

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
July 10, 2015
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL WEST, LAKEWOOD, CO

Monthly Quote: "He was in his tent, on the summit of Mt. Harvard at 9:50 P.M., when the air suddenly was so charged that the zippers on his jacket and the tent were buzzing. "And I was like, 'Oh, this isn't good,' and I grabbed my pack, grabbed my shoes, rolled off the summit blocks and ran, and 20 or 30 seconds later, the lightning struck, almost like a bomb hitting,..." Source: *The Denver Post*, July 17, 2012. Link: http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyle/ci_21087437/camping-atop-each-of-colorados-14000foot

1. Meeting began at 11:50 AM and adjourned at 1:10 PM. Members Present: Clark, Yarnell (Phil & Barbara), Lope, Claus, Johnson, Wells, Elder, Maronick, Schroeder, Hardman, Cui-Gift, Gift, Swanson, McNeill, Wachtel, Truax, Deirnen, Miller, Hopfinger, Levy, Shaver, McDermid, and Griffiths. Clark moderated.
2. This meeting was devoted entirely to the recent lightning strike on a well-known Colorado mountain, which has received widespread media attention. A total of 15 people were struck. Nine received medical treatment and six declined treatment.
3. A journalist from a Denver-area neighborhood paper was hiking up the mountain the day of the lightning strike. She reported the weather was perfect the whole time, up until about three minutes before the strike she witnessed. She said the clouds rolled in at about 12:10 PM and the lightning struck at approximately 12:15 PM to 12:20 PM. She estimated she was about an hour from the summit. She saw hair standing up on multiple people.
4. A doctor on the hike said lightning struck at 11:56 AM. He was able to render first aid to an unconscious man laying face down on a rock.
5. Phil presented one of the individuals that were injured. Prior to the hike, he had checked the weather forecast and found no reason not to hike. He recalled the weather as being nice, almost hot. He hiked up without a shirt on. His party reached the summit before 11 AM. While at the summit, a cloud formed and it became windy and chilly and so his party began their descent and were on their way down by 11 AM.

While descending, hail started falling and he was struck about one minute later, which he thinks was sometime between 11 AM and 11:30 AM. He was about 200 feet from the summit in the boulder field, when he felt intense pain and then woke up face down on the ground. Initially, his arms and legs were paralyzed, but they quickly regained movement. Everything felt like it was in slow motion after coming to. He was able to get down under his own power. He said his hiking poles were making a low hum prior to the strike and his friends said they could feel the static buildup in the rocks. People with him heard a pop in the clouds.

First responders at the trailhead took his vitals and discovered his heartbeat rate was going up and down by 60 beats per minute. Upon that, he was taken directly to the hospital, where he was examined and later released. There was a burn mark on the top of his head and his hair was singed. Fern marks were traced by EMTs to the burn mark. His back and knee still hurt and he does not sleep well, although he had slept well prior to the strike. He has headaches daily and episodes of tinnitus. He lost his appetite for 3 days after and was forced to eat. His diet and appetite are now normal. He will get light headed after standing up. Conversations sometimes trailed off early after the strike and that still happens now, although not as often. There was no damage to his clothes or his backpack.

6. There was discussion about how best to get the safety message out to hikers. Suggestions offered included posting signs on trailheads and distributing safety messages via sporting goods stores. Per one attendee, spreading the safety message via retailers probably will not happen due to retailers' concerns over liability, should someone get hurt. It was suggested the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative might provide a means of educating hikers on lightning safety.
7. Questions, comments, notification of errors, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please forward those to Steve Clark at: sclarktoto@gmail.com. Please keep your communications professional and respectful. Communications will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.
8. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of the LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not implicitly or explicitly recommend or endorse any product or service. Any product or service presented in these minutes is done so for purposes of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for the consideration and review by the entire membership.
9. Next meeting: Friday, August 14, 2015 at 11:45 AM at St. Anthony Hospital West. Conference Room TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist

Lightning Links

This is a monthly listing of periodicals, websites, and videos about lightning and allied areas from a variety of sources. A headline or description is listed, followed by the link. Please note that some of the links are perishable, which means you'll need to go to the source for the information.

Mulder, E. 2015. UPDATE: One Remains in Hospital After Lightning Strike Injures 5 in Colorado Springs. *Colorado Springs Gazette*. June 24, 2015. Link:

<http://gazette.com/update-one-remains-in-hospital-after-lightning-strike-injures-5-in-colorado-springs/article/1554370>

WLS-TV 2015: Chebanese Man Survives Being Struck By Lightning – Twice.

Link: <http://abc7chicago.com/weather/chebanese-man-survives-being-struck-by-lightning---twice/806066/>

Sylte, A. 2015. House Struck By Lightning in Bennett a Total Loss. *9News.com*. June 28, 2015. Link: <http://www.9news.com/story/news/local/2015/06/28/bennett-house-fire-lightning-harvard-avenue/29449987/>

Myers, J. 2015. 5 Lightning Myths Busted. *thedenverchannel.com*. June 26, 2015.

Link: <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/storm-shield/storm-shield-featured/5-lightning-myths-busted>

Makins, M. 2015. Facts About Lightning Which May Keep You Safe.

thedenverchannel.com. Link: <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/weather/weather-blogs/facts-about-lightning-that-may-keep-you-safe>

McGhee, T. 2015. Lightning Strike on Mt. Bierstadt Injures At Least 3. *The Denver Post*. June 28, 2015. Link: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28397551/lightning-strike-injures-people-mt-bierstadt?source=hot-topic-bar

McGhee, T. 2015. Lightning Strike Knocked Some Bierstadt Hikers Unconscious. *The Denver Post*. June 29, 2015. Link:

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28401706/lightning-strike-knocked-some-bierstadt-hikers-unconciuous

CBS 4 Denver. 2015. Lightning Strike Victim Whose Dog Was Killed Believes the Animal Saved Him. June 29, 2015. Link: <http://denver.cbslocal.com/2015/06/29/lightning-strike-victim-whose-dog-was-killed-believes-the-animal-saved-him/>

Berg, J. and P. Tenser. 2015. Mount Bierstadt Lightning Strike Victim Posts tribute to His Dog. June 29, 2015. *thedenverchannel.com*. Link: <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/mountains/mount-bierstadt-lightning-strike-victim-posts-tribute-to-his-dog>

Reuter, J. 2015. Lone Tree Eye Doctor Details Bierstadt Lightning Strike. *Lone Tree Voice*. July 2, 2015. Link: <http://lonetreevoice.net/stories/Lone-Tree-eye-doctor-details-Bierstadt-lightning-strike,192971?>

Rodriguez, M. 2015. Check Early, Check Often: Avoiding Lightning in Colorado. *9News.com*. LDC Member Rich Kithil interviewed. Link: <http://www.9news.com/story/news/local/2015/06/29/check-early-check-often-avoiding-lightning-in-colorado/29487647/>

Sun, C. 2015. All Clear: Six People Treated in the Aftermath of Pikes Peak Lightning Strike Are OK. *The Colorado Springs Gazette*. June 26, 2015. Link: <http://gazette.com/all-clear-six-people-treated-in-aftermath-of-pikes-peak-lightning-strike-are-ok/article/1554515>

Sky News. 2015. Two Killed By Lightning Strikes on Mountains. Link: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/two-killed-lightning-strikes-mountain-172915651.html#dKchOsV>

Orovetz, J. 2015. Lightning Disrupts 9News Broadcast. (VIDEO) *9News.com*. July 11, 2015. Link: <http://www.9news.com/story/news/2015/07/10/storm-knocks-9news-off-air/30002373/>

Colorado Fourteeners Initiative. Link: <http://www.14ers.org/>