

# **EMERGENCY OPERATING GUIDELINES**

## **For Kankakee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Operators**

### **Net Operations**

In the event of a communications emergency, a radio network will be activated. Network operations provide for efficient handling of a high volume messages.

- All traffic should be addressed to the Net Control Operator.
- All unnecessary traffic should be avoided.
- Listen for traffic before you attempt to talk.
- To check in, announce your call only.
- Wait for Net Control to ask for further details.
- If you have traffic, announce your call then wait for Net Control to acknowledge you.
- If your traffic is priority or emergency, say so when you announce your call.

Transmit with full power.

- Weak signals will only hamper operations.

Key your mike and hold for 1 sec before speaking.

- This allows portable radios to operate in "energy save" mode allowing much longer use during emergency situations.

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**Net Operations**

**Key Words**

The following words have special meaning and should be used appropriately.

- Routine            Lowest priority traffic.
- Welfare           Well-being checks for family and friends.
- Priority            More urgent traffic.
- Emergency        Should only be used to save life or property.

**Pro-Words**

The following "pro-words" are used to increase efficiency when communicating:

- Clear              End of contact.
- Over                Let ANY station know to respond.
- Go Ahead          Let SPECIFIC station know to respond.
- Out                 Leaving the air - will not be listening.
- Stand By          A temporary interruption of the contact.
- Roger              Transmission has been received in full.
- Say Again         "Please repeat that last thing you just said"

**"No No" Words**

10 - anything.      Leave that to EMS and Law Enforcement.  
10 codes are not universal and may mean different things to different organizations.

Cute phonetics    Learn the ITU alphabet and use it.

"Q" Codes          Not everyone understands them.  
Use plain English to avoid confusion.

# **SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES**

## **For Kankakee County Storm Spotters**

### **CONDITION BLUE - SEVERE WEATHER OUTLOOK**

**The National Weather Service, Chicago Forecast Office** issues a "SEVERE WEATHER OUTLOOK" statement around 4:30 am each morning. This OUTLOOK statement is updated at approximately 4:30 pm daily.

Each OUTLOOK statement includes a notification for spotters regarding the possibility of activation based on the risk of severe weather.

On days when there is a moderate or higher risk of severe weather, A CONDITION BLUE will be initiated.

Once notified that CONDITION BLUE procedures should be implemented, spotters should take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- Review severe weather procedures.
- Consider your plans for the day, and be prepared to respond to a call for weather spotting later in the day.
- Check your personal preparedness to make sure you are ready to respond, i.e. rain gear, car filled with gas, portable radio with charged batteries.
- Monitor sources of weather information and be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.

# **SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES**

## **For Kankakee County Storm Spotters**

### **CONDITION GREEN - SEVERE WEATHER WATCH**

**The Storm Prediction Center in Norman Oklahoma** will issue a "SEVERE WEATHER WATCH" (either thunderstorm or tornado) when conditions are favorable for the formation of severe weather.

A weather WATCH is usually issued for a period of 6 hours.

Spotters will receive a CONDITION GREEN notification via established communications systems from their respective organization.

Once notified that CONDITION GREEN procedures should be implemented, spotters should take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- Review your community, organization and family severe weather procedures, and make sure you know what to do and where you are to go to spot weather.
- Make sure you know how to report severe weather. Consider a primary and alternate reporting method, i.e. radio and telephone. Review the National Weather Service Severe Weather Report Form to make sure that you are aware of what information the Weather Service needs.
- Be aware of safety issues. If you are a spotter that will be dispatched to a field location, consider safety issues for that location including where you can go to take shelter if a severe thunderstorm or tornado approaches.
- Monitor sources of weather information and be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.

## SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES For Kankakee County Storm Spotters

### CONDITION YELLOW - SEVERE WEATHER ALERT

A "SEVERE WEATHER ALERT" will be issued when **A COUNTY** detects the formation of a potentially violent storm, which has not yet reached the levels to warrant the issuance of a WARNING.

A severe weather Radio Net will be established and spotters will receive a CONDITION YELLOW notification via established communications plans.

Once notified that CONDITION YELLOW has been implemented, take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- If you are a stationary spotter: Notify Net Control of your position. Do not leave that location unless you have communicated with Net Control to advise them of your actions.
- If you are a mobile spotter: Stay in constant touch with Net Control to advise them of your location with relation to any approaching storm. Be prepared to move to a location as directed by Net Control to obtain the best vantage point of the approaching storm.
- ALWAYS be aware of your precise location. Be prepared to identify your location with nearby intersections. Practice this technique during your everyday driving.
- Monitor sources of weather information (NOAA weather radio, Fire or Police two-way radio system, neighboring county's radio nets, amateur radio, etc.) And keep alert for information indicating that severe weather has been detected. Be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.
- Report any weather event outlined in the Severe Weather Reporting Form.
- If you are unsure about what you are seeing, study the sky for a few minutes. Report what you see with as much detail as possible.
- Be especially alert for the formation of severe weather in your area.

## SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES For Kankakee County Storm Spotters

### CONDITION RED - SEVERE WEATHER WARNING

A "WARNING" will be issued by the National Weather Service following the detection, by radar or trained weather spotter, of a severe thunderstorm or tornado on the ground. A warning may also be issued for a verified report of funnel cloud aloft.

A "WARNING" is usually issued for a period of ½ hour to 1 hour.

Spotters will receive a CONDITION RED notification via established communications plan.

Once CONDITION RED procedures have been implemented, spotters should immediately take the following actions:

- Be particularly alert for the formation of severe weather in your area.
- Pay particular attention to the area where severe weather has been reported.
- IMMEDIATELY report any severe weather that you observe to Net Control.
- If you are in the field, be prepared to leave your vehicle and move to your pre-identified place of safety if a tornado or severe storm threatens your location. Notify Net Control if you are taking this action.
- DO NOT leave your location without communicating with Net Control.
- If a severe storm or tornado strikes the community, IMMEDIATELY report the impact to Net Control so they can notify the Kankakee County Emergency Operations Center.
- Provide as much information as **accurately** possible, but do not hold up the report. Communities in the path of the storm need to be warned!

# SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES

## For Kankakee County Storm Spotters

### Storm Reporting Criteria

There are certain criteria for reporting severe weather. Recall that a thunderstorm is defined as severe if it produces a tornado, hail 3/4 inch in diameter or larger, and/or wind gusts 58 miles an hour or higher. It would be desirable to report events associated with a thunderstorm before they reach these severe levels. Use the following guidelines for reporting weather events.

- Report hail occurrences when the hailstones have a diameter of 1/2 inch,
  - Report wind gusts when their speed reaches 50 miles an hour.
- See below for estimations of hail size and wind speed.

Obviously, tornadoes and funnel clouds should be reported. A funnel cloud is defined as a violently rotating column of air which is not in contact with the ground. It is usually marked by a funnel-shaped cloud extending downward from the cloud base (hence its name). If the violently rotating air column reaches the ground, it is called a tornado. The visible funnel DOES NOT have to extend to the ground for a tornado to be present. Look for a rotating cloud of dust and debris underneath a funnel cloud as evidence that the tornado's circulation has reached the ground.

#### Hail Size Estimates (in inches)

Pea	0.25	Golf ball	1.75
Penny	0.75	Tennis Ball	2.50
Quarter	1.00	Baseball	2.75
Half Dollar	1.25	Grapefruit	4.00

**Report conditions listed in yellow box.**

#### Wind Speed Estimates

MPH	Effects
25-31	Large branches in motion; whistling in telephone wires
32-38	Whole trees in motion
39-54	Twigs break off of trees; wind impedes walking
55-72	Damage to chimneys and antennas; pushes over shallow rooted trees
73-112	Peels surface off roofs; windows broken; trailer houses overturned
113+	Roofs torn off houses; weak buildings and trailer houses destroyed; large trees uprooted

# SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES

## For Kankakee County Storm Spotters

### Storm Reporting Format

#### REPORT:

**Who** and where are **YOU**.

**What** you have seen: tornado, funnel cloud, wall cloud, waterspout, flash flooding, etc.

**Where** you saw it: the direction and distance from a known location, i.e., "3 miles south of Bonfield." To avoid confusion, make sure you report the **event** location and not your location.

**When** you saw it: make sure you note the time of your observation.

**How** it was behaving: describe the storm's direction and speed of travel, size and intensity, and destructiveness.

**Include any amount of uncertainty** as needed, i.e., "funnel cloud; no debris visible at the surface, but too far away to be certain it is not on the ground."

DO NOT report on events you did not actually see:

- Secondhand reporting is prone to inaccuracies and is not helpful.
- Your "buddy on the other side of town" is probably NOT a trained weather spotter.
- Adrenaline increases wind estimates and hail size.

# **SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES**

## **For Kankakee County Storm Spotters**

### **Miscellaneous points**

If a severe storm or a tornado strikes the community, do not immediately leave your spotter location. It is possible that a second tornado may occur, and leaving your post may leave a portion of the community unprotected. Additionally, roadways may be blocked by debris and fallen wires. Wait for instructions from Net Control before leaving your post. Taking the initiative to enter an unsafe area without authorization from Net Control may subject you to personal liability should you be injured or your equipment damaged.

If safety concerns require you to leave your location, notify Net Control if you can. Your primary responsibility is to protect yourself and those around you first. If you do not have time prior, notify Net Control as soon as it is safe to do so.

Continue to monitor sources of weather information and be prepared to initiate emergency response activities if the storm impacts the community.

**SAFETY FIRST!** The Net Control Operator cannot see the conditions at your location. If Net Control asks you to do something or go somewhere that you feel will endanger you, do not do it. Advise Net Control of the situation and the fact that you are unable to comply with the request.

You are not authorized at any time to exceed the posted speed limit. Doing so during severe weather will greatly increase your chances of being involved in an accident. Speeding in heavy rain is just plain stupid. Don't do it.

You are not authorized to detain citizens, even for their own safety. If a dangerous situation exists, you may "strongly advise" them of the condition, but the law will not support you if you attempt to restrict their passage. People have the right to injure themselves if they wish.

Keep your composure. The press as well as the general public monitor the repeater. Do NOT use radio to deliver sensitive messages. Avoid words that carry strong emotions.