

## Lightning damages Solon police gear

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### SOLON , OHIO

- Lightning can strike twice in the same place - and it has caused thousands of dollars in damage to Police Department equipment in the past three years.

A power surge last week, caused by lightning striking the communications tower or a transformer, damaged at least \$40,000 in equipment, including outdoor security cameras, the jail's video arraignment system, a clock that times calls and mobile data terminals that process data from computers in police cars, said Police Chief Wayne Godzich.

The ability to answer and respond to calls was unaffected by the outages, which occurred during a thunderstorm around 4 a.m. Thursday that also affected some other area departments.

"We have surge protectors, but when it is lightning, there is not much that is going to stop it," said Ron Katona, the city's manager of information services. He and Godzich said the building should be studied to determine if there is a way to block surges where power enters the building. Godzich said Public Works Director David Klunzinger coincidentally is attending an out-of-state seminar at which such issues will be addressed.

About \$30,000 in equipment was damaged in 1999 in a power surge after lightning struck the communications tower, Godzich said. "What was unique about 1999 was that the final analysis showed that when the dispatcher pressed the transmit button for a radio call, it let the surge go through," he said.

The city's deductible cost is \$5,000 under terms of its membership in the Northern Ohio Risk Management Association, a self-insured group of 10 cities, said Finance Director William Weber. The loss is shared by the member cities up to \$500,000, then by an insurance carrier.

Other police departments in the line of the thunderstorms had less damage. Several lost 9-1-1 service for a short time. Oakwood Police Chief Robert Semik said computers in the clerk of courts office are being repaired.

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