Spotter Training Key Points

Safety

- Lightning can strike more than 10 miles away from a storm.
- Do not drive into water covered roads. Turn around and find another way.
- Always know the storm motion and location so you can shelter if needed.

Storm Structure

- **Shelf Cloud** is horizontal, leads the storm, and precedes downdraft and potential for straight-line wind.
- **Wall Cloud** is vertical, on back of storm underneath the updraft, and when rotation is visible may precede a tornado.
- **All funnel clouds rotate.** When it's real and you have a good view, it will be obvious.
- **All tornadoes have rotation and debris.** When it's real and you have a good view, it will be obvious.
- **Ideal spotting location for supercells:** On the inflow side, with a good view of the updraft, and not in the storm's path.
- **Ideal spotting location for squall lines:** Indoors and away from windows.

Reporting

- Be calm, and provide appropriate details when possible.
- Report only things on the following list. (Other things should not be reported. For example: Shelf clouds are NOT reported, but wind damage is.)

What to report:

- Storm-related Injuries/Fatalities
- Storm-related Damage:
  - Trees down (snapped or uprooted? diameter?)
  - Branches broken (diameter?)
  - Power poles down
  - Structural damage
- Tornado (rotation?)
- Funnel Cloud (rotation?)
- Wall Cloud (rotation?)
- Wind Gusts (40 mph or greater)
- Hail (all sizes)
- Heavy rain (1" or more in a storm)
- Creeks out of banks
- Water > 6 in. deep with current on roads
- Water > 2 ft. deep standing on roads
- Unusual road and/or bridge closures
- Buildings filling with water
- Mud or rock slides or debris flow
- Ice jam, levee failure, dam break

Local Spotter Network

- Who are the local spotters?
- How are spotters activated?
- How should they report?
- To whom should they report?

Send comments and questions on the NWS Quad Cities Spotter Training Class or DVD to:
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