Lightning and Laptop Storage

Problem: Many schools and offices store multiple laptops in carts and cabinets, both for security and to provide re-charging when they are not in use. The risk of damage from *power surges* is often not considered – especially in areas where there is a high risk of *lightning* strikes. While no surge-suppressor can protect equipment from a direct lightning hit, a single power surge caused by a lightning strike could destroy tens of thousands of dollars of equipment, unless your laptop carts and cabinets re-charge through power strips equipped with surge-protection.

Statistics: Here is some interesting information:

- Lightning accounted for 101,000 laptop and desktop computer losses amounting to $125,417,000 in damage in 1997. -Computer Security News

- In 1998, Safeware (an insurance company that deals with laptop losses) reported that power surges accounted for 83,000 claims (valued at $32,225,000) and lightning surges through telephone lines accounted for 48,000 losses (valued at more than $70,000,000).

- In 2003, Safeware reported this: "Claims for power surge and lightning [in 2002] represented only 1 percent each of total claims, down from 4 percent and 2 percent, respectively, in 2001. 'PC owners are becoming much more careful in using surge protectors and similar devises to protect their equipment,' Strejeck said." In spite of this, many schools and offices use laptop carts that have power strips that provide no surge protection whatsoever.

- A lightning frequency map at http://www.tvss.net/aaa-img/litng/ltng.png shows how many states have a large incidence of lightning per square kilometer. The states shown in red (Florida and parts of several other southern states) show especially high exposure.   An animated version of this map using data from NASA can be found at http://www.tvss.net/aaa-img/litng/CombinedAnnual.mpg

Solution: It is absolutely critical that schools and other organizations store, protect and re-charge laptops in carts and cabinets provided with surge-protection. All Dell SafeHarbor carts and other carts provided by Datamation Systems are the ***only carts available with surge-protection built into every unit.***

Some carts have what they call "overload" protection, which is a simple breaker switch. "Overload protection" is not "surge protection."

If you are purchasing a cart for your valuable assets, insist that it provide surge-protection. To check whether a cart you are using or are considering purchasing has surge-protection features, please contact Datamation Systems.