



Tentative Date : Wednesday April 22, 2020 at 7pm

Location: Bennington free library

What is SKYWARN™?

The effects of hazardous weather are felt every year by many Americans. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, established SKYWARN™ with partner organizations. SKYWARN™ is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the NWS.

In the average year, 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and more than 1,000 tornadoes occur across the United States. Eastern New York and western New England are no exception with major weather events such as Tropical Storm Irene, the Mechanicville Tornado of 1998, the February 2019 high wind event, and numerous blizzards including the latest of March 2017. These events threatened lives and property and because of this we rely heavily on our SKYWARN™ volunteers who call the NWS in Albany, NY to report certain weather conditions. Since the program started in the 1970s, the information provided by SKYWARN™ spotters, coupled with Doppler-radar technology, improved satellite and other data, has enabled NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods.

SKYWARN™ storm spotters are part of the ranks of citizens who form the Nation's first line of defense against hazardous weather. There can be no finer reward than to know that their efforts have given communities the precious gift of time--seconds and minutes that can help save lives. While the main role of a storm spotter is to be their community's first line of defense against dangerous storms, they also provide important information to NWS warning forecasters who make critical warning decisions. Storm spotters play a critical role because they can see things that radar and other technological tools cannot, and this ground truth is critical in helping the NWS perform our primary mission, to save lives and property.

