

| Title      | Calorimetry- Box of Lithium Batteries |           |          |      |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|------|
| Test Type  | Custom                                |           |          |      |
| Lab Number | NTSB-2                                | Author    | Justin L | Rowe |
| Test date  | 8/9/11                                | No. Tests |          | 2    |

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**NOTE:** All dimensional measurements were taken in English units and were later converted to metric units. Any inconsistencies between the two units are due to rounding errors when the English units were converted to metric.

# Introduction

Two calorimetry tests were conducted to examine the fire dynamics of an array of lithium batteries stored in a cardboard container. The container was subject to direct flame impingement from a 30 kW natural gas burner fire, as shown in Figure 1. Instrumentation was installed to measure the heat flux, fire plume temperature, gas species and smoke production, and heat release rate of the fire. Video and photos were taken to document the test series. The test series was conducted under the 1 MW Square calorimeter in the Medium Burn Room (MBR) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm, and Explosives (ATF) Fire Research Laboratory (FRL) in Beltsville, MD.



Figure 1. Overview of testing arrangement (6552\_200464.JPG)

# Test Set Up

The 0.22 m x 0.20 x 0.06 m ( $8.5 \times 8 \times 2.5$  inch) cardboard container was mounted in a 0.48 m (19 inch) high metal stand with a wire mesh base, 0.23 m (9 inch) above the surface of the natural gas burner, as shown in Figure 2. An arrangement of 100 rechargeable lithium batteries (Manufacturer: LG Chem; Model: 18650) were stacked vertically in the cardboard container in a single layer, separated by cardboard inserts, as shown in Figure 3. The batteries had a 3.7 Volt, 2600 mAmp-hour rating. The container was encapsulated by a thin plastic wrapper.



Figure 2. Test setup (6552\_200470.JPG)



Figure 3. Arrangement of batteries in cardboard container (6552\_200488.JPG)

## **Experiment Details**

### **Ignition Scenario**

At the start of the test, natural gas was supplied to the burner to achieve a heat release rate of approximately 30 kW. The natural gas was lit by an open propane pilot flame.

## Instrumentation

The test series was conducted under FRL's 1 MW Square calorimeter. The calorimeter used in this test series was equipped with instrumentation to measure the following fire properties: total heat release rate, convective heat release rate, gas species production rates of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, and smoke production rates.

Other instrumentation included one thermocouple tree, four heat flux gauges, and a flame height indicator. The thermocouple tree was used to measure a vertical temperature profile of the fire plume. There were five thermocouples starting at the base of the cardboard container which extended 1.22m (48 inch) above the container at 0.30m (12 inch) intervals. The heat flux gauges were used to measure the total energy transfer per unit area. The gauges were centered parallel to each side of the container at a distance of 0.51m (20 inch) and an elevation of 0.56m (22 inch).

Elevation distances described in the body of this report are relative to the z-axis defined Figure 4.



Figure 4. Instrumentation details (6553\_200576.JPG)

### Laboratory Conditions

The ambient laboratory temperature, barometric pressure, and relative humidity were measured during the experiment(s). The laboratory conditions were measured using an industrial probe and microserver. The probe measures the ambient conditions using capacitive digital sensors. The sensor probe has surface mounted circuitry which responds to changes in the environment and outputs a digital signal. The Laboratory Conditions were measured in accordance with the method defined in FRL Laboratory Instruction "LI017 Laboratory Conditions" [1].

The following table provides a description of the instrumentation used to collect the ambient laboratory conditions measurements during the experiments.

| Description | Manufacturer | Model   |
|-------------|--------------|---------|
| MBR_01      | OMEGA        | IBTHX-D |

#### **Table 1. Lab Conditions Description**

### Thermocouples

Thermocouples are temperature measurement sensors that consist of two dissimilar metals joined at one end (a junction) that produces a small thermo-electrical voltage when the wire is heated. The change in voltage is interpreted as a change in temperature [2]. There are many configurations of thermocouples which affect the temperature range, ruggedness, and response time. The information required to identify these factors for the thermocouples that were used during the experiment(s) conducted for this test series is provided in the "Thermocouple Measurement Description" table. Thermocouples used during this test series were used in accordance with the method defined in FRL laboratory instruction "LI001 Thermocouple" [3].

The following table provides a description of the instrumentation used to collect the temperature measurements during the experiments. The "Description" column describes the location of the temperature measurement. The "Z" location is the height of the thermocouple above the floor. The "Thermocouple Type" describes the characteristics of the thermocouple used.

| Description | Location Z (m) | Thermocouple type               |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| TC_19       | 0.48           | Type K, Glass Ins., 24 AWG wire |
| TC_31       | 0.79           | Type K, Glass Ins., 24 AWG wire |
| TC_43       | 1.09           | Type K, Glass Ins., 24 AWG wire |
| TC_55       | 1.40           | Type K, Glass Ins., 24 AWG wire |
| TC_67       | 1.70           | Type K, Glass Ins., 24 AWG wire |

 Table 2. Thermocouple Measurement Description

## Heat Flux Transducers

A heat flux transducer is a device that measures the rate of absorbed incident energy, and expresses it on a per unit area basis. The operating principle of the Schmidt-Boelter heat flux transducer(s) used during this test series is based on one-dimensional heat conduction through a solid. Temperature sensors are placed on a thin, thermally conductive sensor element, and applying heat establishes a temperature gradient across the element. The heat flux is proportional to the temperature difference across the element according to Fourier's Law [4].

There are many configurations of heat flux transducers which affect range, size, mode and sensitivity. The information required to identify these factors for the heat flux transducer(s) that were used during the experiment(s) conducted for this test series is provided in the "Heat Flux Measurement Description" table. Heat flux transducers were used in accordance with the method defined in FRL laboratory instruction "LI002 Heat Flux Transducer" [5].

The following table provides a description of the transducer used to collect heat flux measurements during the experiment(s). The "Description" column typically describes the location of the heat flux transducer. Heat flux mode indicates whether the total heat

flux was measured or just the radiation fraction. Heat flux over range is the maximum measured value reported for this transducer.

| Description | Heat Flux Mode | Heat Flux Over Range (kW/m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| East        | Total          | 37.50                                     |
| North       | Total          | 37.50                                     |
| South       | Total          | 37.50                                     |
| West        | Total          | 37.50                                     |

**Table 3. Heat Flux Measurement Description** 

### Gas Train

Natural gas was the fuel that was supplied to the sand burner. The natural gas flow rate was measured and controlled using an Alicat mass flow controller. Figure 5 shows a diagram of the natural gas train. Stainless steel braided hose was used to connect the natural gas train to the natural gas supply and sand burner. Gas trains used during this test series were used in accordance with FRL Laboratory Instruction "LI010 Calibration Burners"[6].



Figure 5. Gas train diagram.

### Fire Product Collectors

Fire product collectors, also called heat release calorimeters, are used in fire experiments to measure several characteristics of fires based upon the measured properties of the fire plume. Fire Product collectors consist of a collection hood connected to an exhaust duct placed over a fire as shown in Figure 6. Instrumentation in the exhaust duct measures the properties of the effluent. The fire characteristics that are often calculated from fire products collectors are total heat release rate (HRR), convective heat release rate (CHRR), smoke production rate (SPR), and yield rates of gas species such as carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.



Figure 6. Typical products collector hood

### **Photographs**

Digital Cameras are used within the FRL to record digital still photographs during experiments. Digital Cameras used during this test series were used in accordance with the method defined in FRL Laboratory Instruction "LI003 Digital Cameras" [7].

## **Results for Test 1 (Exp. ID 6552)**

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory temperature during the experiment.

| Table 4. Ambient | Laboratory | Temperature | Summary |
|------------------|------------|-------------|---------|
|------------------|------------|-------------|---------|

| Description | Initial Value (C) | Minimum (C) | Maximum (C) | Average (C) | Final Value (C) |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| MBR_01      | 28.0              | 27.9        | 28.3        | 28.1        | 28.3            |

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory pressure during the experiment.

 Table 5. Ambient Laboratory Pressure Summary

| Description | Initial Value<br>(kPa) | Minimum<br>(kPa) | Maximum<br>(kPa) | Average (kPa) | Final Value<br>(kPa) |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| MBR_01      | 99.57                  | 99.54            | 99.57            | 99.56         | 99.56                |

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory relative humidity during the experiment.

| Table 6  | . Ambient                               | Laboratory | Relative  | Humidity | Summarv |
|----------|---|------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| I able 0 | ······································· | Laboratory | Itclutive | Humany   | Summary |

| Description | Initial Value (%) | Minimum (%) | Maximum (%) | Average (%) | Final Value (%) |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| MBR_01      | 63.9              | 62.8        | 63.9        | 63.4        | 62.9            |

The following table provides a summary of the temperature results. The "Initial Temperature" column provides the measured temperature at the beginning of the test. The maximum temperature recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The remaining columns provide the calculated maximum average temperatures.

| Description | Initial<br>(C) | Maximum<br>(C) | 30 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) | 60 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) | 300 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) | 600 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| TC_19       | 30             | 758            | 674                                 | 647                                 | 625                                  | 599                                  |
| TC_31       | 27             | 553            | 423                                 | 385                                 | 349                                  | 304                                  |
| TC_43       | 27             | 309            | 241                                 | 226                                 | 208                                  | 190                                  |
| TC_55       | 27             | 208            | 179                                 | 171                                 | 155                                  | 148                                  |
| TC_67       | 27             | 188            | 146                                 | 138                                 | 129                                  | 122                                  |

#### Table 7. Temperature Value Result Summary

The following chart(s) present a time-dependent representation of the instantaneous temperatures measured during the experiment.



**Figure 7. Temperature** 

The following table provides a summary of the heat flux results. The "Description" column typically describes the location of the heat flux transducer. The time at which the heat flux first changes by a pre-determined amount is provided in the "Time of Initial Change" column. The maximum heat flux recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The "Maximum Average" columns are calculated over four pre-determined time spans.

| Description | Time of<br>Initial<br>Change (s) | Maximum<br>(kW/m²) | 30 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m²) | 60 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m <sup>2</sup> ) | 300 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m <sup>2</sup> ) | 600 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|--|--|
| East        | 1                                | 5.4                | 4.4  | 4.2   | 3.4  | 2.9  |
| North       | 1                                | 4.5                | 3.7  | 3.5   | 2.7  | 2.3  |
| South       | 1                                | 4.9                | 3.6  | 3.4   | 2.7  | 2.2  |
| West        | 1                                | 4.4                | 3.8  | 3.7   | 2.9  | 2.3  |

**Table 8. Heat Flux Result Summary** 



The following chart shows a time dependent representation of the instantaneous heat flux measured during the experiment.

**Figure 8. Heat Flux** 

The following chart provides a time history of the concentration of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide measured in the exhaust duct during the fire.



Figure 9. Carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide concentrations

The following chart provides a time history of the concentration of oxygen measured in the exhaust duct during the fire.



**Figure 10. Oxygen Concentration** 

The following table provides a summary of the heat release rate (HRR) test results. The maximum HRR recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The "maximum average" values are calculated from average values of heat release rate over specified time periods. The maximum average values provide a means to compare the severity of different fires over these time spans. The "Total heat released" is calculated from the area under the curve for the duration of the test.

| Maximum<br>(kW) | 30 second<br>maximum<br>average (kW) | 1 minute<br>maximum<br>average (kW) | 5 minute<br>maximum<br>average (kW) | 10 minute<br>maximum<br>average (kW) | Total Heat<br>Release (kJ) |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 119             | 106                                  | 103                                 | 106                                 | 53                                   | 35645                      |

Table 9. Heat Release Rate Result Summary



The following chart provides a time history of the heat release rate from the fire.

Figure 11. Heat Release Rate

The following table provides a summary of the convective heat release rate (CHRR) test results.

| Table 10. | Convective | Heat | Release | Rate | Result | Summarv |
|-----------|------------|------|---------|------|--------|---------|
|           |            |      |         |      |        | ,       |

| Maximum | 30 second maximum | Peak 60 sec avg | 5 minute maximum | Peak 600 sec avg |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| (kW)    | average (kW)      | (kW)            | average (kW)     | (kW)             |
| 72      | 66                | 64              | 39               | 27               |

The following chart provides a time history of the convective heat release rate from the fire.



Figure 12. Convective Heat Release Rate

The following chart displays the production rates of CO and CO2.





### Video

The following table provides a description of the video(s) taken during this experiment.

| Description | Start Time | Duration (s) | Filename                   |
|-------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| North       | 09:46:07   | 819          | 6552_20110809_094607_4.mp4 |
| North East  | 09:45:57   | 818          | 6552_20110809_094557_1.mp4 |
| North West  | 09:46:00   | 825          | 6552_20110809_094600_3.mp4 |
| South West  | 09:45:58   | 826          | 6552_20110809_094558_2.mp4 |

Table 11. Video Log

The following figures show all of the still photographs uploaded into the FireTOSS system. The caption below each figure provides the picture's filename as well as any description and elapsed test time associated with the picture.



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Figure 74. Post test 0 minutes, 6552\_200429.jpg Figure 75. Post test 0 minutes, 6552\_200428.jpg Figure 76. Post test 1 minutes, 6552\_200427.jpg Figure 77. Post test 1 minutes, 6552\_200426.jpg



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Figure 102. Post test 8 minutes, 6552\_200401.jpg

## **Results for Test 2 (Exp. ID 6553)**

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory temperature during the experiment.

| Description | Initial Value (C) | Minimum (C) | Maximum (C) | Average (C) | Final Value (C) |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| MBR_01      | 28.2              | 28.2        | 28.5        | 28.3        | 28.5            |

 Table 12. Ambient Laboratory Temperature Summary

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory pressure during the experiment.

Table 13. Ambient Laboratory Pressure Summary

| Description | Initial Value (kPa) | Minimum (kPa) | Maximum (kPa) | Average (kPa) | Final Value (kPa) |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| MBR_01      | 99.55               | 99.53         | 99.57         | 99.55         | 99.55             |

The following table provides a summary of the ambient laboratory relative humidity during the experiment.

### Table 14. Ambient Laboratory Relative Humidity Summary

| Description | Initial Value (%) | Minimum (%) | Maximum (%) | Average (%) | Final Value (%) |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| MBR_01      | 63.4              | 61.9        | 63.4        | 62.6        | 61.9            |

The following table provides a summary of the temperature results. The "Initial Temperature" column provides the measured temperature at the beginning of the test. The maximum temperature recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The remaining columns provide the calculated maximum average temperatures.

| Description | Initial<br>(C) | Maximum<br>(C) | 30 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) | 60 second<br>maximum<br>average (C) | 300 second<br>maximum average<br>(C) | 600 second<br>maximum average<br>(C) |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| TC_19       | 37             | 934            | 885                                 | 844                                 | 761                                  | 750                                  |
| TC_31       | 28             | 557            | 450                                 | 394                                 | 320                                  | 301                                  |
| TC_43       | 27             | 384            | 315                                 | 293                                 | 251                                  | 237                                  |
| TC_55       | 27             | 238            | 189                                 | 177                                 | 150                                  | 141                                  |
| TC 67       | 27             | 163            | 142                                 | 137                                 | 115                                  | 110                                  |

 Table 15. Temperature Value Result Summary

The following chart(s) present a time-dependent representation of the instantaneous temperatures measured during the experiment.



Figure 103. Temperature

The following table provides a summary of the heat flux results. The "Description" column typically describes the location of the heat flux transducer. The time at which the heat flux first changes by a pre-determined amount is provided in the "Time of Initial Change" column. The maximum heat flux recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The "Maximum Average" columns are calculated over four pre-determined time spans.

| Description | Time of<br>Initial<br>Change (s) | Maximum<br>(kW/m²) | 30 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m²) | 60 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m²) | 300 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m²) | 600 second<br>maximum<br>average<br>(kW/m²) |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| East        | 1                                | 5.1                | 3.6  | 3.5  | 3.0   | 2.5   |
| North       | 1                                | 4.4                | 3.3  | 3.2  | 2.6   | 2.2   |
| South       | 1                                | 3.9                | 3.3  | 3.2  | 2.6   | 2.2   |
| West        | 1                                | 5.0                | 4.2  | 4.0  | 3.4   | 2.8   |

 Table 16. Heat Flux Result Summary

The following chart shows a time dependent representation of the instantaneous heat flux measured during the experiment.



**Figure 104. Heat Flux** 

The following table provides a description of the gas trains used during the experiments.

**Table 17. Gas Train Description** 

| Description | MFC Model Name | Fuel Type   |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Gas Train A | MCR-1000slpm-d | natural gas |

The following chart provides a time history of the concentration of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide measured in the exhaust duct during the fire.



Figure 105. Carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide concentrations

The following chart provides a time history of the concentration of oxygen measured in the exhaust duct during the fire.



Figure 106. Oxygen Concentration

The following table provides a summary of the heat release rate (HRR) test results. The maximum HRR recorded during the test is provided in the "Maximum" column. The "maximum average" values are calculated from average values of heat release rate over specified time periods. The maximum average values provide a means to compare the severity of different fires over these time spans. The "Total heat released" is calculated from the area under the curve for the duration of the test.

| Maximum<br>(kW) | 30 second<br>maximum average<br>(kW) | 1 minute<br>maximum average<br>(kW) | 5 minute<br>maximum average<br>(kW) | 10 minute<br>maximum average<br>(kW) | Total Heat<br>Release (kJ) |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 243             | 147                                  | 123                                 | 147                                 | 56                                   | 35783                      |

| Table 18. | Heat | Release | Rate | Result | <b>Summary</b> |
|-----------|------|---------|------|--------|----------------|
|-----------|------|---------|------|--------|----------------|

The following chart provides a time history of the heat release rate from the fire.



Figure 107. Heat Release Rate

The following table provides a summary of the convective heat release rate (CHRR) test results.

| Maximum | 30 second maximum | Peak 60 sec avg | 5 minute maximum | Peak 600 sec avg |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| (kW)    | average (kW)      | (kW)            | average (kW)     | (kW)             |
| 64      | 59                | 58              | 42               | 31               |

 Table 19. Convective Heat Release Rate Result Summary

The following chart provides a time history of the convective heat release rate from the fire.



Figure 108. Convective Heat Release Rate



The following chart displays the production rates of CO and CO2.



The following table provides a description of the video(s) taken during this experiment.

| Description | Start Time | Duration (s) | Filename                   |  |
|-------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| North       | 10:39:02   | 755          | 6553_20110809_103902_4.mp4 |  |
| North East  | 10:38:57   | 757          | 6553_20110809_103857_1.mp4 |  |
| North West  | 10:39:00   | 756          | 6553_20110809_103900_3.mp4 |  |
| South West  | 10:38:58   | 757          | 6553_20110809_103858_2.mp4 |  |

Table 20. Video Log

The following figures show all of the still photographs uploaded into the FireTOSS system. The caption below each figure provides the picture's filename as well as any description and elapsed test time associated with the picture.





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#### References

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- 2. The Temperature Handbook, 2nd edition, Omega Engineering, Stamford, CT, 2000.
- 3. Laboratory Instruction LI001 Thermocouple, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Fire Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD.
- 4. Barnes, A., "Heat Flux Sensors Part 1: Theory," Sensors, January 1999.
- 5. Laboratory Instruction LI002 Heat Flux Transducer, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Fire Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD.
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