

## SKYWARN Net Protocol

RACES units making a report on the net follow a two-step identification procedure. The first step is to identify yourself and establish that you are an authorized RACES appointee. The second step identifies your location to assist the Net Control Stations (NCS), the National Weather Service and the many Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) that are monitoring the net.

1. **Enter the net by transmitting your full call sign using standard phonetics, followed by your RACES unit number and adding “mobile” if appropriate.** Since RACES unit numbers identify the issuing organization, it is not necessary to state your organization or use the word “unit”. Numbers are to be given individually, 5-2-8 instead of five-hundred-twenty-eight; except where the unit number is an even hundred or thousand such as five-hundred or five-thousand.

*Examples:* WT5Q, Garland RACES unit 501, who is mobile identifies as, “Whiskey Tango Five Quebec, five zero one, mobile.” K5HW, Garland RACES unit 528 identifies as, “Kilo<sup>7</sup> Five Hotel Whiskey, five two eight.”

2. **When recognized by NCS, begin your report with your call sign and MAJOR MAPSCO grid.**

Since some major grids have alpha suffixes, and weather is generally a large scale event we do not use sub-grids in weather reports.

*Example:* Even though the RACES station knows he is in Mapsco major grid 19, sub-grid A he will identify as “WT5Q, five-zero-one, Mapsco 19”

3. **End your report with your full FCC assigned call sign.**

Although you are not required to ID after every comment made during report exchanges, you must use your full FCC call sign during the last transmission of your report. If you file another report later in the net, you must use the two-step check-in procedure covered above.

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<sup>7</sup> The phonetic word Kilo is used for the letter “K”, and not “Kilowatt”, since kilowatt is appropriately abbreviated as kW. “Cute” or non-standard phonetics such as Bad for B, Germany for G, or Jumping for J, are inappropriate, slow down reporting or communications and cause misunderstandings.

## Standard SKYWARN Weather Condition Report

### Call sign – Unit number – Mapsco – Rain – Wind – Hail

Since there are numerous EOCs plotting our reports on maps, it is imperative information is transmitted in a consistent manner. Weather reports must be presented in the following order:

1. Major Mapsco grid (sub-grids should never be transmitted)
2. [Rainfall rate in inches-per-hour](#), state whether it is measured or estimated
3. [Wind speed](#) and the direction it is coming from, state whether measured or estimated
4. [Hail size](#) in fractions of an inch and intensity (light, moderate, heavy)

Example: “Whiskey Tango Five Quebec, five zero one, Mapsco 19, rain estimated 3” per hour, winds from the South at 30 miles per hour measured, moderate 1/2” hail. WT5Q”

### Entering the net with a weather priority

Weather priorities are those items requiring immediate attention, such as a lowering, funnel, or wall cloud. Enter the net using the pro-sign “Break, Break” followed by your call sign, un-key and await recognition by NCS.

Example:

*Spotter:* “BREAK, BREAK, WT5Q”

*NCS:* “ALL STATIONS STANDBY, WT5Q”

*Spotter:* “WT5Q, Mapsco 19. I have a wall cloud with rotation 5 miles southwest of me, moving to the northeast. WT5Q”

*NCS:* “ALL STATIONS STANDBY. We have a report of a wall cloud southwest of Mapsco 19. Are there any stations that can confirm<sup>8</sup>?”

### Using an assigned tactical call sign

Such as “Dallas EOC”, “Collin County”, “Staging Area”, “EVAC Center”. Enter the net using the assigned call sign and end the report or conversation with your FCC assigned call sign.

*Example:* *Spotter:* “EVAC Center”, *NCS:* “EVAC Center”, *Spotter:* “We are operational and have received the supplies asked about earlier. KC5EOR, five seven five.”

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<sup>8</sup> Since cloud formations can look radically different when viewed from different angles, we ask for confirmation on all priority weather reports. This allows us to better locate the lowering and avoid false alarms.

## **Minimum Reporting Criteria**

The minimum level of weather events required to make a report in a Dallas RACES SKYWARN Net. Defined as one inch (1”) per hour rain, wind greater than fifty (50) Miles per Hour, or hail larger than one-quarter inch (.25”). These minimum reporting criteria are selected to ensure that only events of interest to the served agencies are reported. Events that do not meet these Minimum Reporting Criteria should not be reported on a SKYWARN Net. Net Control Stations may institute Modified or Elevated Reporting Criteria at the request of served agencies or in order to control or limit Net traffic.

## **Modified Reporting Criteria**

Modification of reporting criteria required for reporting weather events on a Dallas SKYWARN Net. Generally Net Control Stations will call for modified reporting criteria at the request of a served agency such as the National Weather Service. Modified Reporting Criteria may be, but not limited to, events such as wind or flooding reports. When Modified Reporting Criteria is in effect on a SKYWARN Net stations with Minimum Reporting Criteria may continue to submit their reports.

## **Elevated Reporting Criteria**

Elevation of reporting criteria required for reporting a weather event on a Dallas SKYWARN Net. Generally Net Control Stations will call for elevated reporting criteria for significant reports such as lowerings, flashes of light at ground level not associated with lightning, wall clouds, funnel clouds, tornados or other important events. When Elevated Reporting Criteria is in effect on a SKYWARN Net, stations with only Minimum or Modified Reporting Criteria should hold their reports.

**All Minimum or Modified Reporting Criteria reports stand by when a funnel, wall cloud, or flashes not associated with lightning (Elevated Reporting Criteria) are being reported and tracked.**

## Order of Precedence for reporting weather events

The following list shows the priorities in which weather events should be reported, necessary reporting details, and minimum criteria for reporting.

### 1. Funnel

- a. Is *surface damage* occurring?
- b. Is funnel *visible halfway* to ground?
- c. Is there a *visible clear slot*?
- d. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- e. *Direction* and *distance* from you to funnel?
- f. *Direction* and *rate of travel* of funnel?

### 2. Wall Cloud

- a. Is *sustained rotation* visible in the cloud?
- b. Is *surface damage* occurring?
- c. Where is the *updraft* located on the wall cloud?
- d. Is there a *visible clear slot*?
- e. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- f. *Direction* and *distance* from you to wall cloud?
- g. *Direction* and *rate of travel* of wall cloud?

### 3. Flashes of light at ground level, not associated with lightning strike

- a. Are there *multiple flashes* or a *continuous line of flashes*?
- b. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- c. *Direction* and *distance* from you to flashes?

### 4. Hail larger than 1/4 inch

- a. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- b. *Size of the hail* in inches? (Do not report as object sizes)
- c. How much is falling? (intermittent, light, moderate, heavy, biblical)

### 5. Damaging Winds (over 50 MPH)

- a. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- b. Is the wind speed *greater than 50 MPH*? (*cannot walk against the wind*)
- c. What direction is the wind *coming from*?
- d. *Briefly describe damage* that is occurring

### 6. Flash Flooding

- a. Is water *flowing across* the road?
  - i. Is there a *current*?
  - ii. Curb deep water *does not meet minimum reporting criteria!*
- b. Is rising water a *threat to life or property*?
- c. Are *children playing in culverts or flood waters*?

### 7. Rain over 1" per hour

- a. Is visibility restricted to *less than five car lengths*?
- b. What is your *major Mapsco* grid?
- c. What is the estimated or measured rainfall rate in inches per hour?