

## **\*Spotter Do's and Don'ts\***

**Do**...attend spotter classes as much as possible.

**Do**...surf the web for additional information on spotting, severe weather, etc. (including Storm Prediction Center)

**Do**...have a watch, pencil, note pad, cell phone, and colored Spotter Quick Reference Guide with you when spotting

**Do**...make an effort to provide an accurate report - the time, location, condition (what you experienced/saw), and location

**Do**...reference your severe weather report location to the cultural/political center of the nearest city/village, to the nearest 1/10 mile and one of the 16 compass points (stationary spotters)...such as...1.5 NNE Madison

**Do**...provide in your report what direction you are looking at while viewing a rotating wall cloud, funnel cloud, or tornado, since you can't accurately determine, in the heat of the battle, how far away the wall cloud/funnel cloud/tornado is from your position

**Do**...spot with a partner, especially if you are mobile - two heads are better than one in this business!

**Do**...place the safety of you and your family first, your report is second priority

**Do**...take a deep breath, try to remain calm, and get the job done

**Do**...utilize communication channels that have been set up for you or your group, and follow proper format/procedures

**Do**...make sure the National Weather Service receives your report via 911, or our 800 number, or ham frequencies, or E-Spotter

**Do**...be willing to freely share some of your severe weather pictures with the NWS for educational purposes, on-line stories (it's in the public domain)

**Do**...feel good about what you're doing as a spotter - you are just as important as any other spotter!

**Don't**...assume you know everything there is to know about spotting - keep an open mind - you'll learn something new every year

**Don't**...make it difficult for emergency response people (emergency management, law enforcement, fire fighters, Red Cross, etc.) to do their job - don't get in the way unless you are specifically asked to help

**Don't**...just take pictures and video of a wall cloud or tornado and forget to relay your spotter report

**Don't**...look at spotting as a game or procedure that will make you look more important to your peers - keep a level head and just do your best

**Don't**...look down at or ridicule another spotter for making a mistake - you may make the next mistake - we all have - no one is perfect

**Don't**...get upset at the National Weather Service if you don't see your severe weather report appear on-line as a Local Storm Report (LSR) or in a Public Information Statement (PNS), or in some "Top News of the Day" article on the NWS's web page - we get hundreds of reports from the 20 counties we service.

**Don't**...assume that you have a tornado just because you see something that looks like a funnel cloud - you must see some indication of ground-based, rotational effects (rotating debris/dirt) underneath or very close to the funnel cloud in order to classify it as a tornado - and there may be very little of any funnel cloud

**Don't...**get caught up in the game of trying to be the first person to call-in a tornado report - spotting is a game of being 100% correct...it's not a game of being the first.

**Don't...**call-in or relay a report if you're not sure what you're looking at - you must be 100% sure of what you're looking at - accuracy is the highest priority, after your safety - We'd rather have no report rather than a false report.

**Don't...**forget to give yourself a pat on the back - for your volunteer, public safety efforts!