

Highlights - inFIRE Conference 2005
Tuesday, June 14, 2005 - Tour of FM Global Research Campus

7:30 AM departure on the bus - we got off to a great start because no one was late!.

When we arrived at the FM Global Research Campus we were greeted at the Visitor Center with a continental breakfast, various forms of caffeine and a chance to wake up before the program began.

We viewed a short video on the dangers of static electricity while filling automobile fuel tanks and another demonstrating the difference between fire damage in a sprinklered and an unsprinklered dormitory room. The second video highlighted the testing done at the FM Global Research Campus. Dennis Anderson, Vice President, Engineering Application Training provided some background information about the Research Campus and the history of FM Global Testing facilities.

Then we donned hard hats and safety glasses and started off on a tour of several of the labs in the new facility. First stop was the Research Laboratory to view a combustible liquid atomized spray fire demonstration, learn about various testing techniques and view the standard plastic commodities displayed in the laboratory.

In the Multi-purpose Laboratory we viewed a comparison of two working sprinklers and saw a demonstration of a severe spark shower on welding blankets. This clearly showed that not all welding blankets can protect property in the same way.

Next we visited the floor of the large burn lab where Dennis provided an explanation of the construction of the lab and the tests we would view. We moved to the Visitors Gallery which overlooks the lab where we had an impressive view of a heptane pan fire and a free burn of plastic pallets under the 20 MW calorimeter. Some inFIRE members took some excellent photos of the tests.

A short walk outdoors brought us to the explosion bunker for a demonstration of the force that is created when only a small amount of dust ignites and explodes. Dennis also provided a detailed explanation for how to get the best photos and several people reported that they followed his instructions exactly and have great photos to prove it!

For the final part of the tour we boarded a bus which took us to the Natural Hazards Laboratory where we viewed a mechanically fastened roof sample uplift failure demonstration and a large missile debris cannon demonstration. Studying roof uplift helps FM Global engineers determine what roof construction will withstand strong winds and thus prevent loss. Similarly, studying the damage caused by flying debris helps engineers determine how to protect property from such damage.

The tour ended with a short debriefing by Dennis and drawings for prizes. Several inFIRE members were the lucky recipients of various prizes such as mugs and hats.