

SKYWARN® Operators Console Operators Manual – Initial Settings

SKYWARN® Operators Console

Introduction

The **Skywarn® Operators Console** is designed to support trained weather spotters and emergency communications personnel in carrying out their mission: providing timely, accurate, ground-truth information to the National Weather Service (NWS) during hazardous weather events. This application brings together real-time alerts, structured reporting tools, incident logging, and communication workflows into a single, streamlined operational environment.

NWS API Settings - Initial Configuration

The first step in preparing the Skywarn® Operators Console for use is configuring the **National Weather Service (NWS) API settings**. These settings allow the Console to retrieve real-time weather alerts, forecast discussions, and county-based products directly from the NWS. Proper configuration ensures that all alerting and monitoring features operate reliably during severe weather operations.

This section guides you through entering the required information and verifying that the Console can successfully communicate with the NWS API.

Purpose of the NWS API Settings

The NWS API provides the Console with:

- Active weather alerts for your Weather Forecast Office (WFO)
- Update notifications for changing conditions

Because the Console filters and displays alerts based on your local coverage area, the API settings must be correct before any operational features will function.

Information You Will Need

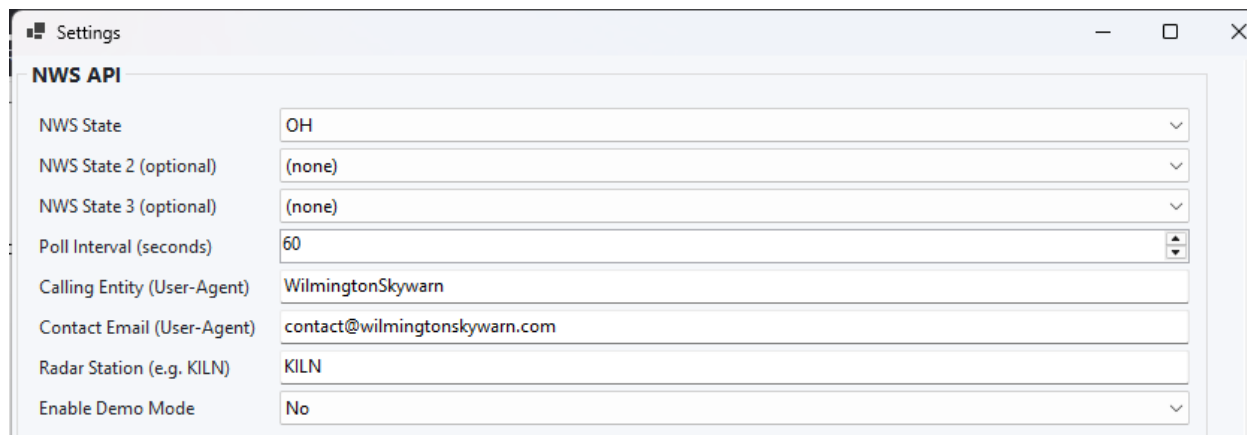
Before beginning setup, have the following ready:

- **Your NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) identifier**
Example: ILN (Wilmington, OH), BOU (Denver/Boulder, CO), GYX (Gray, ME)
- **Your Organization Name**
Required by NWS policy and for populating the Spotter Reports Maps. Please do not include any spaces. This designation informs the NWS API of who is calling, the NWS API will not run without this information. This is also used to call the Free Mapping features used in the Spotter Reports.
Example:
"SkywarnWilmingtonOh" or "ClintonCountyEMA"
- **Your county or coverage area list**
Used for filtering alerts to your operational region. Th

Follow these steps to complete the initial configuration:

- **Open the Settings Panel**
- From the main Console window, select **Settings** from the navigation menu.

Configuring the NWS API Settings



The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Settings" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The "NWS API" section is active, displaying a list of configuration fields:

Field	Value
NWS State	OH
NWS State 2 (optional)	(none)
NWS State 3 (optional)	(none)
Poll Interval (seconds)	60
Calling Entity (User-Agent)	WilmingtonSkywarn
Contact Email (User-Agent)	contact@wilmingtonskywarn.com
Radar Station (e.g. KILN)	KILN
Enable Demo Mode	No

Select the State or States that you will be covering.

In some cases a NWS WFO (Office) might cover parts of more than one state. In our case, Wilmington Ohio office (ILN) covers southwestern and central parts of Ohio, along with counties in Indiana and Kentucky, so we would select 3 states. Do not enter any more states than you have to! Choosing too many state could degrade the speed and reliability of your NWS API calls,

Select the Polling Interval

This is the number of seconds before the application attempts to call for new/Updated Alerts. We all want up to the second updates, but please do not set this less than 30 seconds. To many calls in too short of a time could cause delayed returns and jumping selections thought the system and possible refusal of access to the API.

Enter your Group Name or Calling Entity

This is used by NWS to know whom is calling their API.

Enter your Contact Email

This could be an individuals Email or a group Email. No, we are not going to SPAM you or send you emails, This Email address is required for calling the NWS API.

Radar Station

The NWS WFO entered here determines the view on the Radar Map screen. This should be the WFO nearest to you.

Enable Demo Mode

When we first started demoing this application we had to search for areas with active weather. We added this feature so the users could see the different types and coloring of the alerts. If you do not see the alerts that you are expecting to see, make sure they have not been Acknowledged. Make sure to change this setting to “No” for normal operations.

Configuring Operations Settings

Operations

Coverage Counties
(one per line)

Bracken

Brown

Butler

Campbell

Carroll

Champaign

Clark

Import Counties (CSV)

Fetch from NWS Office...

Label Printer

Letter Printer

OneNote (Desktop) - Protected

Show Alert Detail Tab

No

Show Archive Tab

No

Show Skype Message Button

Yes

Acknowledge On Incident

Yes

Database Filename

SkywarnBeta.db

Map Default Center

Lat: 39.445300

Lng: -83.828500

Map Default Zoom

13

Coordinates should be decimal degrees (e.g., 39.4453, -83.8285)

Zoom: 1=World, 10=County, 19=Street

Covered Counties

There are three ways to configure your **Coverage Counties**.

- a) If you are a Regional Skywarn Support group then the Counties Can be populated using the NWS API.
 - a.1 Select the "Fetch from NWS Office button, a new form will appear.
 - a.2 Select the NWS Office you are supporting from the Drop Down List.
 - a.3 Click the "Fetch" button (Sorry Fetch is kind of a programming term, but I couldn't think of anything else).

The application will compile a list of the counties covered by that NWS Office.
- b) If you are a Sectional Skywarn Support Group.
 - b.1 You can enter your coverage counties in the list itself, enter one County per Line.
 - b.2 You can also import a comma delimited list of Counties, i.e.:
Clinton,Highland,Brown ect. Please do not have any spaces in this list.

c) If you are a County Skywarn Support Group.

c.1 Enter the County name in the Coverage Counties list.

NOTE: What does the Coverage Counties Mean? In the Alerts tab, you have a selector for Counties. The NWS API only gives alerts by state, In the Counties drop down list, the second item is "Covered Counties". Making this selection, only the Alerts for counties that you populated in this section will display in the alerts tab.

Printer Settings

If your office has a "memo" sized printer, or a label printer (4X6 paper or labels) then select that printer in the "Label Printer" field. If you do not have one of these printer, then leave this blank.

If your environment has a regular Letter size printer, select the printer that you want to use as the default printer.

Show Alert Detail Page

This tab was designed to show you Alert Details when you double clicked an Alert on the Alert tab. We feel for our group that is in not as efficient as using the Right Click/View Detail function on the Alerts tab. We suggest you leave this as No, but if you really want to...

Show Archive Tab

Not Functional at this time, please leave this at No.

Show Radar Map Page

Selecting "Yes" will enable the Radar Map tab. These maps are the same maps displayed when viewing your NWS WFO page and selecting the Local Weather maps. All of the differing maps displays could change at any time depending on the NWS availability.

Show Slack Message Button

This selection will display a button that can be used to format an Spotter Report to Slack type message. If you are not an NWS Slack user, we suggest leaving this at No. **NOTE: NWS Slack reporting is limited to authorizes personal and Entities. Unless you are a government entity please do not contact NWS for access to this. Skywarn Access is managed by the Regional And Sections administrators.**

Acknowledge on Incident

When enabled, when you either Click the "Copy To Incident" button or select the "Append Alert" button on the Incident form, the message will be marked

as “Acknowledged”. In the Alerts tab, if you select the “Un-Acknowledged Only” checkbox, the Alert will be hidden. We have found that clearing the Acknowledged alerts from the grid help keep the Alerts view a little less busy.

Database Filename

We use SQLite® for the file storage of the Incident and Spotter Report information. You can change the name of the DB to anything you wish, do not have any spaces in your name and make sure it ends with “.db”. This is also a way to clear you data if you have been testing or demonstrating the application. The old data is not deleted. If you are using the provisioning from Portal.wilmingtonskywarn.org, changing this entry will not have any impact.

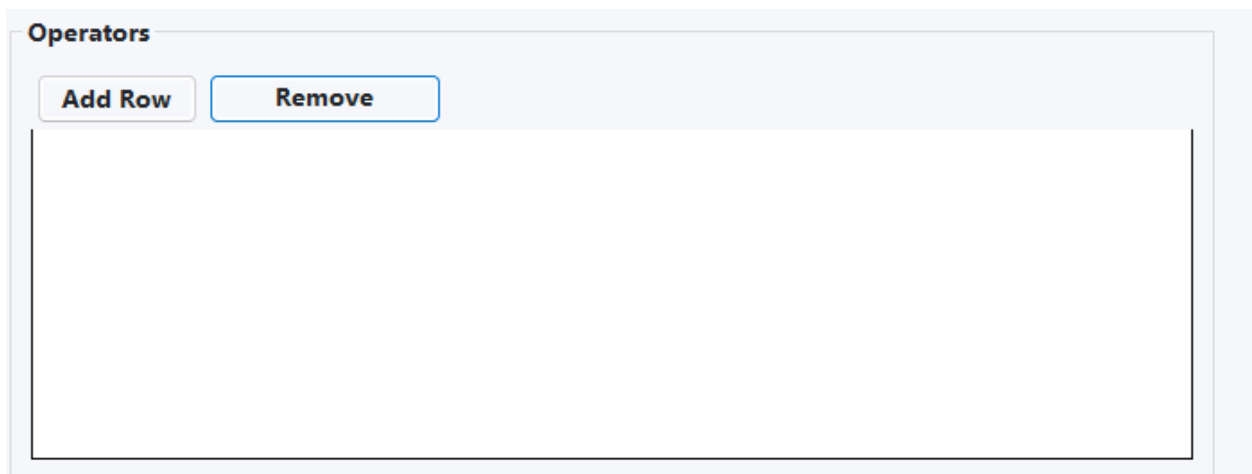
Map Default Center

Enter the latitude and longitude of a default location. This is the Location where in the Spotters Reports, the Map will display first. This is necessary for the mapping function to work properly.

Map Default Zoom

Select a value between 1-19. 1=World, 10=County Level and 19=Street Lever. We have found that 10-12 works well for the level that we are working with.

Operators

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Operators" in a light blue header. Below the header, there are two buttons: "Add Row" and "Remove". Below these buttons is a large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for entering operator information.

This section is where you would enter your operators, this is used in the Alerts/Incidents tab.

For Each Operator

- Click the “Add Row” button at the top of this section.
In the slot to the left, Enter the Operators Name, press the “tab” button, the form will move the cursor will move to the right slot.
- Enter the Call sign (if they are a Amateur Radio or GMRS Operator) or the Operators Spotter ID.

Repeat for each Operator needed.

Cloud Sync will be covered under a different manual.

Legal Notices

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This manual references the SKYWARN® program for the purpose of supporting trained spotter operations and public safety communications. All usage complies with National Weather Service guidelines.