



# The American Weigh

American Scale Corporation

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## ELECTRONIC SCALES VS LIGHTNING

Lightning Season makes most electronic truck scales sitting ducks. Consider that each spark of lightning can reach five miles in length, soar to temperatures of 40,000 degrees Fahrenheit and pack 100 million electrical volts—one zap could fry every load cell in the county.



Lightning is a huge, unpredictable cutting torch, arc welder, and pile driver all rolled into one. Trees, towers, utility equipment, buildings, and mechanical and electronic scales are all fair game. Luckily, scales are seldom hit directly by lightning. Lightning likes things that produce a strong electrical field and travels in a straight line along a conductive path. Most of the damage we see in weighing equipment is caused by the effects of lightning.

A lightning strike can shut down a scale in an instant. We all know that scale downtime is a major inconvenience for all concerned. Scales are an essential part of all commodity based commerce. However, no matter the manufacturer, they are all susceptible to lightning damage. The actual repair of a damaged scale is often quite costly, as reflected in the repair invoice for service and parts. When the intangibles of idle employees during downtime and the potential customer dissatisfaction are considered, it's very difficult to calculate the full impact.

If your area is prone to lightning strikes during thunderstorms, and you experience multiple hits, it could cost upwards of \$8,000 to get your truck scale up and running again. Truck scale downtime can cause significant problems for your business. If this happens often, truck drivers might take their load elsewhere. Even after the scale is repaired, you may need to regain your suppliers' and customers' confidence.

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## GET TO KNOW US...

It's always nice to know a little about the people with whom you do business. To help everyone know just who we are, we will introduce and profile a staff member in each newsletter.

### **Thomas Scott** Systems Specialist

**Birthplace:**  
Harlan, KY

**Currently:**  
Shelbyville, KY

**Education:**  
Marion County HS, Lebanon, KY  
Campbellsville University, Campbellsville, KY  
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY  
Rice Lake Weighing Systems—920i Programming Course  
Avery Weigh-Tronix—E1310 Programming Course

**Family:**  
Thom and his wife Lesley have two sons, Noah and Eli

**What do you do when you're not working?**  
Pretty much anytime I can, I'm playing with my kiddos! We live in an amazing neighborhood and almost weekly we host neighborhood cookouts and have bonfires for s'mores! Anywhere from 12-20 adults hang out on our deck while as many or more kids play in the yard. Great times!



### **When did you become involved with American Scale?**

In January 2004, I was introduced to Danny Coyle at our church on a Sunday morning by a mutual friend. Interviewed and hired by the end of the week.

### **Where else have you worked?**

Kentucky Cooperage as an engineering intern; a Next Day Air sort supervisor at UPS; Lazarus/Macy's as a loss prevention officer (one of the most fun jobs ever!); Volunteer Firefighter (Before kids).

### **What do you like most about your job?**

I love the service industry! I find this career very rewarding when we can meet the needs of our customer. Whether it's because they have a system down and need emergency repair, or they need to comply with their quality requirements, I enjoy providing service that hopefully exceeds their expectations.

### **What do you find most challenging about your position?**

The ever-changing world of industry keeps us on our toes and makes sure we provide the best service and products. Personally, that means I try to keep learning what is new in scales and scale integration. There are times when I wrongfully thought I knew all that I needed to perform a job, only to get there and be stumped because the industry is so diverse and it throws curve balls all the time.

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## ELECTRONIC SCALES VS. LIGHTNING (Continued)

Over the years, computers have made their way into the weigh house. This has generated new and different lightning damage problems due to the equipment associated with it. Computer science advanced and hardwiring was initiated between the digital displays and the computer and has now become a common part of the vehicle weighing system. Computer data is now sent via telephone lines and internet to other computer centers. These links must also be protected from lightning and surge damage.

Vehicle scales are used in almost every conceivable place, from urban, to rural, as well as very isolated settings. The scale may be nestled in an industrial complex or part of an isolated farm or ranch. The site may use megawatts of power in the general area or only a few thousand watts in a five mile area. Distance from the transformer and ground conditions also play a large roll.

We receive many calls following stormy days and nights concerning scales being hit by lightning. Customers who are hit repeatedly want to know why. Believe it or not, things happen for a reason. Evaluation of the problem varies from difficult to nearly impossible over the telephone or through emails. Why are some scales constantly damaged and others in the same area are not? The hard part is to find the differences and modify the system to make it more tolerant. When scales are damaged, particularly repeatedly, evidence is normally left at the scene of the crime. We use this evidence to discover what's being damaged and where it is entering the system.

Each scale and location is different and possesses it's own unique characteristics and problems. The damaged load cells must be identified and examined, the connections from the scale to the display and other peripherals, circuit boards, the scale pit, and many other factors are considered. If you think that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, then maybe it's time you had your vehicle weighing system examined for lightning protection.

American Scale is here to help. Just give us a call at 800.928.5005 or email [info@american-scale.com](mailto:info@american-scale.com) and we will make arrangements to visit to your facility and examine your system.

## GET TO KNOW US... (Continued)

**If you could visit anywhere in the world, all expenses paid, where would it be and why?**

*Ethiopia. Both my boys are from Ethiopia and I have been there three times during the adoption process. I love the country and the people there. I would love to just go back, visit and spend some time seeing more of the country.*

**If you could live in any other time, when might that be and why?**

*Early 1900s America, when electricity and manufacturing started providing all kinds of new household and community advancements. To see such significant changes happen in front of my eyes, shaping our future, would be awesome. I always joke about the ride at Walt Disney World, called the Carousel of Progress, as being my "napping" ride in the dark air conditioned theater. In truth though, I really enjoy the ride as it takes you through five time periods, starting in the early 1900s, showing the technological advancements in our early years.*

**If you could have dinner with two famous people from history (alive or dead), who would they be, and why?**

*George W Bush—I heard him speak at a conference after his presidency (where he could speak more candidly without the whole country watching). He is so full of wisdom and humor that I would love to just sit down and chat with him to hear more of his story.*

*Walt Disney—I stole this one from our Accounting Manager. But when she stated Walt was a famous person she would like to meet, I resonated with that. He had immense vision for the things that he wanted to do and a passion that drove others to share in his vision and make his dreams come true. (And if you were wondering, yes, Walt Disney World is my family's favorite vacation spot.)*

**In summary, what makes you feel best about your future?**

*As I mentioned earlier, I enjoy providing a service where there are needs. In the growing world of technology and industry, I am confident there will always be a need for scale services and scale system integrations.*

*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep  
to gain that which he cannot lose."*

Jim Elliot, missionary to the Waodani Tribe in Ecuador

# KENTUCKY KINGDOM AND HURRICANE BAY



**WE CAN  
INSTALL A  
SCALE JUST  
ABOUT  
ANYWHERE!**

Including on top of the  
12-story (66') high Deep Water Dive, at  
Kentucky Kingdom and Hurricane Bay.  
The tallest body slide in America.

