

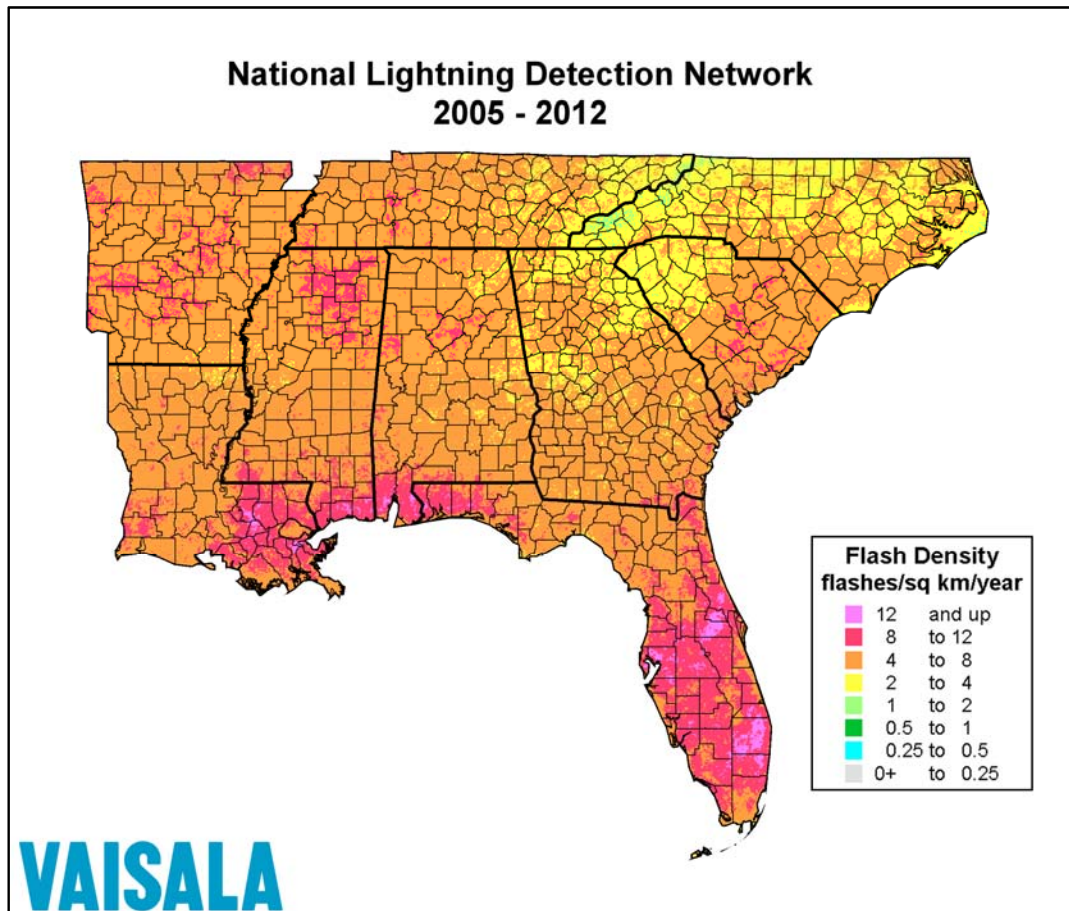
June 2013

For Immediate Release

Southeast U.S. Lightning Data from National Lightning Detection Network

Lightning frequency

The following map shows cloud-to-ground flash density for eight years in the southeast states. There is a great deal of detail to be found within this map at 2-kilometer (1.24 mile) resolution. The highest average lightning frequency is in peninsular Florida, and along the Gulf of Mexico coast from Pensacola to the west around New Orleans. The highest density exceeds 12 flashes per square kilometer per year in some of these areas. Less frequent lightning is shown to the northeast, especially over the higher terrain of the Appalachian Mountains in South and North Carolina. Here thunderstorms develop more often on the slopes than over the highest elevations, as seen around the world on higher terrain in humid environments. Most of the lightning occurs in this area during June, July, and August, and between late morning and early evening hours.



Lightning fatalities

For the entire U.S., 34 people were killed by lightning per year from 2003 to 2012, for a total of 345 during these ten recent years. The number of flashes and fatalities are shown by state in the following table. An average of ten times as many people are injured sufficiently to require medical attention as the number of fatalities. It is apparent that Florida has the largest number of flashes and fatalities. More details on area-weighted flash densities and population-weighted fatality rates are at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

State	Flashes in 2012	Average Flashes 1997 to 2012	Fatalities 2003-2012	Fatality Rank 2003-2012
Alabama	744,752	821,365	11	7
Arkansas	627,880	799,034	6	20
Florida	901,381	1,383,228	52	1
Georgia	585,944	797,159	17	5
Louisiana	899,598	909,274	9	12
Mississippi	736,152	866,997	8	16
North Carolina	465,387	528,092	18	4
South Carolina	358,664	447,014	10	11
Tennessee	514,979	588,187	7	19

Lightning insurance claims

According to the Insurance Information Institute and State Farm Insurance, 186,000 insurance claims were paid for lightning losses in the U.S. in 2011, at an average of \$5112 per claim for a total of about one billion dollars from this source alone – see www.vaisala.com/nldn30. There are substantial additional impacts of lightning in a very wide variety of avoidance and mitigation expenses.

Lightning safety

Safety from lightning involves being inside a large substantial building or a fully-enclosed metal-topped vehicle in the presence of lightning. In the U.S., 99% of lightning deaths in recent years occurred outside of these two safe locations. A simple rule to use for reaching these safe places is “When thunder roars, go indoors.” A substantial expansion on this lightning safety information is located on www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.