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SKYWARN
WEATHER.GOV

What is SKYWARN®?

SKYWARN Recognition Day:

Dec. 1, 2012

The effects of severe weather are felt every year by many Americans. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), part of the U.S.

Department of Commerce, established SKYWARN® with partner organizations. SKYWARN® is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the National Weather Service.

Although SKYWARN® spotters provide essential information for all types of weather hazards, the main responsibility of a SKYWARN® spotter is to identify and describe severe local storms. In the average year, 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and more than 1,000 tornadoes occur across the United States. These events threatened lives and property.

Since the program started in the 1970s, the information provided by SKYWARN® spotters, coupled with Doppler radar technology, improved satellite and other data, has enabled NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods.

SKYWARN® storm spotters are part of the ranks of citizens who form the Nation's first line of defense against severe weather. There can be no finer reward than to know that their efforts have given communities the precious gift of time--seconds and minutes that can help save lives.

Who is Eligible?

NWS encourages anyone with an interest in public service and access to

communication, such as HAM radio, to join the SKYWARN® program. Volunteers include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and other concerned private citizens. Individuals affiliated with hospitals, schools, churches, nursing homes or who have a responsibility for protecting others are also encouraged to become a spotter.

How Can I Get Involved?

NWS has 122 local Weather Forecast Offices, each with a Warning Coordination Meteorologist, who is responsible for administering the SKYWARN® program in their local area. Training is conducted at these local offices and covers:

- Basics of thunderstorm development
- Fundamentals of storm structure
- Identifying potential severe weather features
- Information to report
- How to report information
- Basic severe weather safety

Classes are free and typically are about two hours long. To find a class in your area:

- Go to: <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov/contact.htm> and click on your state
- When your state comes up, click on the name of your Weather Forecast Office
- Once at your local WFO home page, in the blue bar on the left, look for the SKYWARN link to find a schedule of classes and other local information
- Spotter's Guide: [English](#), [Español](#)

SKYWARN® is a registered trademark of NOAA's National Weather Service. Rules for the usage of the SKYWARN® name and logo are available [here](#).

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1325 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
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Last Updated: December 5, 2012

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