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Detecting and Proving Hail Damage

Not all thunderstorms are created equal and not all heavy thunderstorms produce hail. The random and sometimes isolated nature of thunderstorms presents challenges in not only their forecasting, but also proof of their occurrence.

Proof of hail damage presents its own problems. First is that hail typically occurs in a very small area of the thunderstorm, sometimes making it difficult to find evidence in a neighboring property. Second, is that hail melts quickly in warm weather making it challenging to catch “red-handed” on a photograph. Property owners may not be aware of the damage until long after the fact.

Recently, the AccuWeather Forensics Team was asked to investigate possible hail damage to a car dealership. The damage was first noticed during the first business day after an early-summer weekend. Utilizing Doppler radar and proprietary methods, the team was able to first determine if there were thunderstorms in the area and if so, when they occurred. The team found that intense storms had passed over the area in question during a Sunday afternoon, when the dealership happened to be closed. Next the team found that the storms were not only able to produce hail over the vicinity of the dealership, but the results suggested the hail was at least the size of golf balls, large enough to put dents in vehicles and crack windshields.

As a result of the investigation, including the information provided by the AccuWeather Forensics Team, the dealership’s insurance company had the necessary evidence for the damaging hail and paid the claim.

This is an excellent example of the types of cases in which the AccuWeather Forensics department has the experience and the expertise to determine what took place meteorologically at any given time and place. Contact us today at 814-235-8626 for more information.