KØMPX Amateur Radio Operating Procedures

The National Weather Service Forecast office in Chanhassen, Minnesota provides warning for severe weather phenomena for 51 counties in Central and Southern Minnesota and West-Central Wisconsin. As part of this warning process, the National Weather Service (NWS) works with several severe storm spotting groups throughout their warning area. These groups provide vital information regarding storm structure. This information coupled with radar and environmental characteristics help the forecasters at the NWS to provide severe weather warnings for the effected areas to help save life and property. To this end, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen has established an amateur radio club station, KØMPX, and an agreement with various amateur radio organizations to pass severe weather reports via a "Hub & Spoke" reporting network. This network will allow for efficient reporting of severe weather phenomena to the NWS.

Mission

The mission of this group is to pass information from spotters in the field to forecasters at the NWS as quickly and efficiently as possible. To accomplish this goal, the NWS will actively seek out participation from, and provide training within a reasonable amount of time as agreed by both parties to any spotter group throughout their area of responsibility or County Warning Area (CWA).

The NWS has found that to more efficiently transfer information, a "Hub & Spoke" method of reporting will be advantageous to both local spotter groups and the NWS Skywarn Group. See attached map titled "KØMPX Reporting System" for details of participating organizations.

Procedures

The goal of these procedures is to obtain an orderly exchange of information from local Skywarn organizations over the designated hub repeaters.

The NWS Skywarn group coordinator and assistant coordinator are the persons responsible for making contact to the Lead Forecaster at the NWS and also preparing statements to be sent to other Skywarn organizations.

Readiness Statements

The NWS Skywarn group will attempt to make information about possible severe weather available to all served Skywarn organizations via e-mail as far in advance as 24 hours. Updates will be given as to the timing of severe weather and anticipated operations at the KØMPX station at least once on the day of severe weather, and more often as deemed necessary by the lead forecaster and the NWS Skywarn coordinator (or assistant coordinator) for that period. The designated person will contact the lead forecaster on duty in the late morning of an expected severe weather day to discuss any possible activation and the timeframe anticipated.

When operations are expected, an e-mail will be sent to the list and a call list will start stating the expected operations schedule. This call list may include Metro Skywarn operators and also NWS Skywarn radio operators. This list will be outlined in a separate Radio Operators Guide.

Repeater Hubs

Hub repeaters are of two types: a dedicated hub, and a shared hub. The only traffic on dedicated hubs is from Skywarn net control stations to the NWS Skywarn relay station. On a shared hub, a local Skywarn net will be active on the hub. The local Skywarn NCS will run the net and report to the NWS Skywarn relay station any reports of severe weather or other information requested by the NWS Skywarn relay station. These stations will be noted on the operations map and also in the Radio Operators Guide.

Opening Dedicated Hub Radio Operations:

"BREAK" This is KØMPX, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, requesting a clear frequency on the (state frequency or call) repeater. All non-emergency traffic is requested to QSY, thank you.

Is there any emergency traffic at this time? (Pause)

At this time, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen will be conducting Skywarn radio operations in response to (reported/possible) severe weather in the following areas: (name areas) and will be running a closed net for reporting of severe weather conditions. It is asked that all severe weather reports be relayed through your local Skywarn nets. No direct reporting from spotters will be taken on this frequency unless requested.

All Skywarn Net Control Operators, please check in now with your call sign and level of readiness. (Poll available stations to find availability of Spotter Networks.)

Updates:

As time permits, or during times of inactivity, the radio operator at KØMPX will query the net control operators of the Skywarn organizations about their status to ensure that any status changes can be noted. The radio operator will also remind stations that reports are to first be made to local Skywarn nets and not directly to KØMPX by reading the following:

"This is KØMPX, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, MN, on the (state frequency or call) repeater operating a closed net for reporting of severe weather events. It is asked that all severe weather reports be relayed through your local Skywarn nets. No direct reporting from spotters will be taken on this frequency unless requested."

Closing Radio Operations:

This now concludes the closed net for severe weather operations at the National Weather Service. We would like to thank everyone for their participation in tonight's event. Your reports allow us to better warn the public. This repeater is now returned to general amateur use. KØMPX clear.

The following are the operating procedures for a **shared hub** repeater for severe weather operations:

Opening Shared Hub Radio Operations:

"BREAK" This is KØMPX, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, is there currently a Skywarn Net Control in operation on frequency? (If yes, continue. If no, stand by until the local net can be established. NWS Skywarn operators are NOT to act as net control stations for local Skywarn operations.)

At this time, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen will be conducting Skywarn radio operations in response to (reported/possible) severe weather in this area. It is asked that all severe weather reports be relayed through your local Skywarn Net Control Station. The Net Control Station will then forward reports to the National Weather Service. Net Control Station, please call KØMPX with any reportable conditions.

Updates:

As time permits, or during times of inactivity, the radio operator at KØMPX will query the net control operators of the Skywarn organization(s) about their status to ensure that any status changes can be noted.

Closing Radio Operations:

NWS Skywarn relay station will stand down when all hub and spoke organizations stand down, or when the threat has passed.

"(Local net control station), this is KØMPX, the National Weather Service. At this time we will be closing relay operations. We would like to thank everyone for their participation in tonight's event. Your reports allow us to better warn the public. (after Acknowledgement) KØMPX clear."

Backup Operations

Should a hub repeater fail, the NWS Skywarn operator will move to a backup frequency, if available, as stated below and attempt to resume operations. No repeater or other station will be utilized that is not listed in this guide without the expressed permission of the coordinator (or assistant coordinator) on duty. Any changes in radio frequencies should be immediately logged.

Backup operations listed by hub (in order of movement)

Mankato

1. Move to Waseca - 146.940, tone 141.3, call for KBØUJL, Net Control
2. Move to Mankato 443.650, tone 114.8, call for WØWCL, Net Control
3. Direct to 1-800 number

Madison

1. EchoLink
2. Direct to 1-800 number

Becker

1. Move to Paynesville, 145.270, no tone.
2. Should both Paynesville and Becker fail, attempts will be made to directly monitor member repeater systems in the highest threat area(s).
3. Direct to 1-800 number

Baldwin

1. Move to Roberts repeater, 147.330, tone 110.9, coordinate with St. Croix County Net Control.
2. Direct to 1-800 number

Metro Skywarn

1. Direct contact with NCS stations on 146.850 & 147.210.
2. Direct to 1-800 number

3rd Party Traffic

It is requested that local Skywarn nets accept 3rd party traffic related to severe weather whenever possible. It is at the discretion of the local net control to assign a priority to this report. Any reports made in this respect should be passed to the NWS Skywarn station with a note in regards to its origin. Should a report be made to a dedicated hub repeater, the report will be taken and the reporter will be referred to the closest local Skywarn net when possible. Should time permit, the NWS Skywarn station will update the local Skywarn net control operator of this action.

Late Night/Limited Severe Threat Activation

In the event of late night severe weather, or when severe weather is expected to only affect an isolated area and be of short duration, KØMPX may not formally activate Skywarn operations. Depending on staffing during the time of the weather event, meteorologists may be monitoring the hub repeaters for reports. During these events, reports should first be forwarded to the NWS via the 1-800 number. At that time, the staff on duty will be able to inform the net control station if someone is monitoring the hub and how future reports should be forwarded.

Contacts:

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