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Hybrid multiscale modelling to predict lightning damage on CFRP materials

Timothy M Harrell[1], Ole Thybo Thomsen[1], Janice M Dulieu-Barton[1]
[1]Engineering and the Environment, University of Southampton, University Road, Southampton, England SO17 1BJ
e-mail: T.M.Harrell@soton.ac.uk

Timothy M Harrell is a Marie-Curie fellow working at the University of Southampton. His research area is lightning protection of wind turbines where he studies the damage associated with lightning on wind turbine blades through modelling, experimental and NDT methods.

Abstract

Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymers (CFRPs) materials are increasingly being used in the wind turbine industry to reduce weight in turbine blades. However, CFRPs have a particular issue when dealing with lightning strikes because of their anisotropic material properties; in particular, their electrical and thermal conductivities. These issues cause significant damage when exposed to large electric currents. This paper presents a time dependent coupled thermal-electric joule heating model to predict the thermal damage of a CFRP panel when subjected to a lightning strike. The approach of this model uses volume fractions to determine the resulting fiber and resin damage separately. The damage prediction is calculated by a set of pyrolysis equations. The pyrolysis damage alters the materials properties of the elements. The electric current applied to the panel is the 10/350 standard waveform which corresponds to the waveform used to test wind turbines according to the IEC61400 section 24 Ed 1.0.