ROWLETT CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY

TITLE: Skywarn Response Protocol

APPROVAL SIGNATURE:	DATE: July 9, 2021
	POLICY NO.: 21-140
	PROGRAM: ARES
NAME: Mark Riaboy	SECTION: Operations
TITLE: ARES Director	PAGES: 3

1. Purpose

This protocol describes how Rowlett Skywarn operations are activated, deployed and demobilized for a severe weather event. Skywarn is a program of the National Weather Service (NWS). Its mission is to collect reports of localized severe weather in the United States.

2. Background

Rowlett has an established need for a Skywarn program that supports the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during severe weather operations.

3. Authority

Authority for this policy resides jointly with the RCCC Board of Directors through Program Leadership, and the Rowlett Office of Emergency Management.

For purposes of command and control, the ARES Director shall have chief responsibility for coordination of all notifications, deployment orders or radio operations concerning Skywarn operations.

4. Activation Authorization

4.1. The Skywarn Response Team may be deployed at the request of one of the following:

4.1.1. Direct EOC request (OEM, Fire Chief, City Official)

4.1.2. CERT or ARES Director, or their designee; RCCC President

5. Alert Levels

5.1. The following alert levels shall be used for notifying Skywarn responders of potential activation:

5.1.1. **PREALERT** – Notice of potential Spotter activation within the next 24 – 48 hours based on NWS forecast of severe weather.

5.1.2. **YELLOW ALERT** – Notice of potential Spotter activation within the next 120 minutes. The YELLOW ALERT is issued based on the following criteria:

5.1.2.1. Severe Warning in any adjacent County with potential track for Rowlett.

5.1.2.2. Enhanced level or greater of NWS Storm Prediction Center (SPC) Severe Thunderstorm Risk Category during the threat period.

5.1.3. **RED ALERT** – Notice of immediate deployment of Spotters. The RED ALERT is issued based on the following criteria:

5.1.3.1. Severe Warning in Dallas County with potential track towards Rowlett.

5.2. The EOC may request any of the above levels of notification/activation at any time regardless of the above criteria.

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5.3. Alert notification messages shall include as much pertinent information as possible, including timing of activation, direction of storm, and type and severity of warning when known. RED ALERT must include area of focus for spotter locations.

6. **Responsibility**
   6.1. The ARES Director shall:
      6.1.1. Maintain an active role of Skywarn team members sufficient to provide adequate coverage for severe storm spotter activation.
      6.1.2. Set appropriate spotter locations around the fringes of Rowlett city limits that allow for visualization of approaching severe weather conditions.
      6.1.3. Maintain appropriate systems of notification, communications and alerting that allow for effective and efficient Skywarn operations.
   6.2. Skywarn team members shall:
      6.2.1. Maintain Skywarn certification and training as required.
      6.2.2. Maintain necessary equipment and supplies in good order to respond in a prompt and efficient manner. Deployment "GO" Gear is outlined in the Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual.
      6.2.3. When notification of an alert is received, all actions should be taken to enable a state of readiness consistent with the level of alert.

7. **Deployment**
   7.1. When a RED ALERT notification is issued, Skywarn team members must be deployed, at their assigned location and ready to report visual conditions as soon as practical given conditions, but no later than 20 minutes from request.
   7.2. All Skywarn team members will have coordinated spotting locations as set by the ARES Director. RED ALERT notification will contain area of focus information relating to appropriate spotter locations.
   7.3. Radio Net – A net will be initiated upon RED ALERT. All Skywarn team members who are ARES/RACES units will check in with Net Control and remain checked in at their designated spotting location until released by Net Control.
   7.4. Net Control should maintain contact with the EOC Liaison at all times during the deployment.
   7.5. An ARES representative is required to be present in the EOC whenever the EOC is fully activated, or whenever requested by anyone in section 4.1 of this policy.
   7.6. Skywarn team members are encouraged to adopt alternate or backup methods of communications and tracking, such as Slack, Deploy Pro, APRS or other approved systems.

8. **Reporting**
   8.1. Pictures should be taken of any damage that is encountered as well as reportable hail or any other reportable item. Pictures should be sent via Slack if possible, otherwise other forms of picture transmission are acceptable such as text, DeployPro, email, etc. Pictures of hail should include a size reference, preferably a ruler.
   8.2. Reportable Weather Conditions are outlined in the most current version of the Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual.

9. **Demobilization**
   9.1. If the EOC was activated, Skywarn operations will be suspended at request of EOC.

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   9.2. If the EOC was not activated, Skywarn operations will be suspended at the discretion of the activating officer.

   9.3. Once Skywarn operations are suspended, the net will remain open until all personnel have reported in back at home or an alternate location.

10. Qualifications

   10.1. NWS Basic Skywarn class every two years.

   10.2. NWS Advanced Skywarn class optional but highly encouraged.

   10.3. It is recommended that storm spotters have at a minimum:

      10.3.1. Technician or higher class FCC Amateur Radio license

      10.3.2. A dual band (2m/70cm) amateur radio with a minimum of 25 watts of power.

11. Additional References

   11.1. Rowlett ARES/RACES Emergency Plan

   11.2. Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual