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From the Flight Deck with Captain Doug: Lightning Advisories



Aug 01, 2019



Do you know that there are about 45,000 thunderstorms every day around the globe, each of which can have an impact on air travel?

At this very moment, there's at least 2,000 thunderstorms booming on the planet.

In Canada, the thunderstorm capital is in Southwest Ontario, so that includes Toronto Pearson, Air Canada's main hub.

Toronto, and Southwestern Ontario, see about 30 to 33 days of thunderstorms a year.

So, when is a lightning advisory implemented?

It's when lightning strikes are detected within 5 to 9 kilometres of an airport. What happens is, when the system detects lightning strikes, all ground operations will cease preventing flights from departing or accommodating flights that landed.

That means people loading the airplane, unloading the airplane, guiding the airplane in, pushing the airplane back, maintenance, fuellers, commissary. They must go inside and seek shelter.

This is for the safety of all the employees working on the ground as well as our passengers.

For planes that have already landed as a lightning advisory was declared, they would normally have to wait off the gate until the storm clears and ground crews can resume their work.

The good news is, Toronto Pearson now has a Visual Docking Guidance System (VDGS). That allows us to taxi right to the gate even during a lightning advisory, bring the jetway to the airplane and deplane the passengers safely.

Captain Doug Morris writes for [Air Canada's enRoute Magazine](#)



Jan 12, 2022

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