

Start: 1950 L – Stop: 2005 L

SKYWARN®

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank-you Bob. Good evening to the net. Tonight, we'll be reviewing the Pinellas County SKYWARN program.

Within the Tampa Bay area there are two types of SKYWARN® nets. A regional net and local nets. A regional SKYWARN® net will activate on the NI4CE repeater system when one or more of the events listed below takes place.

- a. A Tropical Storm warning has been issued for the Tampa Bay area.
- b. A Hurricane warning has been issued for the Tampa Bay area.
- c. Any other large scale weather event or natural disaster that impacts most of the Tampa Bay area.
- d. The Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Tampa Bay Forecast Office has requested activation.

A regional SKYWARN® net will be activated to better manage the flow of information to the National Weather Service.

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

- a. A Tornado watch or warning has been issued for Pinellas County.
- b. A Severe Thunderstorm watch or warning has been issued for Pinellas County.
- c. A Severe weather event has been reported by a trained SKYWARN® spotter.
- d. The Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Tampa Bay Forecast Office has requested activation.
- e. During annual statewide severe weather and Tornado drills.
- f. During Pinellas ACS/ARES® drills and exercises if the scenario includes a weather event.

Tonight's discussion will be limited to Pinellas County's SKYWARN® program.

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.

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 a severe weather watch has been issued by the NWS. SKYWARN® level 3 is an informal net. The Net Control station will request check-ins; however, other amateur traffic may be passed, and 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 NCS. 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 SKYWARN NET CONTROL

Any trained SKYWARN® member can activate a SKYWARN® net. The NCS does not need prior authorization from the Pinellas County ACS RO to establish a SKYWARN® net.

Minimum requirements to be a SKYWARN Net Control station:

- a. Licensed amateur radio operator trained as a SKYWARN® spotter.
- b. Capable of operating on both two meter and 70 cm band with a clear signal.
- c. Able to receive bulletins from the NWS (i.e.: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR), Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN) receiver, etc.).
- d. Operating from a fixed location with access to a working telephone.

Once net establishment is complete, the NCS will perform the following actions.

- a. Monitor the NWR.
- b. Broadcast to the net any new watches, warnings, statements, or updates issued by the NWS.
- c. Immediately relay all severe weather reports to the Tampa Bay Weather Forecast Office by using the TEL method; Time, Event, and Location.
- d. Notify the ACS RO in the event of significant weather-related damage which may require additional amateur resources.
- e. Collect after-action damage reports and forward them to the NWS in a timely fashion.

1.4 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. Tornadoes. 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 a few miles east of my location. The cloud appears to be moving to the west. No debris is evident at this time.”

1.5 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

1.6 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, July 6th, 2022, at 1930 hours local. This will be a mixed voice and data net with the initial voice segment taking place on the WD4SCD repeater.

A Winlink bulletin describing the planned net activities will be sent to all registered Winlink net participants tomorrow morning. A copy of the bulletin and detailed

instructions for creating the planned messages exchanged during the net have also been posted on the Pinellas ACS Website.

2. Several PACS documents are currently being updated and will be posted on the PACS Website within the next few days. They include.

- a. *Pinellas County ACS/ARES® Emergency Communication Plan and Standard Operating Procedures.*
- b. *Pinellas County ACS/ARES® Winlink Training Plan*
- c. *Pinellas County ACS/ARES® SKYWARN® Operations Plan and Standard Operating Procedures.*

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.

1.7 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 | Please confirm that the colors associated with the activation levels are GREEN, YELLOW, RED, and BLACK. | That is correct. |
| 2. | KJ4RUS | Good example of TEL method; however, when reporting a funnel cloud the report should also indicate how far away the funnel cloud is to the spotter's location. | Will add the information to the example and ensure that this requirement is incorporated into the SKYWARN® plan. |
| 3. | KC4SXO | Recommend before closing the net, that the NCS request check-ins so that a complete record of all those stations monitoring the net can be completed. | Good comment and recommendation. I will incorporate into the SKYWARN® plan. |
| 4. | K4VEB | When updating the SKYWARN® plan recommend that you add a note that indicates the NWS is no longer issuing SKYWARN® spotter numbers. | Good comment and recommendation. I will incorporate into the SKYWARN® plan. |
| | | No Additional Questions or comments | |