

## **Keeping the lights on: Managing and planning for disasters**

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From January 5 to 9, 1998, southwestern Québec was struck by an ice storm of exceptional severity, scale and duration. More than 3,000 transmission structures were damaged by the combined effects of ice and wind, cutting off electricity to 1.4 million customers.

In every respect, the storm was the worst weather event our company had ever experienced. It gave us a unique opportunity to reinforce our crisis management planning as well as the integrated risk management approach we had developed over the years.

Weather disasters are inevitable, and our responsibility is to learn how to manage them when they occur in order to mitigate their impact. We have devoted much effort to reviewing the events of January 1998 and identifying the key success factors for managing a crisis of this scope. We would like to share with you the valuable lessons we have learned, in the hope that others may benefit from them.