

SAFETY BULLETIN

Safety Bulletin No.	2021 09	Date Issued	19 November 2021
Subject	Operating During Thunderstorm Conditions		
Area of Concern	DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – AIRSIDE		
Issued By	<i>Mike Clancy – Airside Manager</i>		

Introduction

This **Safety Bulletin** is issued to remind operators of the safety considerations for operating during thunderstorm conditions.

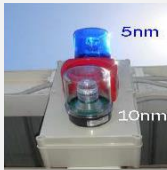
Recent activity that included strikes on the airfield demonstrated that lightning can impact operations and the safety of personnel working on the airside and the importance of having procedures in place when working during thunderstorm conditions.

Thunderstorms and Lightning



Thunderstorms can occur at any time during the Top End Wet Season. Working on the operational area of an airport in thunderstorm conditions contains the risk of lightning strike and must be managed as part of an employer’s duty of care.

Qantas has installed a thunderstorm alert system on the Air Transport (RPT) Apron (and unit also located Northern GA Apron); system comprises a visual light and audible horn. Qantas receives advice from Q-MET and activates the Qantas TS Alert system when information is received that the airport is likely to be affected by thunderstorm activity as per the following table:

Stage	Alert Description	Recommended Actions
10 NM WARNING	<p>Activated when thunderstorms are detected moving towards the airport and are within 10NM (19KM).</p> <p>System displays: WHITE Strobe + 15 sec repeating horn - 3 beeps, 2 sec quiet, 3 beeps, 2 sec quiet, 3 beeps, then quiet for remainder of Alert.</p>	<p>Normal ramp activity continues, though the proximity of the thunderstorm should be closely monitored. Operators should consider implementing own procedures and prepare for the likelihood of a 5NM Thunderstorm Alert.</p>
5 NM ALERT	<p>Alert activated when thunderstorms are likely to impact the airport and within 5NM (9KM).</p> <p>System displays: BLUE Strobe + continuous repeating horn – 3 beeps, 2 sec quiet, 3 beeps.</p> 	<p>It is recommended operators activate their Thunderstorm Alert Procedures and assess if they should declare an OPERATIONS SHUTDOWN. The 5NM alert generally involves the removal of personnel from open areas and most servicing activities such as refuelling have ceased.</p>
ALL CLEAR	<p>As the storm recedes outside of 5NM from the airport the alert is downgraded to ALL CLEAR (no lights) or in some circumstances may return to 10NM Alert – White Light.</p>	<p>Operators should assess conditions and if considered safe to do so, resume normal operations.</p>

THINK SAFELY, ACT SAFELY

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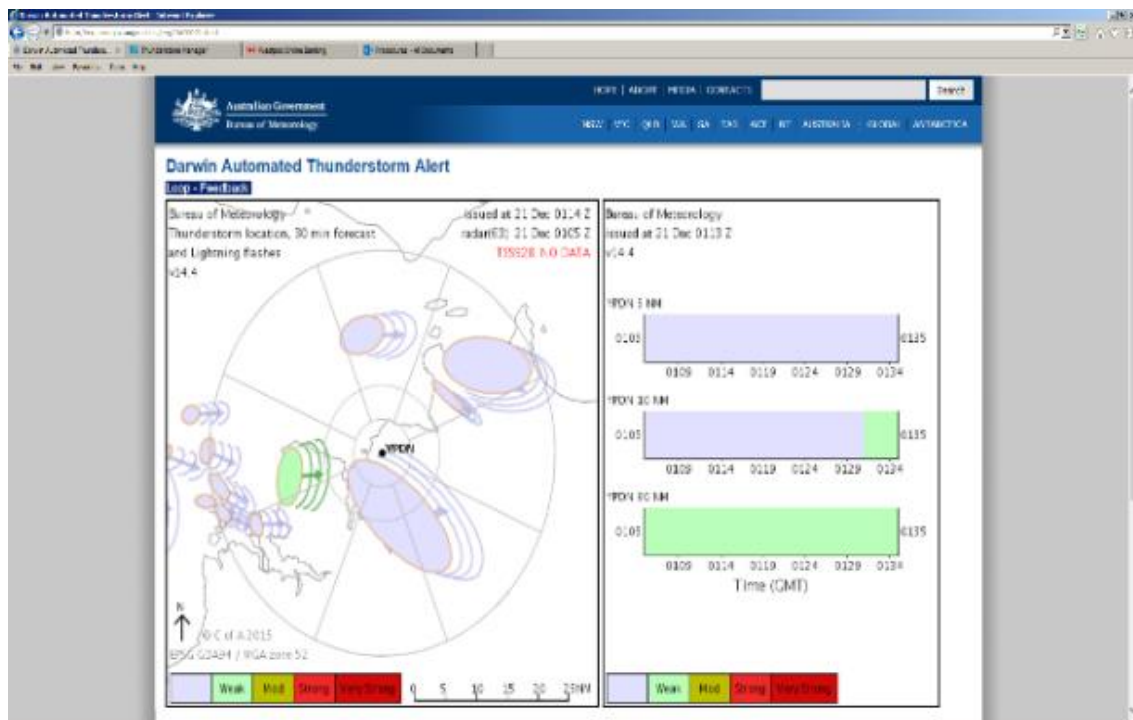
DIA do not mandate or direct that operators vacate the airside though recommend that activities in open areas cease during the presence of electrical storm activity within 5NM of the aerodrome; though airside operators should not be dependent on the Storm Warning system alone.

It is the responsibility of each Operator to have procedures in place to assess the conditions and the requirement for the removal of personnel from open areas and take shelter inside buildings or enclosed vehicles to reduce the likelihood of lightning striking and injury to personnel during thunderstorm conditions.

This could include verbal advice from respective Airline Operations or from monitoring BoM weather information.

Severe weather and thunderstorm information is available from the Bureau of Meteorology website, such as, Darwin (Berrimah) Radar - <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDR633.loop.shtml>

Access to the Automated Thunderstorm Alert Service (ATSAS) can be obtained from the BoM by emailing: webav@bom.gov.au or webops@bom.gov.au or by subscribing to a Storm Alert System that tracks and provides alerts.



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