

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

Denver, CO

November 15, 2025

Monthly Quote: “If you fail to prepare, you are prepared to fail.” - Benjamin Franklin

Members present: Clark, Yarnell and Terry and featured speaker Helen Christians. Meeting began at 11:45 AM and ended at 12:25 PM.

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 is maintained detailing the inflow and outflow of monies. The LDC currently has \$1047.00 in cash.
2. First, I want to apologize to our featured speaker and to the members present for my lack of preparation for our speaker. Simply put, I forgot to verify whether or not she had received the invitation to the meeting, which cost us precious time from the meeting. I will do better!
3. Our speaker was Helen Christians, an Occupational Therapist who retired seven years ago from the Oregon Burn Center in Portland. The center sees patients from southwest Washington and from Oregon. The nearest burn centers to the Portland facility are in Sacramento, Seattle and Denver. There are only about 35 certified burn centers in the United States.

Sometime during the late 1970s into the early 1980s, the Brotherhood of Electricians and the Oregon Burn Center joined forces in a campaign to educate people on the prevention of burns and electrical injuries. The number of people injured by electric shock was very high. From the time the educational campaign began, the number of people injured by electricity has decreased.

Helen presented three examples of electrical injuries. Example 1: The center would see people that had opened a shorted electrical panel who were burned by the flash of heat from the panel. Skin that was exposed was severely burned. If the person was wearing goggles, the area under the goggles was protected. Example 2: Linemen would present with severe burns. Example 3: A homeowner had installed an antenna which came into contact with a power line. All circuits were destroyed. The homeowner was badly hurt, but was later able to return to work.

She presented two cases of lightning injury. Case 1: She had a relative who was a telephone operator and wore earphones over both ears. The phone line was hit by lightning and initially, the relative reported feeling fine. In a few days, the relative was in pain and spent the rest of their life in a state hospital due to insanity. Case 2: A football player was partially paralyzed by lightning.

Due to my lack of proper preparation, we did not have time to discuss these injuries in detail.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Next meeting: Friday, December 12, 2025, from 11:45 AM to TBA. We will be meeting with LDC member Bruce Beckmann, a member of Alpine Rescue and Colorado Search and Rescue. We may have two other speakers: Woody from Alpine Rescue who would address two individuals who were struck last June and Hugh Zuker who would address the two hunters killed in Conejos County in September. The two links in the Lightning Links section below touch on these events. Stay tuned for details.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven E. Clark
President, Lightning Data Center, Denver, CO

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.

Ross, T. and O. Prentzel, 2025: Elk Hunters Found Dead in Southern Colorado Were Killed by Lightning, Coroner Says. *The Colorado Sun*. September 22, 2025.

Link: <https://coloradosun.com/2025/09/22/hunters-found-dead-victims-of-lightning-strike/>

Alpine Rescue Team, 2025: Press release regarding the two hikers rescued by helicopter from Colorado peaks in June.

Link: <https://alpinerescueteam.org/lightning-strike-on-torreys-peak/>
