From GEO/LEO environment data to the numerical estimation of spacecraft surface charging at MEO


(1) ONERA, France
(2) FMI, Finland
(3) BAS, UK
(4) CNES, France

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Introduction

- Space industry guidelines with specifications of **worst case environments** for surface charging at GEO and PEO based on events measured in orbit

→ What about MEO ?
- Van Allen Probes (RBSP): see Sarno et al. [2016] negative charging at daylight of totally conductive spacecraft !

- **Complementary approach:** Get measurements at GEO and LEO
  Extract severe environments
  Check whether we can rely on them
  Try to predict MEO
• 7 GEO LANL satellites from 1994 to 2008
  • Electron and proton detectors 1 keV to some MeV
  • Spacecraft potential routinely provided
  • Remove all « easy to remove » data
Classify LANL data

- Sort the remaining events in « Top 100 » series
  - Top 100 longest durations with large negative potentials
  - Top 100 largest integrated fluxes 15 min
  - Top 100 largest fluxes at low energy 15 min
- Apply Liouville’s theorem for part. distribution distortion by spacecraft $\phi_{SC}$
Shall we rely only on fluxes and spacecraft potentials?

Seasonal effects
the same spacecraft under the same plasma conditions may charge very differently if
at sunlight (positive to negative), in eclipse (very negative) or at eclipse exit
→ Thanks to photoemission

Spacecraft attitude
the same spacecraft under the same plasma conditions may charge very differently for
different MLT locations
→ Thanks to photoemission
→ Because sunlit conductors area change with spacecraft orientation

No charging does not necessarily mean no hazardous environment

Not forgetting material properties (BOL, EOL)…
Can we rely on measurements?

Instruments or algorithm errors
LANL acknowledged algorithms errors leading spacecraft potential uncertainties (sometimes very large)
→ Removing « easy to remove » data is not enough

Cross-compare two methods to obtain the potentials

\[ \phi_{SC} = \text{- ion « peak » energy} \]

\[ \Phi_{sc} = A + B \times \left( \frac{T_{e,ave}}{T_0} \right)^D \]

\[ T_{e,ave} = \left[ (n_{lp} \times 5.0eV) + (n_{he} \times T_{he}) \right] / (n_{lp} + n_{he}) \]
Can we rely on measurements?

Global agreement in average

Top 200 largest flux events

- Algorithm often overestimates $\phi_{SC}$ by factor of 2 to 4

Top 100 15 minutes worst cases with the HFAE (High flux all energies) and LFHE (Low flux at high energies) criteria

- Potential from ion peak (V)
- Potential from moments (V)

ONERA
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Can we rely on measurements?

Top 100 largest potentials from the algorithm
Range of validity [-8 kV; 0 Volts]

Top 100 longest series of potentials < -2000V, < -5000 and < -10000 V from moments

For strong charging events, the ion peak method is to be preferred

Top 100 largest potentials from the ion peak

→ Algorithm still miss some events…

Top 100 longest series of potentials < -2000V, < -5000 and < -8000 V from ion peak

Id curve
Inspection of ion peak potentials
Top 100 potentials < -8 kV

Longest events with $\phi_{SC} < -8kV$

$\phi_{SC}$ concentrated around -8kV $\rightarrow$ Instrument saturation close to -8 kV ?!
Too much uncertainty again

Top 100 longest series of ion peak potential < -8 kV

- Potential from ion peak (V)
- MLT

Uncertain
Inspection of ion peak potentials
Top 100 potentials < -5 kV

Longest events with $\phi_{SC} < -5kV$

$\phi_{SC}$ nicely spread between -5 kV and -8kV
97% events centered around midnight
Longest durations all occur in eclipse
This less restrictive criterion is more appropriate for long duration with high potentials
$\phi_{SC}$ spread between 0 and $-3500$ V
Between night and dawn as expected
No seasonal correlation as expected
#1 on LANL_1994_084 on 2005/07/15 at 14h40min39s at MLT 21 18 [Bastille’s day]
#2 on LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47
Focus on one specific day … at LEO
HFAE #2

POES data during “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”
Maximal 2s electron flux E>30 keV each 3 hours

Fluxes at $L^* = 6.0$ exceed the 5% exceedence level $\rightarrow$ correlation with high fluxes at GEO
Fluxes at $L^* = 4.5$ very close to the 1% exceedence level $\rightarrow$ high fluxes at MEO too!
Fluxes at $L^* = 4.5$ of same order as Fluxes at $L^* = 6.0$ $\rightarrow$ same charging risks …
Can we predict severe environments at MEO? IMPTAM simulations: 1 full day in rad belt

Simulation of “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”
IMPTAM = Inner Magnetosphere Particle Transport and Acceleration model
Evolution of [1-100 keV] electron fluxes in the equatorial plane during the modeled period.
We start our modeling with IMPTAM with empty magnetosphere.
Electrons move from the plasma sheet to the inner regions.
Solar wind and IMF

![Graph showing electron fluxes in an equatorial plane with color scale indicating flux levels.](image-url)
Can we predict severe environments at MEO?

IMPTAM at GEO

IMPTAM simulation of “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”

Flux at GEO 15:50

File: j0057000.dat, time: 15:50
Can we predict severe environments at MEO? IMPTAM at GEO

IMPTAM simulation of “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”

Flux compared at GEO LANL 15:46:12 at MLT = 4.47
Matches LANL E< 90 keV
IMPTAM limited to 100 keV

Graph showing electron flux [cm^-2 s^-1 sr^-1 MeV^-1] vs. energy [MeV] for 2 January 2005 (LANL) and comput. at GEO.
Can we predict severe environments at MEO?
IMPTAM maximal flux at MEO

IMPTAM simulation of “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”

Max flux at MEO 17:10 at MLT = 5.6
Can we predict severe environments at MEO? IMPTAM maximal flux at MEO

IMPTAM simulation of “LANL_1994_084 on 2005/01/02 at 15h46min12s at MLT 04 47”

Max flux at MEO 17:10 at MLT = 5.6
10 to 50 times larger than at GEO!
Correlates POES observations: $\text{flux}_{\text{MEO}} \geq \text{flux}_{\text{GEO}}$

![Graph showing e-flux vs energy for different dates and locations.](image)
• LANL data have been fully reprocessed
• Top 100 worst environments examined with care concerning the potential

• POES data and IMPTAM program both suggest that low-energy electron fluxes at MEO are at least of the same order of magnitude as at GEO during particle injections
  → at least use the same design margins and mitigation techniques to avoid secondary arcing
Perspectives

- Model other LANL events with IMPTAM and cross compare with POES
- Examine also E > 100 keV and E > 300 keV fluxes
- Cross-compare with GTO/MEO data: RBSP

- Guideline, standards
  - SCATHA-Mullen-1 good candidate for WC at GEO
  - Needs more investigations?
  - Include MEO

- Need for combined plasma sensors and ESD monitors in-flight because ESD also depends on material properties, spacecraft geometry, attitude, season…
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