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FLASH BACK: A REVIEW OF LIGHTNING-RELATED DAMAGE AND DISRUPTION LITERATURE[♦]

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ABSTRACT: This paper reviews and summarizes research completed to assess the extent and costs of lightning-related damage and disruption. Lightning routinely damages property and disrupts economic and social activities. Affected sectors include: health; property and casualty insurance; forestry; electricity generation, transmission, and distribution; agriculture; telecommunications; transportation; and tourism and recreation. Based on available literature, the first four sectors are the most important in terms of contributing to overall impacts and costs. Very little information exists that documents the amount of damage attributable to lightning in Canada, a finding that substantiates the need for additional Canadian empirical research, including on-going efforts by the authors to develop an aggregate picture of lightning impacts and costs across multiple sectors.

Keywords: lightning, damage, cost, disruption, casualty, thunderstorm, Canada

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 14,000 warnings for severe weather are issued each year by Environment Canada (MSC 2003). From April through October, most of these warnings are issued to alert the public of the development and imminent arrival of severe thunderstorms and the potential for damaging winds, heavy rainfall, large hail, and intense cloud-to-ground (CG) lightning. While the physical characteristics and climatology of lightning are relatively well-known, much less effort has been devoted to understanding the impacts of this common hazard. In response to this apparent dearth of

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information, especially for Canada, Environment Canada and university partners have undertaken an assessment of the impacts of lightning. The first phase of activity established an updated estimate and profile of lightning-related casualties (Mills et al. 2008). The current paper reviews published research examining the impact of lightning in terms of property damage, service interruptions and associated economic implications.

Emphasis was placed on North American research obtained through traditional library journal search engines (e.g., Web of Science, Scholar's Portal) and general internet searches focused on combinations of the term "lightning" with damage, impact, cost, prevention, and a range of sensitive economic sectors (e.g., electricity generation, transmission, and distribution). The review was intended to provide general understanding of damage mechanisms, quantified estimates of economic and social costs or other measures of physical impact, data sources and analysis methods. Discussion throughout the remainder of the paper is organized by impacted sector or activity: human health; general property damage; forest fire management; power generation, transmission and distribution; agriculture; transportation and pipelines; telecommunications; tourism and recreation; and other impacts. A brief summary section concludes the discussion, establishing the contextual and methodological stage for an empirical analysis of direct and indirect impacts across several sensitive economic sectors in Canada reported in Mills et al. (n.d.).

HUMAN HEALTH

Human casualties were discussed extensively in Mills et al. (2008) who estimated that 9-10 deaths and 92-164 injuries are attributable to lightning each year in Canada. The literature review from that publication also provides an inventory and interpretation of estimates for other countries (Mills et al. 2008). While casualty statistics stand on their own in terms of motivating policy or action to reduce impacts, the economic burden associated with casualties is often significant and should not be overlooked when aggregating or comparing costs across sectors. That said, no references were found that examined the costs of lightning-related mortality and morbidity, somewhat surprising given the inclusion of this direct cost element in other hazard studies (e.g., air quality; DSS Management Consultants Inc. 2000). However, many studies have assessed the value of a statistical life (VSL) and injury costs based on contingent valuation (willingness-to-pay or -accept), human capital, and revealed preference approaches (e.g., Alberini 2005; Health Canada 2002; Hirth et al. 2000; Viscusi 2004; Viscusi and Aldy 2003). The lowest values generally come from studies that have adopted human capital methods where only discounted future earnings losses of those killed or injured are considered. Estimates from contingent valuation (e.g., based on an individual's willingness to pay to reduce or accept compensation for the risk of being killed or injured) and revealed preference (e.g., observed wage-risk relationships) analyses tend to produce much larger figures and are more representative of the broad costs to society. In addition to the costs of the human consequences, there are also time and material costs associated with emergency response (i.e., ambulance, fire) and healthcare (Vodden et al. 1994).

GENERAL PROPERTY DAMAGE: INSURED AND UNINSURED LOSSES

Property damage is a frequently examined aspect of lightning impact. It has also been an important concern of the insurance industry for over a century—an observation supported by the titles of early insurance companies which contained explicit references to lightning (e.g., Virginia Assessment and Cooperative Fire, Lightning and Storms Insurance companies; Valgren 1925). Lightning strikes to power facilities, vehicles, livestock, forests, dwellings, and other public or private buildings and structures may cause immediate damage to assets. Physical damage to concrete structures and masonry has been documented, but is relatively uncommon (Blumenstein 2006; Erlin 2007). More often property damage results from either lightning-ignited fires or lightning-caused power surges through electrical, communication or other utility lines that affect equipment and the electronic contents of homes and businesses.

Several researchers, mostly within the natural hazards and applied climatology fields, have sought to understand the impact of a large spectrum of weather and climate-related events that cause insured and uninsured property damage (e.g., Changnon et al. 2001; Changnon 2003; Kunkel et al. 1999; Dore 2003; Cutter and Emrich 2005; Mileti 1999). Lightning is occasionally treated as a distinct hazard in such assessments but normally it is included in a broader category like thunderstorms (e.g., Changnon 2001). Much of this research is based on national or international disaster or catastrophe event databases where entries must exceed a relatively high (often greater than US\$5 million) damage, insured loss, or casualty count for inclusion (e.g., EM-DAT , Canadian Disaster Database , SHELDUS). Lightning strike events rarely achieve these thresholds and thus are often poorly represented in the aggregate damage estimates (Mills 2005).

Table 1 identifies general lightning-related property damage analyses and references that were uncovered through the literature review. The list is composed of estimates derived from analyses or interpretations of actual damage data from multiple sectors as opposed to more theoretical or conceptual risk models (e.g., Mazzetti and Flisowski 2000). Although there is some degree of overlap, research focused on individual sectors (e.g., damage to power generation facilities) is reported in subsequent sections. References were excluded if supporting documentation for statements was not provided or could not be verified (e.g., Briët 2004). The bulk of the work included in Table 1 was conducted in the United States, most often relying on the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Storm Data database which uses a combination of media references and reports from law enforcement agencies, local government officials and others in documenting weather-related fatalities, injuries and property damage (NOAA 2007). Household and commercial property and casualty insurance claim data were also used in a few studies, either alone or in combination with NOAA Storm Data. Proprietary constraints often restrict the use of insurance data such that only samples or partial coverage (i.e., records from one company) are usually available.

Kithil (n.d., 1997) provides the most comprehensive collection of damage estimates and his annual average U.S. loss figure of up to \$5 billion appears to be referenced most frequently in broader hazard assessments. However, the most rigorous studies have been completed by Holle et al.

Table 1 Summary of published estimates of lightning-related insured and uninsured property damage

Author	Timeframe	Location	Scope	Estimated Lightning Impact ^a	Data Sources
Aguado et al. (2000)	1950-1999	Navarra, Spain	Property damage (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated costs of 270M pesetas (>US\$1.5M) over study period 	Media reports and stakeholder survey
Curran et al. (1997, 2000)	1959-1994	United States (state-level)	Property damage (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19,814 damage reports over period Over 50% costing between \$5,000-\$50,000 Average annual damage of \$32M (1992-1994) 	US NOAA Storm Data
Ferretti and Ojala (1992)	1959-1987	Michigan	Property damage (all sectors)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 645 lightning strike events caused property damage over the 29-year study period with 173 of these events producing \$50,000 or more in damage 	US NOAA Storm Data
Holle et al. (1996)	1987-1993	Colorado, Utah, Wyoming	Property damage (insured personal and commercial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One claim per 52-57 CG flashes 4.7, 1.4, and 3.9 claims per 10,000 population for Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, respectively \$7M average annual 3-state loss (including \$150/claim deductible) Average annual U.S. loss of \$332M 	Colorado Chapter of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters and a large member insurer
Holle et al. (2005)	1890-94, 1990-94	United States	Property damage (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tremendous shift in types of damages from 1890s to 1990s, with much reduced farm and animal impacts (from ~52% to ~9% of reports) and much higher impacts to dwellings and utilities (from ~20% to ~49% of reports) 	US NOAA Storm Data Kretzer, H.F. 1895. Lightning Record: A Book of Reference and Information. Vol 1, 106 pp.
Homstein (1961, 1962)	1939-1958	Canada	Property fire loss Forestry (fire loss)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA\$1.5M average annual property fire loss (1,771 fires) CA\$3.5M average annual cost related to forest loss and fire suppression 	Dominion Fire Commissioner Provincial Forest Fire statistics

Table 1 Summary of published estimates of lightning-related insured and uninsured property damage cont...

Author	Timeframe	Location	Scope	Estimated Lightning Impact ^a	Data Sources
Insurance Information Institute (2007)	2004-2006	United States	Property damage (homeowner insured losses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 266,500 average annual claims • \$812.4M average annual losses • \$3,048 average loss per claim 	Participating insurers
Kithil (n.d., 1997) with figures also cited by Best's Review (1998), McGraw (2003), Kunkel et al. (1999)	1980s-2006	United States	Property damage and disruption (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2-5B in annual losses (interpretation of sector statistics from 1980s to 2006: fire-related, insurance, storage/processing, aviation, electrical infrastructure, electrical components) 	References to published estimates Personal and/or written communications with industry representatives
Lopez et al. (1995)	1950-1991	Colorado	Property damage (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 331 damage reports over period • Average of 7.9 damage reports per year 	US NOAA Storm Data
Mileti (1999)	1975-1994	United States	Property damage (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average annual loss between \$20-200M 	US NOAA Storm Data
Stallins (2002)	1996-2000	Georgia	Property damage (insured)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19,582 claims and \$22.9M insured losses over 5-year period for one Georgia insurer (\$1,100 per claim) • \$91.6M insured losses if results extrapolated statewide using relative market share 	Large Georgian insurer claims database US NOAA Storm Data

^a costs reported in \$US unless noted otherwise

(1996), Curran et al. (1997, 2000) and Stallins (2002). The following general points have emerged from their work and are consistent with the results of other studies referenced in Table 1:

- Lightning is one of the most common sources of weather-related property damage, whether measured in absolute terms or normalized for population or cloud-to-ground (CG) lightning flash density.
- NOAA Storm Data consistently and significantly underreport the number of damaging events and the value of damage when compared with insurance claim data. Presumably this underestimation applies to all media report-based damage data sets.
- While the frequency of damage appears to follow the same diurnal and seasonal pattern apparent for casualties, additional research is necessary to characterize and explain the relative roles of population density, household consumer trends (e.g., prevalence of consumer electronics), and CG flash density in influencing the observed geographic and longer-term temporal variation in property damage.

FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT

Forest fire, also commonly known as wildfire, is a natural and important part of the ecology of a forest (Podur et al. 2003). Nevertheless, forest fires may impact hydrology, water quality, air quality, and forest ecosystems. Where fires interface with people and settlements, they may cause injuries, damage property, force evacuations, close roads and railway lines, interrupt power and energy supplies, and necessitate substantial investments in fire suppression activities (Hardy 2005). Lightning is a well-established and recognized ignition source for forest fires (e.g., Gisborne 1926). Long continuous current (LCC), high multiplicity, and positive polarity CG strikes are generally thought to account for most lightning-caused fires (Wotton and Martell 2005; Latham and Williams 2001). However, other research has shown little evidence of a relationship between the latter two factors and forest fires (Hall and Brown 2006). Studies have examined the relative significance of lightning as compared to anthropogenic ignition sources on the frequency and spatial extent of forest fires. Canadian figures for the 1959-1997 period indicate that more than 70 percent of large (>200ha) fires and 85 percent of the average annual 1.8 million ha burned are attributable to lightning (Stocks et al. 2002). Lightning accounts for a smaller proportion of fires less than 200 ha in size, however, these only make up a few percent of the total area burned each year (Weber and Stocks 1998). Variations in the potency of lightning have recently been observed in Ontario (Podur et al. 2003), Western Canada (Wierzchowski et al. 2002), and Northwest Territories (Kochtubajda et al. 2006). In a study of the Central Cordilleran area, Wierzchowski et al. (2002) determined that one fire occurred for every 50 and 1400 lightning discharges in British Columbia and Alberta sections, respectively. Differences are attributable in part to elevation, vegetation, fuel and lightning characteristics (Podur et al. 2003; Wierzchowski et al. 2002; Wotton and Martell 2005).

The general costs and economics of forest fires and fire prevention have also received treatment in the literature. While no studies were found that explicitly evaluated the aggregate costs of lightning-ignited fires, research has been undertaken on individual fires or exceptional fire seasons (e.g., Kelowna, B.C., Filmon 2004; Chisholm, AB, CFRC 2001), summary statistics of provincial/state and national suppression costs (e.g., NRCan 2004; Johnston 2006), and specific forest use impacts (e.g., parks, Starbuck et al. 2006). Fire management costs in Canada typically range from \$400-800 million each year (NRCan 2004). The value of timber lost to fire is substantial and in extreme fire years can equal or exceed the value that is harvested commercially (NRCan 2004). Where fires occur at the wildland-urban interface, significant costs can result from forced evacuations and property damage to homes, other buildings, and transportation or energy infrastructure.

Some work has been completed to quantify impacts for tourism and recreation and health sectors. If parks and other recreation areas are shut down over large areas because of fire, economic impacts associated with reduced visitation can cost tens of millions of dollars (Starbuck et al. 2006). Rittmaster et al. (2006) estimated one-day health impacts of \$9-12 million for the 2001 Chisholm forest fire whose smoke plume affected the large urban area of Edmonton, Alberta. These costs were comparable to those incurred for fire suppression (\$10 million) and about half of the value of lost timber (\$20 million) as determined by CFRC (2001). Regardless of cost type, it is apparent from studies that provide very detailed accounts of losses and expenditures for specific fires that the form and magnitude of impact are strongly influenced by the individual circumstances of each event (i.e., nature of the fire, forest qualities, and socio-economic considerations) (Lynch 2004).

POWER GENERATION, TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION

Power utilities, in particular transmission and distribution facilities, bear a significant portion of the overall lightning-related damage burden. Although generation is largely unaffected by the outdoor environment (Billinton and Acharya 2005), studies have noted the impacts of lightning to the safety-related instrumentation and control systems of nuclear power plants (e.g., Trehan 2001; Bernstein et al. 1996) and have provided detailed accounts of lightning damage to wind turbines (Cotton et al. 2000; McNiff 2002; Glushakow 2007).

Most of the literature regarding the power sector, however, relates to the effect of lightning on the transmission and distribution infrastructure of electric utilities. Lightning was a major contributing cause of very significant blackouts, including the July 1977 blackout in New York City that affected 9 million people for up to 26 hours, and a June 1998 blackout that shut down electricity systems in the U.S. Upper Midwest, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan for upwards of 19 hours (U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force 2004). More commonly though lightning is a nuisance hazard that affects small sections of transmission and distribution networks. Two types of impact are widely cited: 1) physical damage to lines, towers, poles, transformers, insulators, fuses, and surge arrestors which generate repair and replacement costs, and 2) outages and power quality events that result in lost revenue to utilities and various costs to electricity consumers.

Whether or not a particular segment of a transmission or distribution system is affected depends on many factors. For instance, the location and properties of the lightning strike (i.e., direct overvoltage or adjacent strike causing induced overvoltage, current strength); voltage rating and length of power line; construction design and maintenance of towers, poles, transformers and lines (e.g., height, insulation rating, material deterioration); ground resistance (i.e., flashover potential greater if resistance is high); and extent of investment in lightning protection (e.g., surge arresters, overhead shield wires) have all been identified as being important in determining the vulnerability of a network (Carpenter and Auer 1995; Drabkin and Carpenter 2004; Parrish 1991; Rakov 2003; Shen et al. 1999; Koval and Chowdhury 2005; Allan and Billinton 1993; Chisholm et al. 2001; Nakada et al. 1998; Short 1992; Porrino et al. 1997). In general, higher voltage components of the system (i.e., transmission element, substations) are constructed to higher standards and with greater levels of lightning protection than the lower voltage (i.e., distribution) portion.

Reliability statistics are used by electric utilities to track, explain and manage impacts, most often outages, on a particular system. General measures include the annualized number of outages per standard line-length, total customer hour interruptions, percentage or count of total unplanned outages, total duration of outages, total customers affected. Standard industry indices include the System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) (average number of interruptions per customer per year) and Customer Average Interruption Frequency Index (CAIFI) (average number of interruptions per customer affected per year) (Allan and Billinton 1993; Keener 1997; McCracken and Rylska 2005; McDaniel et al. 2003; Mitsche 1989; Tarchini and Giminez 2003; Visacro et al. 2005). In general, adverse weather accounts for most of the unplanned sustained and transient line-related outages that are experienced in Canada (Koval 1994). Table 2 summarizes a selection of studies that have identified lightning-specific influences on outages, based on analyses of observed outage data as opposed to modeled or simulated values (e.g., Anderson and Short 1993; Savic 2005; Pyrgioti et al. 2000; Torres 1999; Teixeira and Moura 2006). Lightning consistently appears as a major cause of service interruptions.

Despite the documented significance of lightning, few articles were found that assessed or referenced estimates of the direct or indirect costs of lightning-related outages and utility equipment damage. Diels et al. (1997) note that lightning accounts for about half of all power failures experienced in regions of the U.S. that are subject to thunderstorms and costs the electric utility industry up to US\$1 billion annually in damaged equipment and lost revenue. Considering annual estimates of US\$50 million (Mitsche 1989) and US\$100 million (Keener 1997) for repairing lightning-caused damage and service restoration from the Electric Power Research Institute (ERPI), it appears that much of the impact may reside in lost income (i.e., electricity sales) rather than property damage.

An even greater cost may be that borne by electricity consumers and society-at-large. While not lightning-specific, several researchers have recently examined the economic value of electricity reliability and the costs of power disturbances to consumers in a number of countries including Brazil (Massaud et al. 1994), Canada (Allan and Billinton 1993; Billinton and Wangdee 2003, 2005), Denmark (Baarsma et al. 2005), South Africa (Mushwana 2005), United Kingdom (Allan and Karuiki

Table 2 Selection of published estimates of lightning-related damage (electricity generation, transmission and distribution sector)

Author	Timeframe	Location	Sector(s)	Estimated Lightning Impact	Data Sources
Adler et al. (1994)	1965-1985	Canada and United States	Electricity transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.596 line-related forced outages per mile-year (583,712 mile-years of circuit exposure) 	1985 Utility survey by IEEE
Chisholm et al. (2001)	1989-1992	Southwestern Ontario	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average system experienced 15 sustained outages per 100km-year (FAIRS data) Average lightning-related line disturbances per 100km-year for Drayton DS (55) and Cedar Mills (29) based on ELDs 	Hydro-One (FAIRS) data ELDS Station Event Recorder data (2 stations in SW Ontario)
Gelineau (2000)	2000	Canada	Electricity transmission and distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.9% of customer interruptions were due to lightning 	Canadian Electricity Association
Hidayat et al. (2002)	1996-2000	Jakarta, Indonesia	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36.2 line outages per 100 km-year (1,779 km medium-voltage lines) 	Regional utilities
Karlsson and Norberg (2001)	Not stated	Sweden	Electricity transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.8 outages per 100 km-year (130kv line) 	Vattenfall AB (utility)
McCracken and Ryjska (2005)	1999-2003	Canada	Electricity transmission and distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1M average annual customer hour interruptions (5-year average) 5.2% of total average annual customer hour interruptions 	Canadian Electricity Association (based on 31 major utilities)
McDaniel et al. (2003)	1997-1999	United States	Electricity transmission and distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightning-related outages/flash density (flashes/km²) statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detroit Edison (9,583/2.1) (13kv system over 20,000 km²) Carolina Power & Light (30,831/3.9) (23kv system over 35,000 km²) Florida Power (37,683/9.3) (12kv system over 10,155km²) 	Reliability data from Detroit Edison, Carolina Power and Light, and Florida Power
Parrish (1991)	1986-1988	Florida	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average annual lightning-caused transformer failure rate of 0.25% and transformer fuse operating rate of 0.43% based on 2,448 transformers at 1,789 locations and 154.4km of exposed circuit 	Florida Power Corporation

Table 2 Selection of published estimates of lightning-related damage (electricity generation, transmission and distribution sector) cont....

Author	Timeframe	Location	Sector(s)	Estimated Lightning Impact	Data Sources
Shen et al. (1999) and Koval and Chowdhury (2005)	1977-1996	Alberta	Electricity transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightning was the primary cause of 10, 5 and 23% of 72kV, 144kV, and 244 kV line-related sustained forced outages, respectively. Mean/median durations for 72kV, 144kV and 240kV line outages caused by lightning were 7.12/1.83, 104.21/1.26, 1,45/0.39 hours, respectively. 	Alberta Power Limited
Tarchini and Giminez (2003)	1997-2001	Argentina	Electricity transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 line outages per 100 km-year (132kv line) 	Empresa Distribuidora de Electricidad de Mendom
Tolbert et al. (1997)	1960-1992	Tennessee	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57 of 135 recorded outages (42%) over the period and approximately 20-mile network were attributed to lightning 	Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Whitehead and Driggins (1990)	1987	Southeast United States	Electricity transmission and distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65% of 1009 reported transmission line outages in 1987 were lightning-related 	Tennessee Valley Authority
Zhu et al. (2006)	1995-2004	United States Unspecified**	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of lightning-related outages explained by simple linear model $N=58.94(\text{flash density/mile}^2)-27.975$ (r-squared, 0.919) 	Unspecified utility's power outage data Regional utilities
Zoro and Meriardhi (2005)	2002-2004	West Java, Indonesia	Electricity distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88-168 direct and indirect flashovers per 100km-year (4-20kv lines, 260 km of total circuit) 	

1999), and the U.S. (Balducci et al. 2002; Caves et al. 1992; CEIDS 2001; Chowdhury et al. 2004; Eto et al. 2001; LaCommare and Eto 2004; Lawton et al. 2003). Disturbances include momentary, temporary and sustained power outages (0-10 percent of voltage for fractions of a second to many hours) and power quality phenomenon (all other deviations from perfect power including voltage sags, surges, transients, and harmonics) (CEIDS 2001; LaCommare and Eto 2004). Such events affect residential, industrial, commercial, and institutional consumers through lost production, labour, lost or damaged electronic data, materials loss or spoilage, equipment damage, backup generation, overhead, and restart costs which are offset to some extent by unused materials and fuel, scrap value of damaged materials, lower energy bills, and unpaid labour (Eto et al. 2001; CEIDS 2001; Balducci et al. 2002). Broader or secondary social costs (e.g., looting and other crime, injuries/deaths related to alternative fuel use and CO poisoning) have also been acknowledged but never included in costing studies (Eto et al. 2001; Balducci et al. 2002).

Several methods have been used to determine costs, including market-based approaches that rely upon observed consumer behaviour (e.g., choice of interruptible and curtailable electricity rates, investment in back-up generation, insurance for utility service interruptions) and survey approaches (e.g., direct costing, contingent valuation) (Kooimey et al. 2002). The latter seem to dominate the literature and have produced a wide variety of estimates (or damage/cost functions) for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional user classes. While few studies have explicitly assessed the costs of power quality impacts on consumers, CEIDS (2001) estimates that power quality events may cost the U.S. economy between \$15-24 billion each year. When combined with aggregate outage impacts across all business sectors, it is estimated that power disturbances cost the U.S. economy between \$119 billion and \$188 billion annually (CEIDS 2001). LaCommare and Eto (2004) provide a smaller base estimate of US\$79 billion for outage costs but suggest that two-thirds of the impact are the result of momentary interruptions (less than 5 minutes duration)—important for the current investigation in that many of these short-term events are caused by lightning strikes. Assuming that the Canadian economy is similarly sensitive to that of the U.S., if even a small fraction of such large costs are associated with lightning, then the potential lightning-related impacts could be significant.

An alternative and complementary approach to gauging the impact of lightning-related interruptions to customers is to assess the level of investment in preventive measures and realization of benefits. In the general power disturbance literature, this technique has been used to determine the impact of power quality on consumers (e.g., Clemmensen et al. 1993, as cited in LaCommare and Eto 2004 and Kooimey et al. 2002). Although several studies have evaluated the technical efficacy or small-scale feasibility of lightning arresters, alternative pole designs and other protection technologies across a transmission or distribution network (e.g., Karlsson and Norberg 2001; Carpenter and Auer 1995; Tarchini and Gimenez 2003), minimal research was found on the aggregate economic costs and benefits of adoption. Bernstein et al. (1996) provide a series of U.S. utility-specific accounts of savings attributable to data produced through the U.S. National Lightning Detection Network though. While not comparable to a fully quantified valuation and cost-benefit analysis, reported cost savings for 8 utilities amounted to several hundred thousand dollars per year (Bernstein et al. 1996). General

areas of cost reduction or benefit interpreted from the paper include: reduced labour-intensive monitoring effort; more accurate and cost-effective pre-positioning of resources (e.g., repair crews) in response to lightning threat compared to deployment based on general forecasts or waiting for customers to identify problems; reduced system down-time; validation of insurance claims for lightning-caused interruptions; reduced time and labour explaining cause of outages to customers; and justification for allocation of additional lightning protection equipment in infrastructure designs (i.e., to higher-prone parts of system).

AGRICULTURE

Lightning-related agricultural losses, such as damage to homes, barns, sheds and other buildings, were included in several of the studies referenced in Table 1 that relied on Storm Data. Holle et al. (2005) note that agricultural losses were the most common form of lightning damage in the late nineteenth century but now account for a much smaller proportion of reported impacts. Livestock mortality in particular has historically been important to insurers (Kopf 1928) with weather in general responsible for about 7 percent of the 3.9 million cattle and calves lost in the U.S. in 2005 (USDA 2007). Linn (1993) observed that lightning accounts for more than 80 percent of accidental livestock losses, presumably in the U.S., and Williams (2000) describes lightning mortality in horses. However, aside from these references, a few isolated and often anecdotal accounts of individual events (e.g., Nunes 2006), and papers describing farm-specific lightning protection measures (e.g., Chamberlain and Hallman n.d.), no contemporary documentation was found in the literature that could be used to define the extent and magnitude of lightning-related impacts to agriculture. Intuitively, and through experiences with other natural hazard events (e.g., Ice Storm 1998; Kerry et al. 1999), power supply interruptions as discussed in the previous section are important and costly to certain operations (e.g., dairy) and often necessitate the purchase of standby generators.

TRANSPORTATION AND PIPELINES

Little research has been conducted on the impacts of lightning on transportation. Much of what exists has been completed in the U.S. and provides evidence of general impact mechanisms but little indication of the frequency, severity or magnitude of impacts let alone costs. Most of the detailed and quantitative research has been completed for aviation with less activity concerned with surface transportation, which for this analysis includes energy supply pipelines.

Concerns about the impact of lightning on aviation, in particular the safety and protection of aircraft and space vehicles, have been expressed in the literature for several decades (e.g., Cobb and Holitz 1968; Plumer et al. 1985). Weather is a contributing factor in about 23 percent of U.S. accidents involving aircraft (Kulsea 2003) and several studies have isolated the impact of lightning. Cherington and Mathys (1995) identified 40 lightning-related aviation entries in the US National Transportation Safety Board accident data over the 1963-1989 period. Ten commercial and 30 private aircraft incidents resulted in 290 fatalities and 74 serious injuries (Cherington and Mathys 1995). Uman and Rakov (2003) reviewed past studies to determine the nature of lightning-aircraft interactions, documenting both direct effects (e.g., holes in metal skin, puncturing or splintering of

non-metallic structures, welding or roughening of moveable hinges and bearings, exterior antenna and light damage, fuel ignition) and induced voltage impacts that affect many aircraft electronic systems (e.g., VHF communication set, compass, instrument landing system). Based on a meta-analysis of commercial aircraft strike data (1950-1974) they estimated an exposure of 1 strike for every 3000 hours or about once per year for each commercial aircraft though impacts of strikes are often minimal and are only very rarely catastrophic (Uman and Rakov 2003). This observation is also supported by Weber et al. (1998) who noted that only 11 percent of lightning strikes to aircraft in the United States require repair or replacement of equipment. Damage incidence is much lower for newer aircraft with avionics or full High-Intensity Radiated Fields (HIRF) protection (O'Loughlin and Skinner 2004) thus one would expect impacts to diminish over time as fleet stocks are replaced.

While one account of lightning damage to airport infrastructure was found in the literature (Gopalan 2005), the greater significance of lightning for aviation is its impact on ground operations, flight delays, diversions, and cancellations. Weather-related accident damage and injuries, delays, and unexpected operating costs amount to \$3 billion annually in the U.S. (Kulsea 2003). In assessing the utility of a new lightning mapping sensor, Weber et al. (1998) suggest that \$2 billion per year in operating costs and passenger delays are associated with thunderstorms. This figure, based on U.S. Federal Aviation Administration information, has also been attributed, perhaps incorrectly, to lightning alone (NOAA 2006). Research by Evans et al. (2004) suggest that, given the complexity of aviation systems, it is very difficult to determine and allocate delay costs related to convective weather, let alone an aspect of it such as lightning. Post et al. (2002) utilized lightning data to develop an enroute weather severity index that can be applied to determine travel delays associated with convective weather—and ultimately costs (Kettunen et al. 2005). In addition to providing information on the impacts of convective weather, such studies, along with those of Evans et al. (2004), are important for assessing the potential benefits and costs of various planned improvements to aviation systems.

Surface transportation, including road, rail, and marine modes, along with pipelines, that account for most of the economic value of the transport sector, is also affected by lightning. Although no research has been conducted to determine the overall economic significance of lightning, a recent survey of U.S. surface transportation representatives to assess their weather information needs (OFCM 2002) identified the following lightning-related impacts:

- potential for injuries to maintenance and operations personnel (small boat marine, aviation ground operations, rural/urban light rail transit);
- potential equipment damage (pipelines);
- occasional damage to towers and antennae disrupting communications (State police);
- restrictions on certain hazardous operations such as refueling or maintenance;
- signal and track sensor malfunctions/outages from lightning strikes to switches or electrical boxes causing delays, stops, or traffic congestion (long-haul rail, rural/urban light rail transit); and
- sensor damage and disruption of monitoring data flow and communications from sensors and control facilities (pipelines).

Several studies have examined the general impacts noted above and the efficacy of lightning protection for rail or light rail systems in greater detail (Morris and Dinallo 1996; Lucca and Buffarini 2000; Heilig et al. 2002; Pham et al. 2003; Theethayi et al. 2007). For the road sector, measures to mitigate lightning-caused damage to traffic sensor and data communication surge protection infrastructure in Florida were assessed by Harvey and Mussa (2003). Some simulation research has also been completed to examine impacts on and preventive measures for pipelines (e.g., Metwally and Heidler 2005). Overall though, research on the impacts of lightning on surface transportation interests seems lacking which likely suggests that existing lightning protection technology and operating rules and standards are effective at mitigating impacts at acceptable cost levels for most users.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The telecommunications sector has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. Approximately 64 fixed telephone lines, 53 mobile cell subscribers, 87 computers, 68 Internet users and 24 broadband Internet subscribers existed for every 100 inhabitants in Canada in 2005 (ITU 2007). Expansion in telecommunications, as measured by these and other indicators, is positively correlated with economic growth (Correa 2006). Despite the increasing importance of telecommunications, no published information was found that described the aggregate impact of lightning on telecommunications infrastructure, operations, and services. However, several studies generally note and discuss various means to reduce the vulnerability of systems and infrastructure to direct strikes or, more commonly, induced voltages and associated electromagnetic damage or interference (Barreto 2002; Kijima 1999; Baker and Ahmad 1999; ITU 1997; Janklovics 1997; Shintaku et al. 1998; Woodward 1991). For instance, Kijima (1999) described 3 cases of lightning damage to telecommunications installations (private branch exchange, digital switch, and transmission equipment elements) and simulated countermeasures for each event. Baker and Ahmad (1999), Janklovics (1997) and Shintaku et al. (1998) also used models to simulate potential damage or the efficacy of protective measures such as lightning rods, grounding systems, surge bypass with arresters, and insulation.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

Tourism and recreation activities that take place outdoors are exposed to lightning. Although businesses and facilities may be subject to direct damage from lightning strikes or affected by lightning-related power or telecommunication outages, the published literature pertains almost exclusively to the protection of active participants and spectators. Several studies have shown that a large and growing proportion of lightning-related casualties involve those engaged in recreation activities such as hiking, camping, boating or golfing (e.g., Holle et al. 2005; Makdissi and Brunker 2002; Mills et al. 2008). These risks are acknowledged in various guidelines that have been developed to alert the public of the lightning hazard, threats to safety, and precautions necessary to minimize exposure in a wide range of settings (Zimmerman et al. 2002). Most of the literature

obtained for the review dealt with either stadiums (or other events with concentrated gatherings) or golfing⁴. General threats to stadiums and other large event venues from severe storms have been studied by Edwards and Lemon (2002) with more detailed, lightning-specific risks and safety recommendations provided by Walsh et al. (1997, 2000, 2003), Gratz et al. (2004), Gratz and Noble (2006). Lightning safety policies have also been developed for participants in sports and athletics activities (e.g., Makdissi and Brukner 2002; Bennett 1997) which often take place in large event venues during the peak lightning season and time-of-day (Walsh et al. 1997).

The prime golfing season also overlaps peak lightning months which in part explains why a significant number of lightning casualties occur on golf courses (Kithil 2007; Flynn 1995; Waddell 2006). High profile events, such as the 1991 tragedy at Hazeltine National Golf Club during the U.S. Open golf tournament, which killed one man and injured 5 others (Kindred 2002), have encouraged a number of golf facility operators to invest in some level of lightning protection (e.g., mobile or permanent shelters) or detection/alert technology whereby golfers are ordered off a course (e.g., Waddell 2006; Bonner 2005; Mooney 2003). No figures were found that quantified the market penetration of such systems, but cost estimates for individual courses were between US\$3,000 (Flynn 1995) and CA\$30,000 (Crawford 2001). Such costs may explain why many courses lack such policies or interventions and simply rely on golfers to use common sense in lightning situations (Crawford 2001). As adoption of policies and new technologies increase, liability may become an issue if a failure to provide lightning-proof weather shelters or protection can be proven an act of negligence though, according to research by Flynn (1995), this has not yet occurred in U.S. courts.

Lightning may also affect the tourism and recreation sector through lost revenue due to cancelled events or reduced participation rates (because of safety concerns) and property damage. As noted previously, there is little evidence documenting the extent or magnitude of either type of cost to the industry. Flynn (1995) anecdotally noted that significant lightning activity can close a golf course thus reducing the number of rounds played and associated revenue. Other researchers have examined the impact of weather elements, including precipitation, on participation levels in golfing and other recreation activities (e.g., Scott and Jones 2007) but no quantified estimates of the impact of lightning were found. In terms of property damage, descriptions of particular events are evident (e.g., golf course green, Krider 1977) and U.S. National Golf Foundation figures estimate that lightning damage to trees, irrigation systems or buildings occurs on average 2 times per golf course each year (Crist 1995). Cheng (2002) notes a potential grounding (and therefore damage) issue for the moving components of retractable stadium roofs. Overall, the lack of literature suggests that for most forms of recreation, property damage is not a large concern. Recreational boating may be an exception though. In his review of the US code for lightning protection of boats, Thomson (1991) surveyed 71 owners of small recreational sailboats in southwest Florida that were damaged by lightning. By combining the survey information with general repair records, Thomson (1991) estimated that about 3 percent of all moored sailboats in the region experience lightning-induced damage each year. In

⁴ Lightning-ignited forest fires are also a threat to parks (e.g., Heathcott 1999), but this was generally treated in the Forest Fire Management section.

general, sailboats in freshwater experienced the most severe and frequent electronics and hull damage; lightning protection equipment seemed to afford only modest reductions in damage (Thomson 1991).

OTHER IMPACTS

A couple of studies were also discovered that dealt with hazardous material accidents. Rasmussen (1995) extracted and analyzed data from the MHIDAS (SRD)⁵ and Facts (TNO)⁶ data bases of (global) accident case histories for the period 1941-1991. Lightning accounted for 61 percent of 232 hazardous material accidents where natural events were the cause or a major contributing factor (Rasmussen 1995). At a smaller geographic scale, Ruckart et al. (2004) determined that lightning was a causal factor in over 19 percent of the 110 weather-related acute releases of hazardous substances that were reported to the HSEES system in Texas during 2000-01.

Finally, Keskar (1996) cites and explains lightning-related damages to water and wastewater treatment plants in Florida and Arkansas, respectively, arising in part from improper installation of surge protection equipment. Despite the limited amounts of literature, lightning impacts to water utilities may be relatively common. A survey of community water system managers conducted in South Carolina and the Susquehanna River Basin in 2000 revealed that over 50 percent had experienced lightning events over the past 5 years (Dow et al. 2007). Over 40 percent of system managers in South Carolina and over 20 percent of those in the Susquehanna River Basin expected to be impacted with considerable or catastrophic problems related to lightning during the next 10 years (Dow et al. 2007).

SUMMARY

In summary, three general types of impact were revealed through the literature review: human casualties, property damage, and losses associated with the interruption of electricity and other critical services. Affected sectors include human health; property and casualty insurance; forestry; electricity generation, transmission, and distribution; agriculture; telecommunications; transportation; and tourism and recreation—the first four sectors are the most important in terms of contributing to overall impacts and costs. Impacts were usually reported in terms of physical indicators (i.e., number of people injured, damage report counts, electricity outage frequency and duration, number of insurance claims, etc.) with a smaller set of studies also estimating economic costs. Based on the available though often limited descriptions of analyses, virtually all of the research that was examined reported direct lightning-related damage costs or cost savings associated with preventive measures. No formal economic analyses of indirect costs or non-market costs attributable to lightning damage

⁵ Major Hazard Incident Data Service developed by AEA Technology plc on behalf of the Major Hazards Assessment Unit of the United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

⁶ Facts (TNO) <http://www.factsonline.nl/tabid/178/Default.aspx>

were uncovered. Much of the work that has been completed is focused on the U.S., with only a few Canadian studies. In short, this literature review substantiates the need for additional Canadian empirical research, including on-going efforts by the authors to develop an aggregate picture of lightning impacts and costs across multiple sectors (Mills et al., n.d.).

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