

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

February 9, 2024

ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO

Monthly Quote: “The idea hit me like a bolt of lightning.” Colloquial expression.

Members present: Crow, Langford, Semple, Swanson, Wachtel, Yarnell. Meeting began at 11:45 AM and ended at 12:53 PM. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

1. The LDC is accepting donations, either as cash or check. If you donate via check, please make your check payable to Steve Clark at 755 S. Clinton Street, #2A; Denver, CO 80247. He will cash the check and keep the cash holdings specifically for the LDC. When the LDC incurs expenses, Steve will pay for services rendered through his bank account using the cash from LDC’s cash holdings. A log will be maintained detailing the inflow and outflow of monies.
2. Our intrepid LDC president was absent from the meeting for a well-deserved vacation. My continued gratitude goes out to Steve Clark as the driving force for keeping this organization active.
3. In previous meetings the idea has been discussed for preparing a packet of materials which could be accessed by ER personnel and others concerning how to manage emergent lightning injury. In service of this idea, Ken Langford proposed a set of tasks. This was the primary focus of the meeting. Each task shall be discussed in the paragraphs below.
4. Task 1 - The manner in which most of the world now accesses information is via the internet. It is therefore proposed that rather than preparing physical materials, a well labeled and curated set of web links should be prepared and posted on the existing LDC website. Task 1 is in the gathering of these links, and the actual posting. If any LDC members would care to propose materials, these would be considered. Mary Ann Cooper has shared what she considers to be current best practice information. Thank you Dr. Cooper! Among these resources is a PDF of Auerbach's Wilderness Medicine. These resources may be all that are required. Phil Yarnell did suggest that there should be a link for information on the long term functional neurological consequences of lightning injury.
5. Task 2 – Straight medical literature will be most of what is important for the assessment and treatment of lightning injury, but possibly not all. A plea for documentation of lightning injury indicators – physical evidence and factors consistent with lightning injury in the literature – could be crucial to insurance coverage, which in turn impacts level of available care. Therefore I propose at least some emphasis be placed on such documentation.
6. Task 3 – Two of our members – Barb and Coleen – had very different experiences in the ER when they were first evaluated. The reason is that Barb made a point of educating the personnel who evaluated her, leading to a better experience for Coleen when she was seen by the same people. I would like to identify what that x factor is and try to communicate it.

7. Task 4 - Just because information is posted on the internet, does not mean people can or will find it or access it. Carl Swanson wondered how many hits we currently receive on our LDC website. Our moderator did not have that information. Once the materials are ready to go, I propose an effort to publicize the location of our resource page. One possibility is via “web optimization,” whereby various Google searches would result in an early listing of our site in the first results page. Another possibility is to identify web chat forums where ER personnel might share information and find a willing member to create a thread in which our site is featured. Finally, if you are a survivor who is in contact with your treating physician, perhaps you could ask them what they did to find information, so that we might reverse engineer our approach. Please submit other ideas for this task as you think of them.
8. At the conclusion of the meeting we briefly discussed our guest at last months’ meeting. All agreed that theirs was a complicated case. It was noted that the presence of a 2nd person to serve as an advocate at any medical appointment or evaluation can be very useful. For instance, having a written list of questions going into an appointment can help to ensure that all concerns are addressed. We called those after-the-fact unanswered questions “car questions” because one usually thinks of them as they are sitting in their car after the appointment.
9. LDC welcomes your questions. Please send them via e-mail to Steve Clark at sclarktoto@gmail.com. Your medical questions will be forwarded to Dr. Phil Yarnell for his review and will usually be taken up for discussion in the next month’s meeting. Please be advised any questions posed are for the general consideration by the group and any answers given do not constitute a formal medical opinion. If a formal evaluation is requested, arrangements can be made directly with Dr. Yarnell. If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 or your local EMS.
10. Questions, comments, error notifications, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please send them to Steve Clark. Please keep the communications professional and respectful. They will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.
11. 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.
12. Next meeting: Friday, March 8, 2024, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM MST.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kenneth Langford

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.

John, K., 2024: 242 Million Lightning Flashes in US Unfold in 2023 with 13 Total Fatalities, New Report Shows. *Nature World News*. January 31, 2024. Link: <https://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/60488/20240131/242-million-lightning-flashes-unfold-2023-13-total-fatalities-new.htm>

Bell, A., 2023: 20-Year Old Rescues Man from Chicago Train Tracks, Gets Rewarded with New Car and Job Offer. *Blavity, Inc.* August 30, 2023. Link: https://blavity.com/20-year-old-rescued-man-chicago-train-tracks?utm_source=t1&utm_campaign=25311996&utm_content=3838481031&utm_medium=cpc&utm_term=1037842&bna=1&tblci=GiAmPKM7nM6XC1CNUOdlx1QIZvI6zaAhS1x7TZO78G-FhiCH31YoxtiCjIfOqKpl#tblci=GiAmPKM7nM6XC1CNUOdlx1QIZvI6zaAhS1x7TZO78G-FhiCH31YoxtiCjIfOqKpl

Oberholtz, C., 2024: Lightning Fatalities Were Second Lowest on Record in 2023, Safety Council Says. *Fox Weather via Yahoo!News*. January 25, 2024. Link: <https://news.yahoo.com/lightning-fatalities-were-second-lowest-152307579.html?guccounter=1>
