SKYWARN® SPOTTERS

SKYWARN® spotters provide lifesaving information for all types of environmental hazards. However, the main responsibility of a spotter is to report severe local storms. More than 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and 1,000 tornadoes occur in the U.S. during an average year. If that weren't enough, spotters are also trained on warning signs for snowfall, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, volcanic ash fall, and coastal hazards such as tsunamis, water spouts and rip currents.

Since the program started in the 1960s, SKYWARN® information, coupled with Doppler radar technology, improved satellite data and other resources, has enabled NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods.

SKYWARN® storm spotters form the Nation's first line of defense against severe weather. The efforts of these volunteers give communities the precious gift of time - seconds and minutes that can help save lives.

Who is Eligible?

Anyone interested in helping their community and with an interest in weather is welcome. Offices have various ways of reporting, from amateur radio operators, to phoning in reports, or emailing and posting them online or through social media. SKYWARN® Spotters include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and the public at large. NWS encourages anyone responsible for large groups of people or who work primarily outdoors to become a spotter.

How Can I Get Involved?

To get involved, contact the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) in your local NWS office. WCMs conduct training and administer the SKYWARN® program for a specific local community. Classes are free and typically last about two hours. To find out when a SKYWARN® class will be conducted in your area, contact your local WCM at: http://www.stormready.noaa.gov/contact.htm

Many NWS offices also accept weather spotters who completed the Online SKYWARN® Training course. Make sure to select that you want your information shared with the NWS. https://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_course.php?id=23

SKYWARN® STORM SPOTTER