

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARES

Severe Weather Incident Procedures

As anyone in southwest Ohio knows, we can get some very severe weather during just about any time of the year. Weather can range from ice storms and blizzards in the winter to severe thunderstorms, flooding and tornados in the spring and summer months. Because of this, the **Montgomery County ARES** has established a severe weather net that can be activated when the National Weather Service places **Montgomery County** under severe weather watches and/or warnings. The **Severe Weather Information Net** is activated to provide the **Montgomery County EMA** with more timely and in real time **Severe Weather Information** as to be able to more quickly and accurately **mitigate any damage or problems** caused by the severe weather. The net operates on the backup MARA repeater **145.330(-)**. The National Weather Service offers Weather Spotter training classes each year in the spring. All members of the group are encouraged to attend this training. It not only helps you and your family, but it can also be used to help the rest of the county. Each year as classes are arranged, the EC will notify the group of when and where the classes will be held.

Emergency plan procedures

Thunderstorm and tornados

There are two types of weather nets:

- **Severe Weather Watch**
- **Severe Weather Warning**

If conditions are favorable to support the formation of thunderstorms and/or tornados the National Weather Service will place the county into a “**Watch**” state. At this time, it is important for Montgomery County ARES members to start watching the weather. If storms begin forming in surrounding counties and there is a general movement towards Montgomery County, a “Severe Weather Watch” net will be established. With this net **no checkins** are taken. It is not a directed net and the repeater can still be used for normal and customary amateur use. However, during the establishment of the net, the net control station will make it clear that the net can be taken to a directed state and the repeater would no longer open for normal and customary use. This is a precautionary net. It is established to get members ready in case weather conditions get worse. It also gives us the ability to pass information to other hams listening in about what is going on in surrounding counties (watches set, warnings set, etc.)

There are two ways that a net can go from informal to formal:

1. An actual severe weather incident is observed first-hand (not heard on a scanner or from someone who heard it from someone else).
2. The National Weather Service can place Montgomery County under a severe thunderstorm and/or tornado warning. This means a storm or tornado is very probable or already happening somewhere.

Note: We need to be very careful about passing information heard on a scanner or heard from someone who got it from a scanner, or heard it from someone who heard it from someone else, etc. These types of reports can unnecessarily get people panicked and institute first responder dispatches that aren't necessary.

Once the net goes to a formal state, checkins will be taken and all communications shall be through the net control officer. Station to station communication is not permitted without permission from net control. A liaison station will need to be established to pass traffic from the

Montgomery County Weather Information Net to the Montgomery County EOC and/or Dayton Skywarn (if it has been brought up).

Severe weather reporting procedures are as follows:

1. Weather Spotter or trained amateur radio operator will make a severe weather report to the net control station.
2. If necessary, the net control station will poll the net to find out if another spotter or radio operator can confirm the severe weather report
3. The net control station will ask the liaison station to relay the report to Montgomery County EOC and/or the Dayton SkyWarn net (if it's up).

The next step in activation of the Montgomery County ARES is if an event turns into damage. This can result from straight line winds, hail, flooding or a tornado touch down. Thunderstorms can produce straight line winds or micro bursts that can cause a significant amount of damage. This damage can be localized or wide spread. At this point, the ARES EC could be notified by the Director of Emergency Services to activate the Montgomery County ARES. Normally the ARES EC will go to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to work directly with the Director. The Director working in concert with other emergency officials and the ARES EC will determine where Montgomery County ARES members need to be deployed and what they can expect once on site. There might also be instances where it will not be possible to communicate what to expect once a person arrives at an assignment. The person is being dispatched so they can communicate back what is happening or what the situation is. The Montgomery County ARES members will start becoming eyes and ears for the Directory of Emergency Services.

Severe Weather Watch Script

Montgomery County Emergency ARES Severe Weather Information *Watch* Net

- 1) Monitor the repeater frequency to insure it's clear
- 2) If repeater is in use, ask the users to free the repeater because a severe weather net needs is to be activated.
- 3) Open the net
- 4) When this net is activated, indicate your call sign and title when you start speaking
- 5) Record the time that you activate the net
- 6) After activation, make an announcement after 10 minutes and then every 10 minutes until the net is secured. Make sure people know that the repeater is open for general use, but remind people to pause before keying to enable the net control to take the net to a formal net if necessary.
- 7) Make sure you record all information accurately from stations reporting severe weather. Make sure the reporting stations indicate whether the observation is based on calibrated weather instruments or is estimated. Make sure the report is complete before passing it on to Wilmington.

At a minimum the reporting station should pass:

- a. Call sign
- b. Location within the county (see below)
- c. Exact nature of the severe weather
- d. Downed power lines
- e. Nature and extent of structural damage
- f. Nature and extent of tree damage
- g. Size of hail (1/4", 1/2", 1", etc.)
- h. Rain rate (if possible this should be measured, not estimated)

? Damaging winds – usually 50 mph or greater resulting in damage to buildings and structures and damage to large healthy trees or utility poles

? Flooding including rivers over banks, water covering roadways and water entering the 1st floor of houses

? Heavy rain at 1” per hour measured over a sustained period of 15 minutes”

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“All stations checking in please indicate your call sign slowly and phonetically along with your physical location within the county

This location is important when reporting to Wilmington national weather service.”

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“Please unkey your microphone every 15 seconds to listen for emergency traffic. If you have emergency traffic call **BREAK** followed by your call sign at any time. The net control station will immediately acknowledge your traffic.”

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“All Amateur Radio operators are encouraged to report any severe weather conditions in your immediate vicinity.”

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“When calling in severe weather reports please indicate whether the conditions are actual using calibrated weather instruments or estimates.”

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“I will now take check-ins from any stations in Montgomery Co.”

[Start recording callsigns and locations of people checking in. Make sure stations indicate their location with the county (as indicated earlier in this script) Ask for check ins during your call every 10 minutes when you announce that the repeater is being used for emergency communications]

[Unkey and allow the repeater to beep]

“This is station _____ standing by.”

Call sign

[Go back to the beginning of the script every 10 minutes and repeat it]