Marion County SkyWarn Event Net Procedures

The Marion county, Florida SkyWarn amateur radio weather spotter network will activate in one of two modes during a severe weather event, depending on the local conditions and the activations requests from emergency management officials and the National Weather Service. If either of these two agencies has requested an activation or weather events meeting the current reportable criteria set forth by the National Weather Service, the net will be in “Formal Mode”. If a weather alert has been issued by the National Weather Service or any member of SkyWarn feels it is necessary to bring the SkyWarn net online this will be done in “Informal Mode” until which time the chance of severe weather has passed or the net is upgraded to a “Formal Mode” status. Remember as a net control operator you main goal should be the safety of your spotters. Remind everyone to stay safe.

Informal Mode:

Any member may bring the net into informal mode. We would rather be safe than sorry. If the member who brings the net up doesn’t wish to be net control then the member should attempt to pass net control to another available member. In informal mode the main goal is to gather radio operators onto the designated repeater to be prepared for a severe weather event. The net control operator is still in control of the net in informal mode. However rag chew and general discussion is acceptable and weather related discussion is encouraged. Many times the net may never go beyond this point.

When bringing the net up in informal mode announce the net is being activated in informal mode and ask for any available operators to notify other area repeaters of the informal status of SkyWarn. If other operators are not available notify that you are moving to other frequencies to notify other members of the activation. While in informal mode if possible monitor weather radar at [www.weather.gov/jacksonville](http://www.weather.gov/jacksonville) and monitor the local weather radio for any updates on location and severity of the event. The net control operator should keep everyone listening informed of any new information but, may designate another operator to do this. Informal mode will be the go to mode even during a hurricane event until reportable criteria have been recorded unless emergency management of the National Weather Service has requested otherwise. This will encourage more active and lively spotters during the long activation times required during a tropical event.

Formal Mode:

Formal Mode means that the National Weather Service or a Member of emergency management has asked for spotter activation or a weather event that meets the reportable criteria has been spotted. When the net is in formal mode it is the job of net control to keep the net and the information being relayed organized and professional. The event net script should be used and records of what operators have checked in or out and there locations be kept. No rag chew should be tolerated and unless calling for check-ins or an operator with emergency traffic, operators should only occupy the repeater when asked to with the exception of the net control operator.

The net control operator should designate another operator as an assistant to help copy traffic and call in or post reports to the National Weather Service. The net control operator should keep track of members and their locations while facilitating the movement of the information needed. Unless the net control operator requests otherwise the second person to check in to the net will be the assistant to the net control operator. It is suggested that if possible the net control operator during formal mode be trained in net control operations by performing weekly nets. The net control operator should have access to and follow the current version of the SkyWarn Event Net Script and have available the SkyWarn roster as these members will be the most familiar with net operations and may assist the net control operator during the event. During a severe weather event, net operations can become overwhelming very quickly and knowing who can assist with untrained spotters joining the net can be very helpful. If other duties arise the net control operator can designate other operators to assist with specific tasks and may even direct another operator to instruct new untrained operators on another available repeater. It is also suggested that all reports be copied on the Marion County SkyWarn Severe Weather Report Form if at all possible. This will give us the redundancy and traceability if there are any questions on a report. If a specific event has passed but the possibility of more sever weather still remains the net can drop back to informal mode for a standby purpose.