

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 (GPS coordinates accepted!)

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 51 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...forget to give yourself a pat on the back - for your volunteer, public safety efforts!