

Weather & Your Data

Yes, summer is upon us. The temperatures are rising and so is the storm frequency. Living in Florida we know we can almost set our clocks to the afternoon storms, but wouldn't it be nice if we could also predict where and when lightning will strike? Unfortunately we haven't come that far yet, and until such time that we can, it's important to make sure your network and equipment is protected.

First, some Lightning Facts:

The National Weather Service indicates there are up to 1,800 thunderstorms in progress somewhere on the earth at any given moment. Each year, the earth hosts over 16 million storms and 3 billion lightning strikes. The United States experiences approximately 100,000 thunderstorms with 20 million lightning strikes annually.

Lightning can:

- have a flash that can be six to eight miles long.
- heat up to 60,000 degrees Fahrenheit (about five times the temperature of the sun).
- carry 1 billion volts and 10,000 to 20,000 amperes of current. Your house probably uses only 200 amps.
- cause the ground surface to be lethal up to a 60-foot radius at the time of the strike. If the strike occurs in water, that increases to 600 feet radius.

* Compiled with information from The Weather Channel, Automated Weather Service, Inc., National Weather Service, Global Atmospheric, Inc and LightningTalks.com

Lightning Myths

Myth: Lightning rods attract/discharge lightning.

Truth: The direction lightning takes is purely random. Rods only provide a conductive path to ground for an electrical charge that is already in the area.

Myth: Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

Truth: Lightning often strikes the same location several times a year. The Empire State Building is hit 25 times per year

Myth: Umbrellas, cleats, and golf clubs attract lightning.

Truth: Nothing "attracts" lightning. The only determinant that effects where lightning will strike is the location of the thunderstorm itself.

Myth: Lightning strikes, or is more likely to strike, tall objects.

Truth: Lightning has the ability to strike everything and everywhere.

Myth: Lightning victims are electrified.

Truth: Victims and the surrounding ground do not carry an electrical charge after the strike and are safe to touch

Protecting your network and equipment goes beyond a simple surge protector. Sure, that might stop a power surge, but what about a direct lightning strike or a power failure? With the amount of energy in a lightning strike, you can rest assured if you have no protection or little protection, if your building or nearby power lines get hit, you're going to have damage to your equipment and possibly your data. Using a UL Listed protection device (with Joules rating being the higher the better) is one way to provide protection. However, smart consumers should always opt for a battery backup, or UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply) that will not only provide the power protection against surges and lightning, but also provide temporary standby power in the event of a power failure, giving you time to properly save your data and shut down. Failure to properly close many applications, databases, programs, etc. can cause irreversible damage to your important data.

Another form of protection is Back Ups. We always suggest, whether for a business or a residence, that you back your data. For a personal computer, backup your E-mail, documents, pictures, music, financial data, etc. Anything of importance to you. For a business, make sure you are not only backing up your data locally (via a disc to disc backup or tape backup), but also utilize an offsite backup. Should a catastrophic event such as a fire or hurricane destroy your locally stored data, you can rest easy knowing your data is also located offsite at a remote location ready for you to restore. You might be surprised how affordably you can use an offsite backup! However, can you really afford to lose your customer and financial data?

Contact Us to find out more information on how Upton Technology Group can assist you with Disaster Recovery Solutions.