

3. A communications emergency exists at the NWS, such that amateur radio might be used to contact and coordinate with other NWS offices, emergency management agencies, etc.
4. A major winter storm is imminent, or is expected to affect the area. (Net activations for winter storms are extremely rare, but are included in the operations plan since spotters can be a great help during adverse winter weather.)

2.2 Activation Time Frames and Requested Staffing

Most of the time, SKYWARN will be activated when a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm WATCH is issued for any counties in the Memphis CWA. The lead-time in such situations will range from zero (0) to six (6) hours. Thunderstorms may develop and intensify rapidly and are often life-threatening situations. Responders are always requested to staff the NWS amateur radio station during severe thunderstorm or tornado watches, as well as during other fast-moving and rapidly-changing weather situations. The SKYWARN net may remain activated from one to as many as twelve hours, depending on the coverage and severity of the weather situation.

During long-lead time severe weather events such as winter storms, SKYWARN may be activated when a WARNING is issued. Lead time may be anywhere from zero (0) to twelve (12) hours. Requests to staff the NWS amateur radio station will depend on the forecaster's assessment of the nature of the storm, the utility of the spotters' reports in the situation and the potential of the storm to cause widespread communications outages. Long-term events could cause SKYWARN to be activated for extended periods of time, although this type of activation is extremely rare.

2.3 NWS SKYWARN Net Activation Steps

Once the NWS makes the decision to activate SKYWARN, the following action steps are taken by the forecasters:

1. The Forecaster-in-Charge will call the Amateur Radio Operations Coordinator, or his designate to request activation of the Mid-South SKYWARN Emergency Net.
2. The forecaster will brief the SKYWARN Amateur Radio Coordinator, or his designate on the following: a) the reason for activation (watch, valid time), b) the affected areas, c) expected onset of severe weather in the County Warning Area (CWA)

The Coordinator will make the determination, based on timing and affected areas, on whether to dispatch Responders to the NWS office. This determination is based, in part, on the areas of the CWA to be affected and the availability of spotters in those areas, and on the expected onset of severe weather in the CWA.