

Informal vs Formal Skywarn Net

There are two types of Skywarn Nets that we run. The informal nets are when a Skywarn Net Control Station announces the net and what criteria we are looking for then we just monitor the repeater for incoming reports. This is usually when we have very specific criteria that we are looking for. Such as snow depth, ice accumulation, changes in precipitation type or intensity. In the summer months it might be severe weather criteria such as tornado, hail, heavy rain, or flooding.

We start the nets usually when Rob Macedo requests it. He will specify what information he is looking for and how often he would like us to call out for reports. They could be once an hour, every half hour or, under severe conditions, every five minutes. The NCS will typically transmit something like "This is KC1IKA, Smitty, in Westfield and we are running an informal Skywarn net. We are looking for snow accumulation and elevation. Stations with reports please call. We will be listening on this repeater for the next few hours. This is KC1IKA listening for Skywarn reports."

Formal Skywarn nets follow a stricter preamble and are more like a normal ARES net. We will identify the net and ourselves, we will inform you of why we are having the net, then we will request check-ins. After everyone has checked in, we will request reports. These nets are also requested by Rob Macedo and we report the results back to him on a special Skywarn chat group. The shortest interval for these nets is typically every fifteen minutes. This allows us to do the net and type up the reports.

With both nets, it is very important for reporting stations to listen to what we are requesting and in the order we are requesting. We fill out log sheets and it makes our jobs a lot easier if we get the information in the order we are requesting. If we are just requesting precipitation type, intensity, accumulation, and station elevation please just provide that information. Your personal weather station might have temperature, dewpoint, wind direction, wind speed, max gusts, air pressure, pressure tendency, etc. Providing all that when we just need to know four things just slows down the net and delays us getting the report to Rob.

Please be specific when reporting values. We have some snow, about 4 to 8 inches and it's windy, won't really help us. Snow depth is measured in tenths of an inch, so $\frac{3}{4}$ inch should be reported as 0.8 inches.

Practice Skywarn Nets

Before the start of a new season, Summer, Winter, we will have a couple of practice Skywarn Nets to remind everyone how they run and what we are looking for. They will be announced on the ARES nets at least a week in advance.

For the Winter nets it is very important to know your station elevation. There are GPS apps for most phones that will give you your elevation. This can make a huge difference in the type and amount of precipitation we are receiving.

At the start of the practice nets we will let you know what the simulation event involves and the range of measurements expected. Please pay attention to what we are looking for and respond accordingly. You don't have to be a Skywarn Spotter to participate but you should be familiar with reportable criteria. I have requested documentation to explain that to be uploaded to HCRA.org and MTARA.org web sites.

See you on the nets! 73, Smitty, KC1IKA