

Denton County Skywarn Guidelines

Emergency traffic, tornadic activity or weather that is an immanent threat to life and/or property has top priority.

Repeater Operations during a Skywarn Net:

During a Skywarn event, the Denton 146.92 and Lewisville 145.17 repeaters are linked together. This requires different usage in comparison to standalone operations on either repeater.

1. Allow the courtesy tone on the repeater you are using to complete. The configuration of the link requires this to happen or you can prevent a station from the other repeater from making a report.
2. Do not quick key or tailgate another station. Doing so creates two issues. First, stations with emergency traffic may not be able to be heard by Net Control. A quick key or tailgate incident can cause life or death traffic to be delayed. Second, it creates issues with the proper operation of the link. For example, if a station on 92 makes a report then another station on 92 keys up immediately after (not allowing courtesy tone to complete), stations on the 5.17 machine will not be able to make a report or check in. The inverse is the same for stations on the 5.17 machine.
3. Allowing the courtesy tone to execute also allows weak signal stations or stations with priority traffic to check in to the net and post a report.
4. Both the 146.92 and 145.17 repeaters go to a single tone courtesy tone instead of 3 tones. A triple tone indicates normal operation. A single tone indicates an ARES net.
5. When the repeater announces WATCH, this indicates that severe weather is a possibility but there is not an active net. The repeaters are still informal status.

How to place a report to an active net:

1. Wait for the courtesy tone on the repeater you are using to complete.
2. Send the suffix of your callsign. Wait to be acknowledged.
3. When you are acknowledged by net control, give your location (use major street intersection only, not a MAPSCO grid), what you are observing and then your full callsign. Keep the report short and concise. Think about what you are going to report before you key up and place the report.

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Severe Weather Reporting Criteria

Note: This is copied directly from the NWS Basic Storm Spotters guide.

Many types of weather information are needed from storm spotters; however, some types of information are much more important than others. Strict adherence to the reporting criteria allows vital information to be communicated as soon as possible.

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

High Priority

1. Hail 3/4-inch diameter or larger
2. Wind speed greater than 58 mph
3. Persistent non-rotating wall cloud
4. Rainfall 1 inch or more per hour

Lower Priority

1. Hail 1/2-inch diameter or larger
2. Wind speed greater than 40 mph
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, some offices may not need reports of 1/2-inch hail. Contact your local NWS office for specific adjustments to the criteria suggested above. If you have a lowering, watch it 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 Fort Worth Texas)

Level of lightning activity

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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 WSR-88D 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. Denton County ARES does not keep track of who joins a net for record keeping.
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. If a correction to a report is required, let the report be completed before contacting Net Control to make a correction.
8. Profanity.

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. Theses guidelines are intended to help make the

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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.

ARES Pager Notification:

To be able to receive pager based notifications of Skywarn or ARES events, you will be required to be an active ARES member.