

Jim Bell SKYWARN

To become a JBWA Spotter:

- Take a SKYWARN class. Additional training is covered in the Tools document.
- Participant in local training nets, JBWA plus Central Alabama (MARC).
- Volunteer to be a net controller.
- Listen and check into SKYWARN nets during severe weather. An excellent example is the Central Alabama SKYWARN on 146.84 (-) 123 tone (Montgomery).
- For ARES, you are required to take a SKYWARN class at least every two years.

To take a Storm Spotter course from the National Weather Service (NWS), our areas are covered by two regions of the National Weather Service: the Birmingham NWS and the Mobile NWS.

Birmingham National Weather Service

The Birmingham National Weather Service web page is: <https://www.weather.gov/bmx/>. The Birmingham NWS is located in Calera, Alabama and covers, relative to JBWA, Lowndes and Montgomery counties. This site has the latest radar, detailed forecasts for upcoming weather, and information on any predicted severe weather in the area.

The Birmingham NWS offers several basic Storm Spotter/SKYWARN classes both on-line and classes throughout the year. They also have an Advanced class once a year. Click on the SKYWARN icon at the bottom of their web page to see their schedule of classes.

Mobile National Weather Service

The Mobile National Weather Service web page is: www.weather.gov/mob/. The Mobile NWS is located in Mobile, Alabama and covers, relative to JBWA, the counties of Butler, Crenshaw, Conecuh and Convington counties. This site has similar features as Birmingham.

The Mobile NWS also has classes available. The link is : https://www.weather.gov/mob/spotter_training. They have a similar array of classes.

SKYWARN Nets

There are two types of SKYWARN nets. The first is a training net. This net is an opportunity to check your equipment and insure that everything is working in case of an actual weather emergency. Generally these nets are done weekly at a set day and time. The other type of SKYWARN net is the actual activation due to a severe weather event such as a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning.

Training net script and procedures

The JBWA training script listed separately. The procedure is straight forward:

- The net controller (NC) reads the preamble and calls for check-ins from other NC's.
- The NC ask for any announcements
- The NC takes general check-ins

- The NC closes the net

Activation due to a several weather event

A SKYWARN net is activated due to a specified warning condition released by the local National Weather Service. Any Net Controller can activate the net. Types of warnings include: tornado (either spotted or detected on Doppler radar), severe thunderstorm (winds in excess of 55 knots or 62 mph), hail (in excess of one inch diameter) or flooding. Occasionally, the net will be activated for a Significant Weather Event (weather with potential to transition to severe).

SKYWARN Activation Procedures

The NWS will often give indications of a severe weather occurrence a day or even several days in advance of an actual event. Monitor your local weather forecasts on your television, listen to the weather radios, or get on-line to the NWS web pages for the latest information. Don't let the issued warning catch you off guard. Be aware that a condition may develop, and make sure that you turn on your radio equipment in advance of the event. When the NWS issues a warning condition, a net controller should activate the SKYWARN Net. He/she will ask for check-ins of SKYWARN personnel. Sometimes he/she will only ask for check-ins of the affected area, versus a tri-county area. It can become very busy for a NC during a severe weather event. It is a good idea to assign one of your check-ins, that is not mobile, to watch radar and/or alerts in order to advise you of potential hazardous situation. Please reference the Procedures document for a list of key words and their descriptions. Since this is a directed net, all transmissions must go through the net controller. To become familiar with a net activation, you should study the following documentation in the order listed:

- Welcome
- Procedures
- Net_Activation_Script
- Training Script
- Checkin_Log