

SAFETY ALERT



Safety Alert No. 373
December 10, 2019

Contact: Andrew Wareham
Phone: (907) 334-5278

Lightning Strikes Threaten Aircraft on Helidecks

On August 8, 2019, a thunderstorm passed over an offshore oil and gas facility and lightning struck a BSEE contracted aircraft. When the pilot initially inspected the aircraft after the storm passed, he saw no damage and flew his passengers back to their base. At the base, maintenance personnel inspected the aircraft and saw damage to the top of the vertical fin (figure 1), the aft strut (figure 2), and the bottom of one skid (figure 3).



Figure 1. Lightning damage to the top of the vertical fin



Figure 2. Lightning arcing on the aft strut



Figure 3. Lightning damage to the bottom of the skid

Therefore, BSEE recommends operators and contractors consider the following:

- Ensure pilots closely inspect critical flying components of an aircraft, such as the vertical fin, rotor blades and landing gear, after it is exposed to a storm;
- Complete required inspections and notifications prior to further flights after an aircraft is exposed to lightning; and,
- Brief passengers about actions taken to inspect an aircraft prior to transporting passengers.

An online resource on lightning strike inspections and repairs can be found at <https://www.shinewire.com/lightning-strike-inspections-repairs/>.

--BSEE--

A Safety Alert is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding a potential safety issue. It also contains recommendations that could assist avoiding potential incidents on the Outer Continental Shelf.