

Safety



As a spotter, it is your responsibility to stay safe while spotting. You are asked to abide by the following guidelines, both for your personal safety and for the safety of those around you.

1. The spotter's personal safety is the primary objective of every spotter.
2. The spotter should adhere to the concept of ACES (defined below) at all times.
3. The spotter should obey federal, state, and local laws and directives from public safety officials.
4. The spotter should never put his or herself in harm's way. This includes attempting to walk or drive over obstructions (e.g., flooded roadways and downed power lines) and positioning themselves under objects that have a potential to fall or be blown over due to severe weather.

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ACES

- **Awareness**
- **Communication**
- **Escape Routes**
- **Safe Zones**

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The ACES concept, commonly used by emergency management personnel, stands for: Awareness, Communication, Escape Routes, and Safe Zones.
If you remember ACES, you can remain safe in any situation, including spotting.



Awareness means you should constantly observe the situation around you. This is sometimes referred to as situational awareness. Continuously monitoring the risks around you can save your life, especially in rapidly changing weather conditions. Knowing that there is a river crossing, or knowing that the street is lined with power poles and trees can help you be prepared for the hazards of severe weather. When you are aware of the imminent threats, and you are thinking ahead about possible outcomes, you can position yourself better to minimize these threats.



Communicating your whereabouts to others on a regular basis and having multiple lines of communication available can keep you and others safe from hazards.

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Escape Routes are important when you need to get away from danger. An escape route is a clear path that will allow you to reach your safe zone well before harm arrives. Anytime you are acting as a spotter, you should continually note and monitor the escape route(s) available to you. Remember that your escape route must allow you to reach your safe zone in time to protect yourself. A proper escape route always leads to a safe zone.



A *safe zone* or *shelter* is an area in which you are safe during a hazardous condition. Your safe zone can be either a location to shelter in place or an area completely away from the hazardous event. Always clearly identify a safe zone in an area in which no harm will come to you. At times, it may become necessary to establish multiple safe zones with clear escape routes. In the event of severe weather, your safe zone could be the lowest portion of a sturdy building away from all windows. For mobile spotting, your safe zone could be an area away from the severe weather. Always clearly identify and continually monitor your safe zone and escape routes to limit your risk, and be ready to use them to protect yourself from harm.

Remembering ACES (to remain aware of your surroundings, have open lines of communication, know your escape routes, and know your safe zones) wherever you go can increase your safety.

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