

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2012
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL WEST, LAKEWOOD, CO

Monthly Quote: "It has been happening every year since I moved in here. The damage is not bad as the apartment units' ceiling are separate from the roof but this is worrying. It's pure luck that no one has been hurt so far." – From a Kuala Lumpur area resident describing the incidence of lightning strikes on their building and how lucky they've been. StarMetro, Friday, January 27, 2012, page 4. See paragraph 4, below.

1. The meeting began at 11:55 PM and adjourned at 1:05 PM.
2. Members present: Clark, Yarnell, Gift, Cui-Gift, Elder, Claus, Langford, Nibbe, and Wells. Clark moderated the meeting.
3. Clark presented a YouTube video showing a lightning strike to an airplane as it was approaching a gate at an airport. Ground crews were approaching the aircraft, as the lightning appeared to hit the tail of the plane and exit to the ground near a metal grating on the tarmac. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but people did retreat away from the airplane after the strike. Clark learned of this through the Yahoo Lightning forum. A reader asked for three "anomalies" to be explained.

"After the strike to the plane, the ultimate discharge to the ground occurred at the front, which appears to be more elevated than the mid section of the plane." From the video, it appears the lightning followed the best electrical path to ground – starting at the tail through the fuselage and down through the front landing gear and out into a metal drain. Indeed, part of the drain cover was blown off and thrown towards the baggage tug on the left-hand side. During the meeting, none of us noticed, or mentioned, the drain cover being blown off.

"There does not appear to be any precipitation at location of the plane where the lightning strike occurred. It is only at the distant background where there is some indication of rain activity." This is not unusual. Here in Colorado, we found approximately two-thirds of the people hit by lightning were struck either before or after precipitation had fallen. The other one-third was hit while it was raining.

"Ground crews seem to be doing business as usual while a thunderstorm is apparently in progress." It appears these people are in need of some basic training in lightning safety. That goes for the ground crews, the airline, and other involved parties.

Here is the YouTube link to this video, which is different than the one I used during our meeting:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrRzQbNMfW4&feature=related>

Here is a still photograph from the YouTube video showing the strike. My thanks to calvinmcraig, a YouTube user, who uploaded this video on Jan. 18, 2012.



4. Clark also presented an article about an apartment building in Ampang Indah, in the northeast portion of the greater Kuala Lumpur area, which had been struck by lightning. Photos from the article show some of the ceramic roof tiles and the roof substructure were blown off, allowing the sun to shine through an eave, when it should not be. The tiles fell onto and damaged four vehicles below. The building had an ESE-type device on it. One of the residents says this has happened every year since he moved in. Photos are attached to these minutes.
5. Ken Langford will be attending the International Lightning Meteorology Conference on April 4 and 5. He will present a report on the conference in our April meeting. Ron Holle advised the agendas for the conferences are available at: <http://www.vaisala.com/en/events/ildcilmc/Pages/default.aspx>. Ron says the agendas have already been corrected once and are apt to be modified yet again. Keep checking the website above for the latest agendas.

6. Karen wells gave us a quick presentation on researching journal articles on PubMed. For a long time, PubMed and some other databases have been available only to institutional users. Of late, access to these databases is increasingly being made available to the public. To get on PubMed, simply type "PubMed" into your browser window, hit enter, and then click on the Home-PubMed-NCBI link. At the top of the PubMed homepage, enter your search term(s), for example, "lightning injuries" and hit enter. The next page will list the first few links. The majority of links will be abstracts. Some free articles are available and you can find those to the upper right under "Filter your results:". Happy hunting!
7. Phil Yarnell saw a patient who recently met with the LDC. This patient has cardiac arrhythmia. He corresponded with some of the members of the Lightning Strike and Electric Shock Survivors group in North Carolina and learned some of them also have arrhythmias. Al Nibbe thinks the patient should be wearing a Holter monitor to track his heartbeat.
8. Unfortunately, Robert Gift was unable to locate his photographs from his trip to China. I am hopeful he will be able to find those and present them in a future meeting. He did, however, bring in his 1930s vintage Tesla coil and demonstrated the ionization of a fluorescent tube and also showed how an ordinary clear-glass light bulb behaves somewhat like those plasma globes that were widely sold in the 90s.
9. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not explicitly or implicitly recommend or endorse *any* product or service. Any service or product presented in these minutes is done so for the purpose of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for consideration and review by the entire membership.
10. Next meeting: Friday, March 9, 2012 at 11:45 AM at St. Anthony Hospital West. Conference Room E. Subject: TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist

In Case You Missed It...Lightning in the News

This is a monthly listing of news and videos about lightning and allied areas as reported in the media. A headline is listed, followed by a link to the article. Please note that some of the links are perishable, which means you'll need to go to the source for the article. Enjoy!

Kuala Lumpur Area Lightning Damage Photos (See paragraph 4 above)



