball size Hail at the corner of Park Blvd and 137th Street."

The second example is a report that could be used to report a funnel cloud. Again, as a reminder to the net, this is an exercise report.

EXAMPLE 2

"This is WA1RYQ, I am SKYWARN® trained. I am located at the intersection of 113th Street North and 71st Avenue North. The local time is 17:22 and I am watching a funnel cloud form at the base of a thunderstorm east of my location. The cloud appears to be moving to the west. No debris is evident at this time."

1.4   QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

I'd like to pause here for a minute and ask if anyone has a comment or question about tonight's presentation. If you have a comment or question, please provide me with your call sign, slowly, clearly, and phonetically so I don't make a mistake when I respond. And then ask your question or provide me with your comment.

This is WA1RYQ.

ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS

1.5   CONCLUSION.

That's all I have for this week's training session. Let me conclude with a couple of reminders.

1.   The next Winlink Training session is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19th, 2022, at 1930 hours local. This will be an on-line zoom meeting. An email containing the link to

the zoom meeting has been sent to all registered Winlink net participants. If you have not received the email and would like to attend the zoom meeting, please send me an email at WA1RYQ@arrl.net.

2.   I am continuing to work on updates the PACS web site. I am currently working on the FOCUS ON… Severe Weather page. Although several of the links have been updated, a few are still broken. I hope to have them fixed within a week or so.

I've also added an interactive weather map that displays a variety of weather-related information including current radar, lightning, temperature, wind, etc. You'll also see forecast information. Go ahead and push the buttons and let me know what you think.

3.   Finally, I strongly encourage everyone to provide me with comments and suggestions for future training activities. I can be contacted at WA1RYQ@ARRL.net.

Now with that, I'll turn it back to Net Control.

1.6 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

The following table contains a summary of the comments and questions provided by the membership during the presentation.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
1	W8QFV	(1) Imperative that spotters report hail of any size report that into the net. (2) Most of the funnel clouds in this area are usually obscured by rain so spotters will be unlikely to see them. When funnel clouds are seen, the circulation is very difficult to see.	Agree with statements.
2	KC4SXO	NWS likes to get the spotter reports of severe weather because it validates the information they are seeing on radar.	Agree with statement.
3	KJ4RUS	(1) I want to stress that anyone can start a SKYWARN® net. You do not need to be a trained NCS or an ACS officer or any type of lead. If you see severe weather and you think a SKYWARN® net is required, go ahead and start a net. (2) Net protocols are on the PACS website. (3) If you are reporting anything to the NWS, keep it short and simple. NWS likes the TEL method: Time, Event, Location.	Agree with statement
4	W8QFV	Many of the severe weather events in this area pop up quickly and dissipate rapidly. If the event is over, Spotter do not need to report the event to the NWS.	Some information about an event can be useful to the NWS even after the fact. Detailed reports of damage, in particular, should be reported even if the report is a few hours or a day after the event. These reports enable the NWS to better estimate the severity of a wind or tornadic event.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
		No Additional Questions or comments	