



Enlightening



Wednesday, March 20, 2019 will mark the start of spring. Spring in Texas brings pleasant temperatures, wild flower lined highways, and the dreaded spring storm season. Texans have come to expect strong storms that come with anything from hail and strong winds to devastating tornadoes. With a weak “El Nino” in effect, only time will tell what this Spring Storm season has in store for residents.

One of the potential hazards that these storms bring, is impressive displays of lightning. Lightning is a visible electrical discharge that occurs within a cloud, between two clouds, or between a cloud and the surface of the Earth. As lightning passes through the air it heats the air rapidly, which in turn causes the air to expand rapidly creating the sound wave we hear as thunder. Normally, you can hear thunder about 10 miles from a lightning strike. On average, there are 1,800 thunderstorms on Earth at any given time which leads to 100 lightning strikes hitting the Earth per second.

According to the most recent data, US fire departments respond to an average of 22,600 fires per year that were started by lightning. These fires caused an average of \$451 million dollars in direct property damage a year. Texas ranks second on the list when comes to number of homeowner insurance lightning losses, with Florida topping the list.

More and more property owners are becoming educated on hazards of lightning and the need to protect their property from lightning strikes. They are turning to lightning protection systems to help secure one of their most expensive investments. Below is brief overview of the components that typically make up a lightning protection system.

- **Air Terminals** – these are often referred to as lightning rods, they are inconspicuous copper or aluminum rods are vertically mounted on the roof at regular intervals as defined by the industry safety standards. The air terminals serve as strike receptors, designed to intercept the lightning strike.
- **Main conductors** – constructed of copper or aluminum, these braided cables connect the air terminals to the other system components and the grounds.
- **Grounds** – a minimum of two ground rods, driven at least 10 feet deep in the Earth are required for all structures. The ground terminations direct the dangerous current into the ground, to help eliminate the chance of damage to the structure.
- **Bonds** – bonding joins metallic bodies and grounded building systems to the main conductor to ensure conductivity and prevent side flashing (lightning jumping between two objects).
- **Surge arresters and suppressors** – surge suppression is installed at the electrical panel/s to prevent the entrance of over-voltages which can cause a fire. Arresters installed at the electrical panel/s help protect heavy appliances and prevent fires at the service panel entrance.
- **Tree protection** – it is recommended that any tree taller than the structure or within 10 feet of a structure be equipped with a lightning protection system. An unprotected tree in close proximity to a structure can create a side flash hazard.

Keep in mind that a single bolt of lightning can carry over 30 million volts of electricity. It is no wonder why lightning can rip through roofs, explode brick and concrete and ignite fires. Until next time my friends, be prepared and stay safe.

March 2019

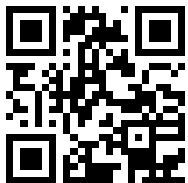
Events

March 4-6: TASBO Conference
 March 5: IREM Luncheon
 March 7: ACA Luncheon
 March 13: AAFAME Luncheon
 March 20: IIASA Luncheon
 March 20: SA BOMA Luncheon
 March 21: CAMO Luncheon
 March 21: SAABE Luncheon
 March 28: IWSA Luncheon

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 -----TASBO-----	5 ----Conference----- IREM Luncheon	6 ----SA-----	7 ACA Luncheon	8	9
10	11	12	13 AAFAME Luncheon	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 IIASA Luncheon SABOMA Luncheon	21 CAMO Luncheon SAABE Luncheon	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 IWSA Luncheon	29	30
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