

Hail Information now readily available

New software now installed, gives VCE, Inc. the ability of accessing all 40 years of the hail records of the National Weather Service for any location in the United States. The records are current up to 3 months prior to the current date.



National Weather Service gathers hail information from every official reporting station. Reports from reporting stations include information from storm spotters located throughout the reporting area, law enforcement or emergency management personnel, media reports, and from the general public. Nashville, for example, has 11 weather stations, and there are about 400 spotters in Middle Tennessee. In many cities, most reports from a given reporting station are recorded as having occurred at the latitude and longitude of the reporting station. The accuracy of the data has not been independently confirmed.

To obtain information at a given location, one enters search information. The information entered, is the latitude and longitude of the location in question, the time period to be considered, the radius in miles of the search area, and the range of the size of hail. The smallest diameter of hailstone which may be used is 3/4 of an inch. The largest size is 5 inches in diameter.

The program then issues a report showing the latitude and longitude, the date and time of day, and the size of hailstone for each occurrence of hail in the selected area.



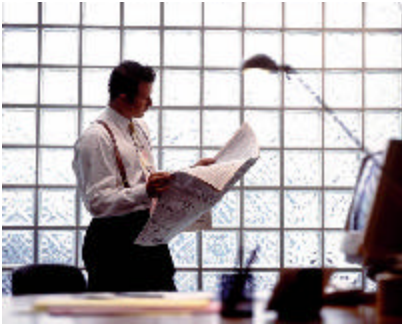
An investigator may utilize the data obtained as dependable information for determining the probability of hail damage. The investigator must realize that a hailstorm is an event which occurs over an area while hail-fall reports are listed as point locations. Thus, a hailstorm could cover several square miles and deposit different sizes of hailstones, but there might be only one hail-fall report.

Before the development of this software, the information was maintained at the National Weather Service, but was not readily available.

It is true that not all occurrences of hail are reported. Nevertheless, the availability of reliable information about hail will greatly aid in the determination of actual hail damage.

VCE, Inc. is now a member of IRICOWI, a Roofing Industry Committee on Weather Incidents.

by Carl Hudson / VCE, Inc. Roof Specialist



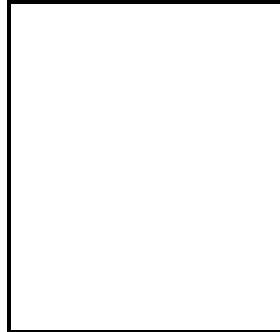
VCE, Inc.'s Tips of the Trade

Accident Reconstruction

When forced with interpreting the physical evidence at an accident scene, the following tip may be helpful.

Pre-Impact skid marks show the direction of travel prior to the point of impact. At the point of impact, the skid marks will shift towards one side or the other, depending on the direction that the other vehicle is traveling. A good example of this is seen below in the photograph.

As seen here, the skid

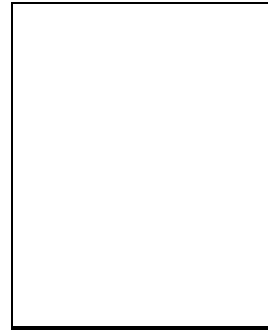


Todd Hutchison

marks seen in the middle of the intersection are initially straight and then bend to the left. The point where the marks bend to the left are called off-set skid marks and show the location of the front tires of the skidding vehicle at the point of impact. The other scuff marks seen on the far side of the off-set skid marks show the locations of the front tires of the other vehicle.

marks seen in the middle of the intersection are initially straight and then bend to the left.

Blasting Damage Follow the cracking pattern.



Wade Hutchison

cracking in the interior of a house often indicates deflection of the floor system. If deflection of the floor system has occurred, follow the deflection to its source for the root cause of the cracking. Often you will find that differential settlement or inadequate support material size is the cause for the deflection. In exterior masonry materials, follow the cracking pattern to find indications of ground erosion, sifting or other soil weakening conditions. Often times these soil conditions lead to differential ground settlement, which is the source for many continuous stressing crack patterns.

Remember when analyzing cracks, it is important to follow the crack pattern.

The cracking pattern of a material is important in determining the causation of the cracking. Wedge shaped cracking in interior drywall or exterior brick and mortar work is an indication of continuous stressing of the material. The orientation of the wedge shaped cracking will give some general indication as to the source of the material stressing.

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VCE, Inc. Video Productions

The Video Department at VCE, Inc. has recently acquired technology which helps to create dynamic presentations for the courtroom. This technology utilizes digital video (on CD-ROM or other media) for instantaneous playback of depositions or exhibits. Not only can the video be played back on a projector for a larger image, but the video playback displays a transcript for each word spoken in the deposition.

The first step is to convert video tapes from a VCR into a format that can be recognized by a computer. This process is called digitization. The video must be compressed in order to fit on a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM and a series of filters are used to remove unmoving video that takes up space.

Then the video is synchronized line for line with

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a court reporter's transcript. Synchronization tells the computer what portion of video to bring up on screen when instructed by an attorney.

The program used to playback video in this way is called **SANCTION**. SANCTION is a complete trial organization and presentation package that is very easy to use. With this software, all of your case information can be stored in a single place for review and then displayed to the courtroom. The \$395 price tag is well worth the investment. **If you have any questions about this product or any of the other services we offer, please call our Video Department at 615/781-3844.**

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