Aalto University

Fire Modelling of Energy-Efficient Apartment Buildings – Consideration of air-tightness and mechanical ventilation

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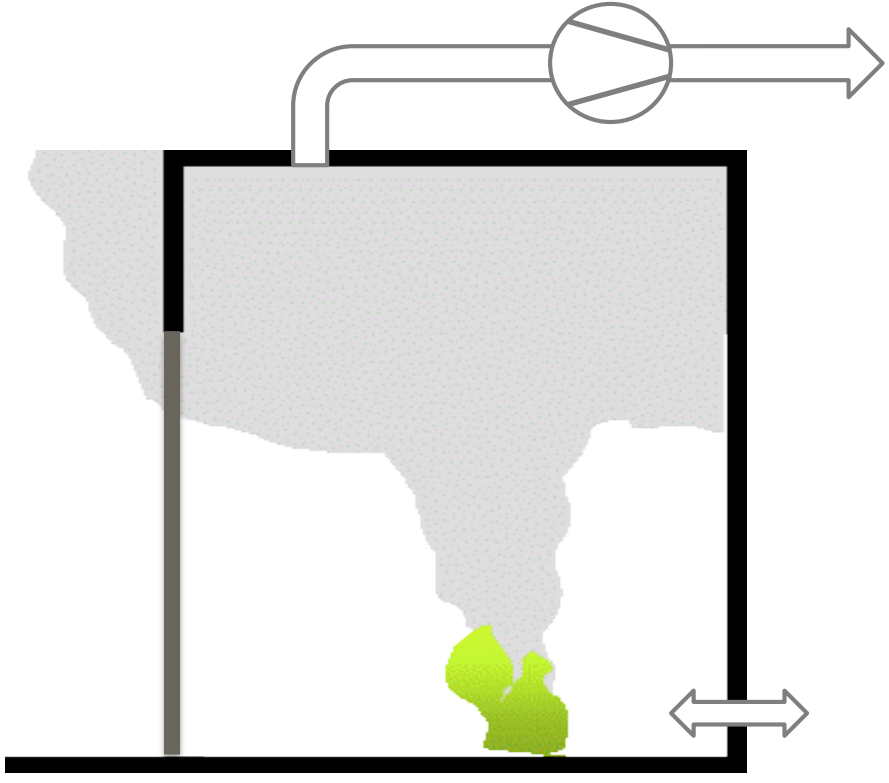
Background



The project

Partners

- Aalto University
- Stravent Oy
- Southwest Finland Rescue Service
- Markku Kauriala Oy
- VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd.

Thanks to

- Rahul Kallada Janardhan
- Umar Riaz
- Topi Sikanen (VTT)

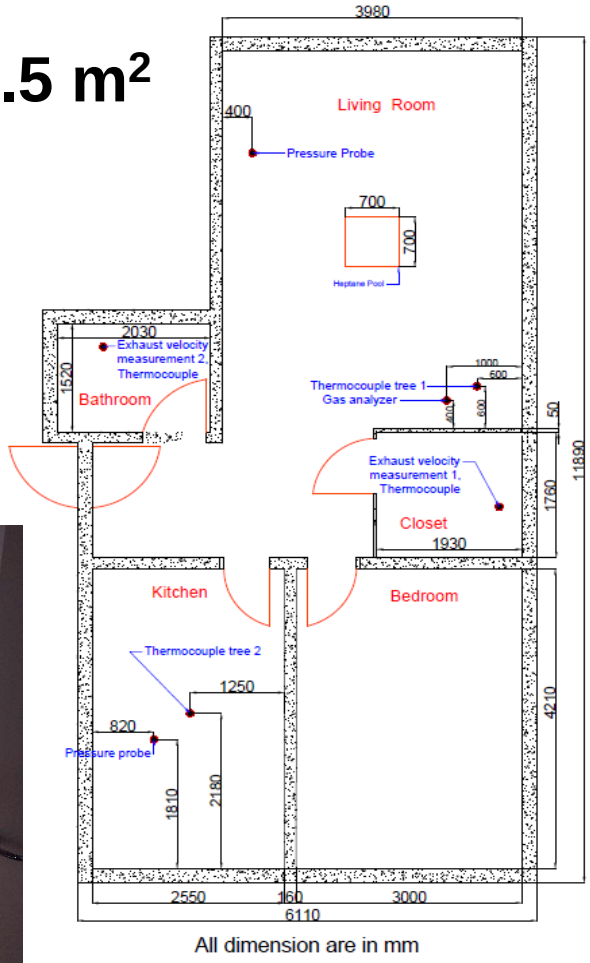
Sponsors

- Finnish Fire Protection Fund
- Hagab AB
- Criminal Sactions Agency
- Ministry of Environment

Fire experiments

- **3-storey apartment building in Kurikka, western Finland**
- **Built in 1970’s.**
- **Windows renewed few years ago.**
- **Tests in a 1st floor apartment**

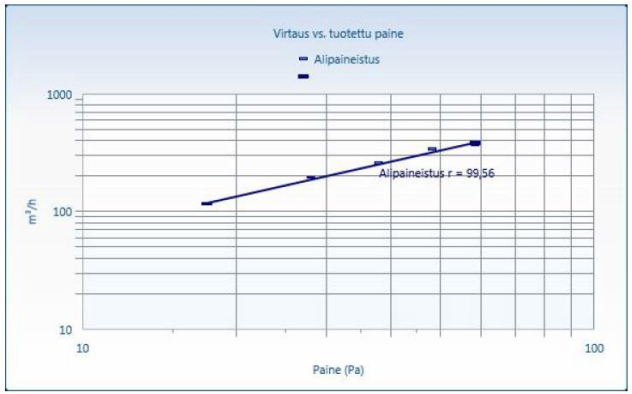
58.5 m²



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ss_ONolzLY

Air tightness measurements

SFS-EN 13829, Mikko Yli-Piipari / Vertia Oy



Results of the air-tightness

Direction	Δp [Pa]	$\dot{V}_{\lvert\Delta p\rvert}$ [m^3/s]	$q_{\lvert\Delta p\rvert}$ [m^3/hm^2]	$n_{\lvert\Delta p\rvert}$ [1/h]	A_{leak} [m^2]	A_{leak}/A_{env}
Underpressure	-30	0.047	1.0	1.1	0.011	0.70×10^{-4}
Underpressure	-50	0.078	1.7	1.9	0.015	0.89×10^{-4}
Underpressure	-70	0.10	2.2	2.4	0.016	0.97×10^{-4}
Overpressure	30	0.091	2.0	2.2	0.022	1.4×10^{-4}
Overpressure	50	0.12	2.7	2.9	0.023	1.4×10^{-4}
Overpressure	70	0.15	3.3	3.6	0.024	1.5×10^{-4}

RakMK D3 (2012)

Requirement: $q_{50} \leq 4$ m^3/hm^2

Recommendation: $q_{50} \leq 1$ m^3/hm^2

$$\dot{V}_{leak} = A_L C_d \text{sign}(\Delta p) \left(\frac{2\,|\Delta p|}{\rho}\right)^{1/2}$$

NFPA 92 (2012):

Very loose: $A_{leak}/A_{env} = 12 \times10^{-4}$

Loose: $A_{leak}/A_{env} = 3.5 \times10^{-4}$

Average: $A_{leak}/A_{env} = 1.7 \times10^{-4}$

Tight: $A_{leak}/A_{env} = 0.50 \times10^{-4}$

Ventilation configurations

CLOSED

OPEN

NORMAL

Fire loads

Group 1 (10 tests)

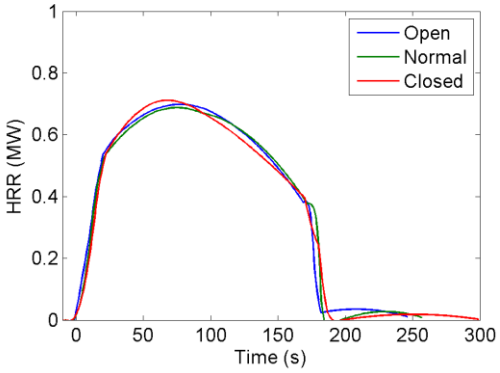
3 L n-heptane

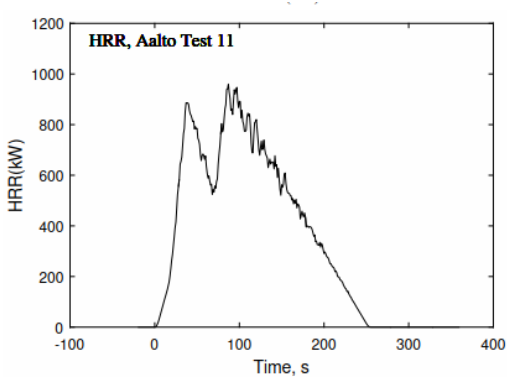
0.7 m x 0.7 m pool

Group 2 (3 tests)

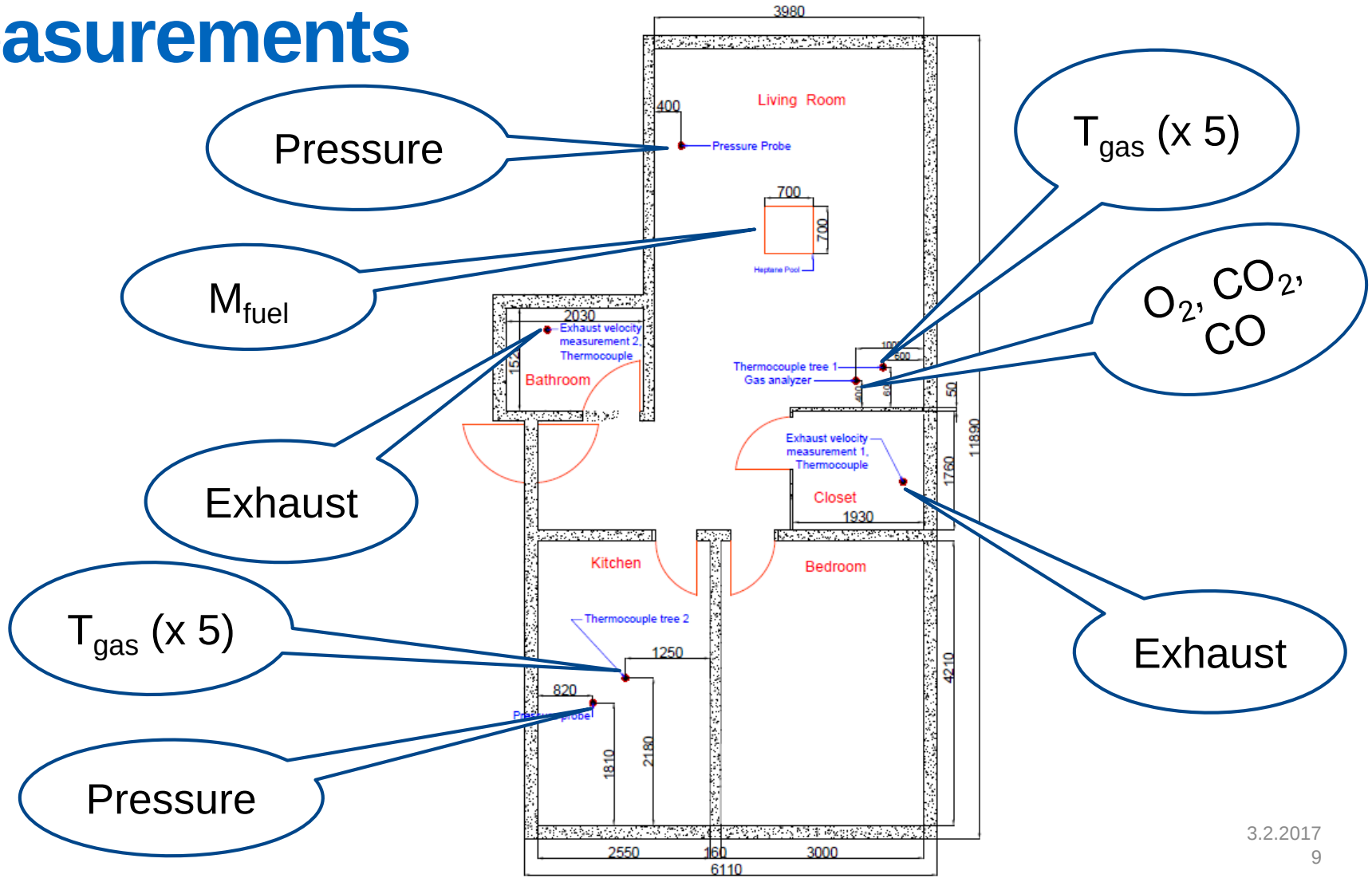
PUF matress of about 3 kg

Both fires were ultrafast (t_g < 75 s)





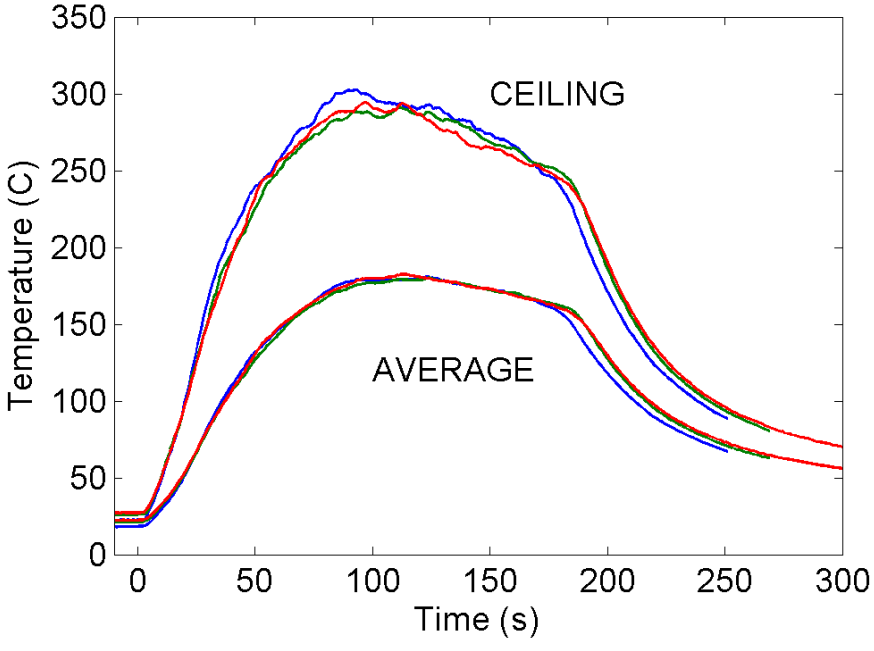
Measurements



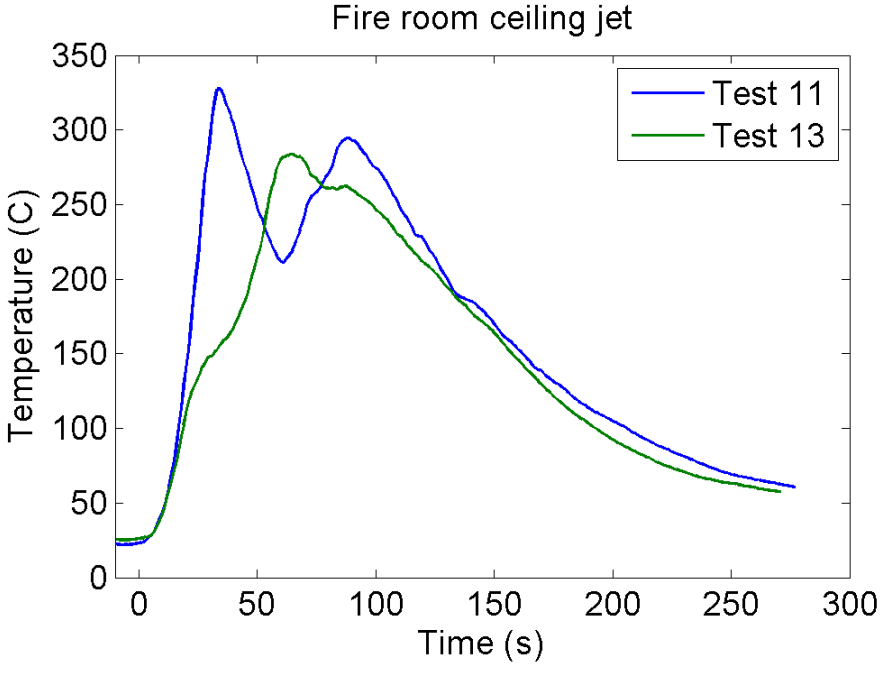
All dimension are in mm

Gas temperatures

Heptane fires

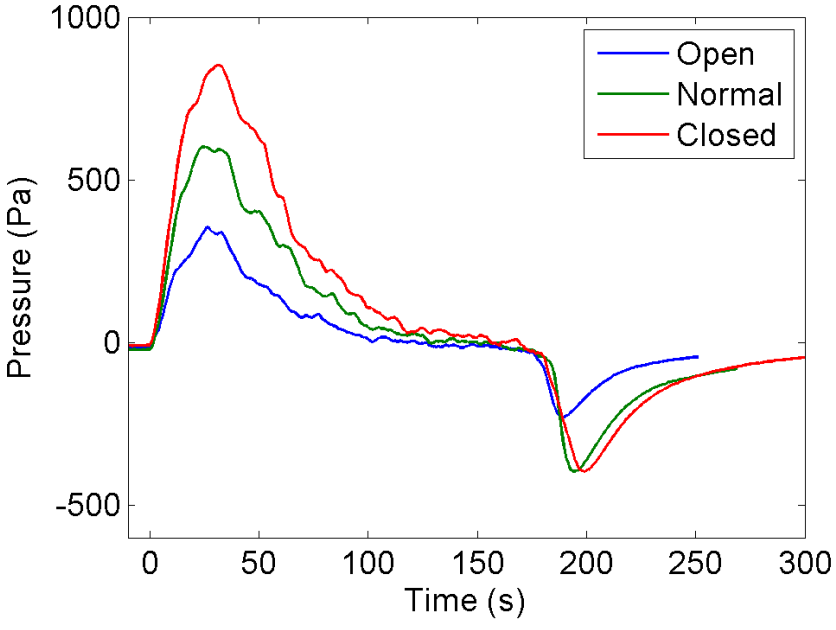


PUF fires

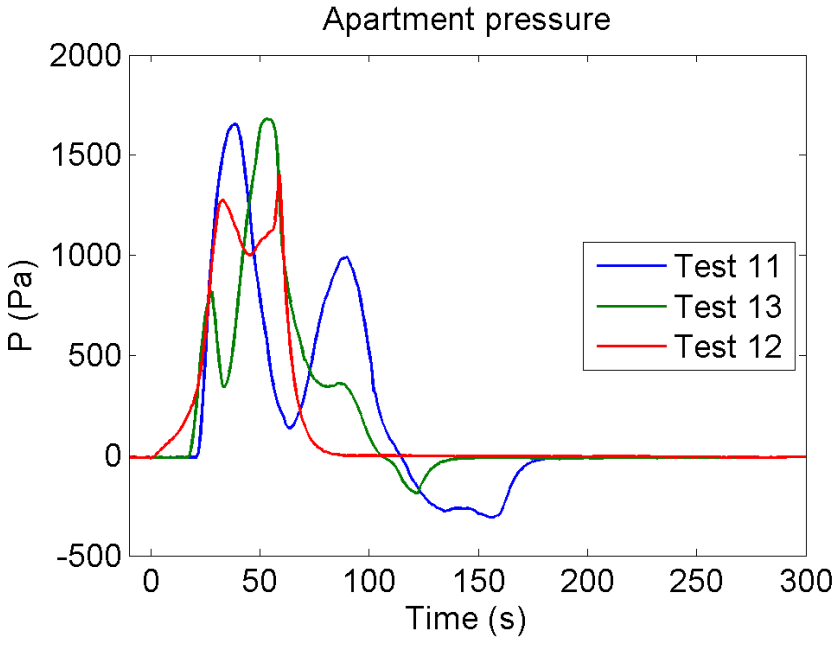


Gas pressure

Heptane fires



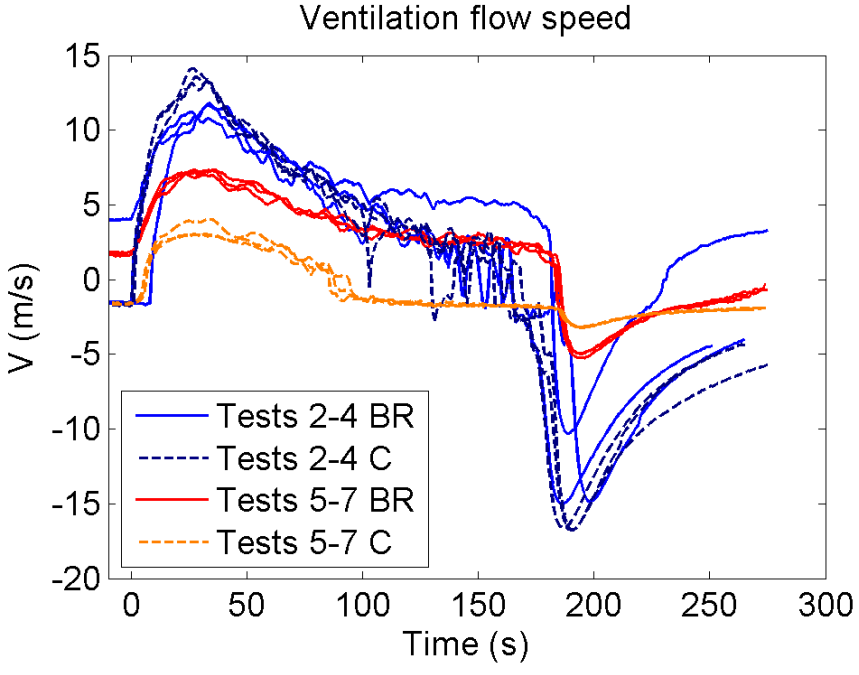
PUF fires



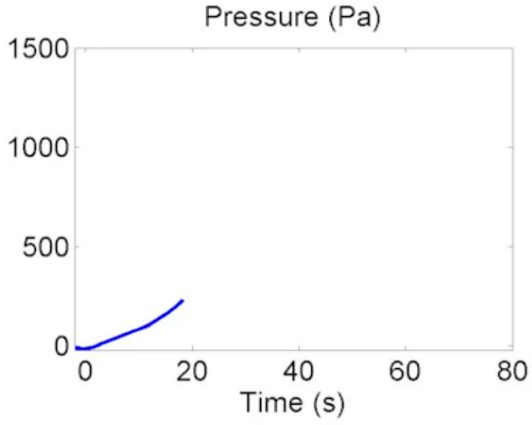
Flow speed in exhaust duct

Test 2-4: OPEN
Test 5-7: NORMAL
BR = bathroom
C = closet

Heptane pool fires



PUF in closet, normal ventilation

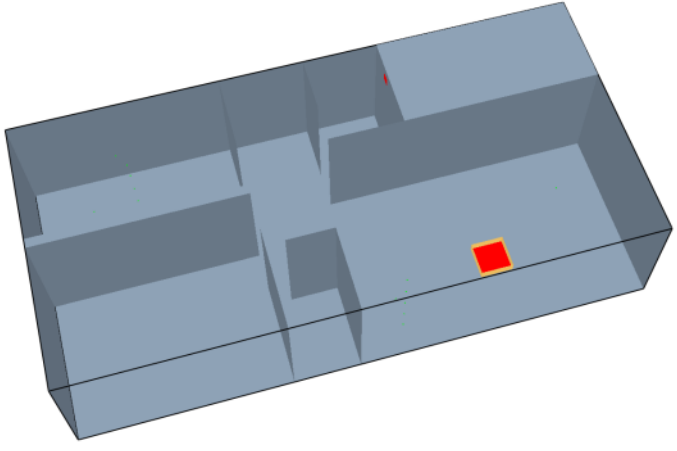


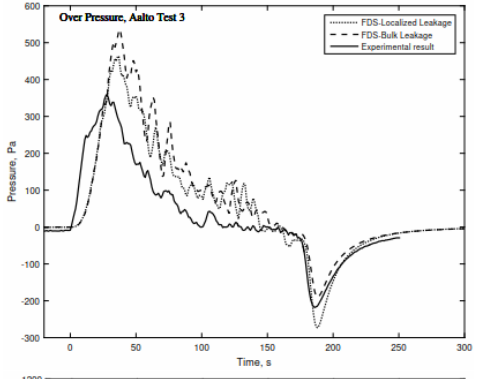
Validation of FDS modelling

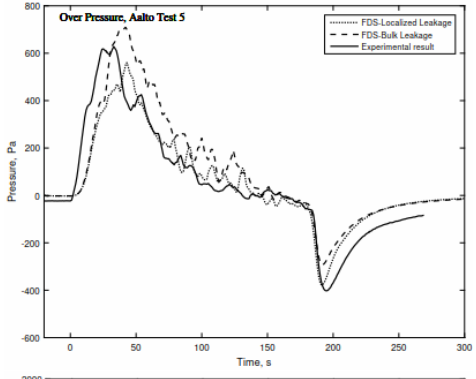
Prescribed HRR

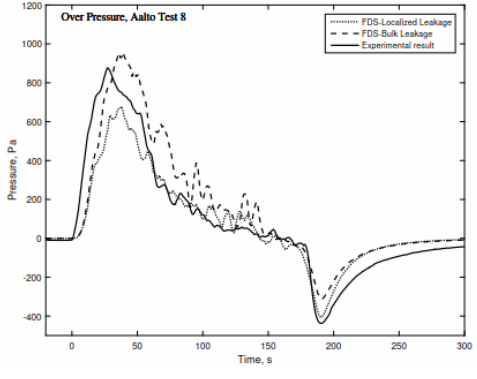
Simple HVAC

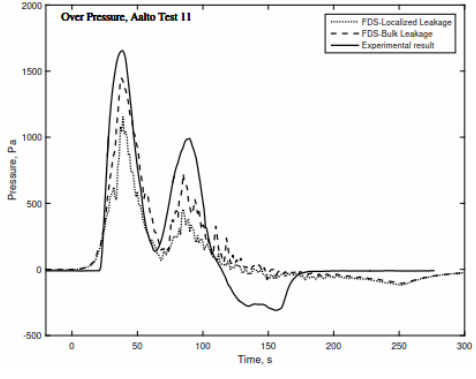
Local / bulk leakage









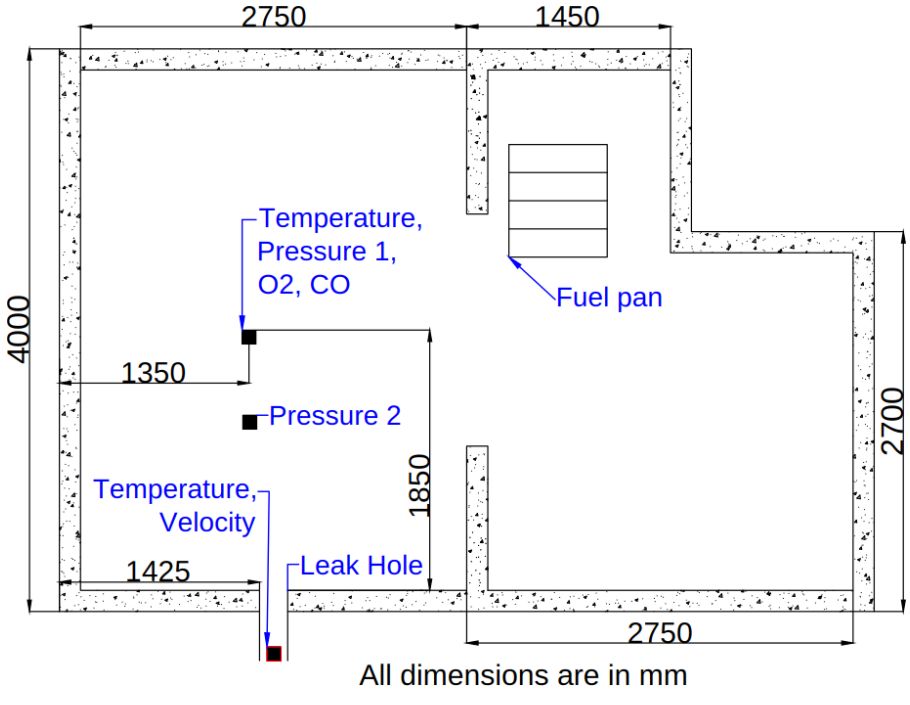


Additional validation data

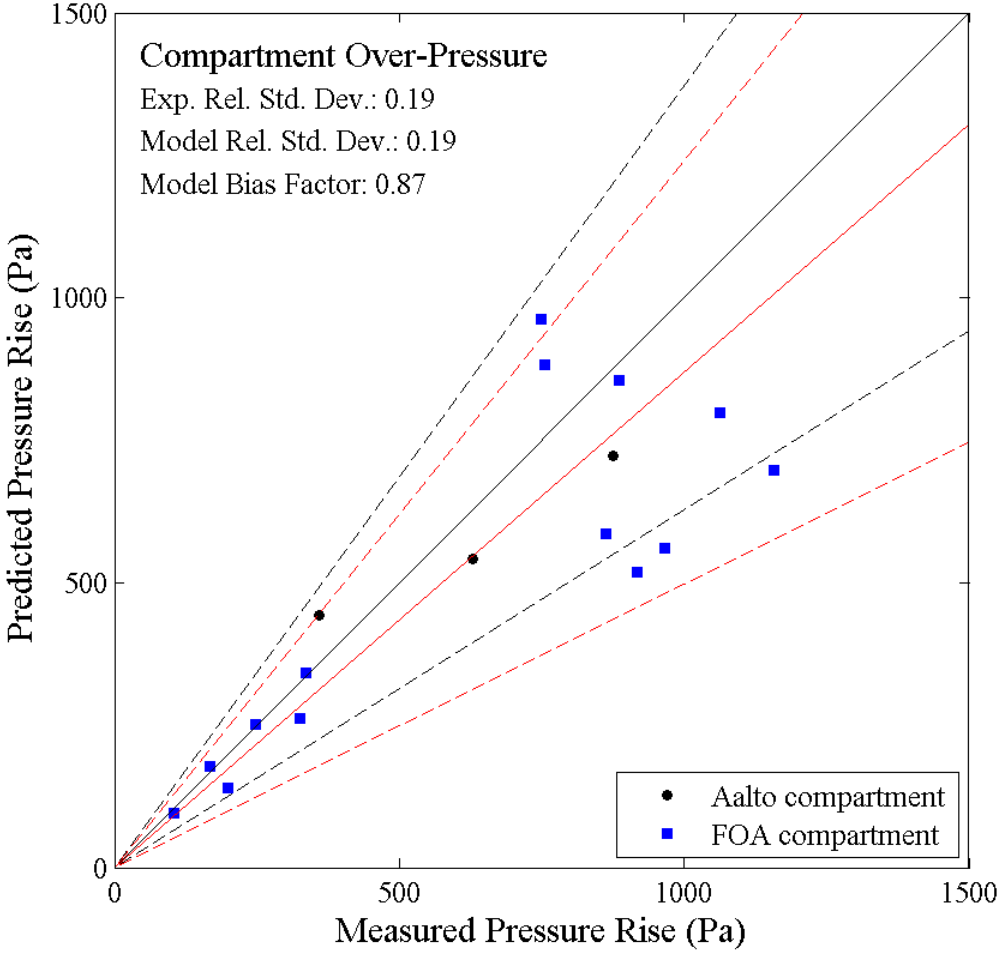
FOA experiments by Hägglund et al. 1996 and 1998.

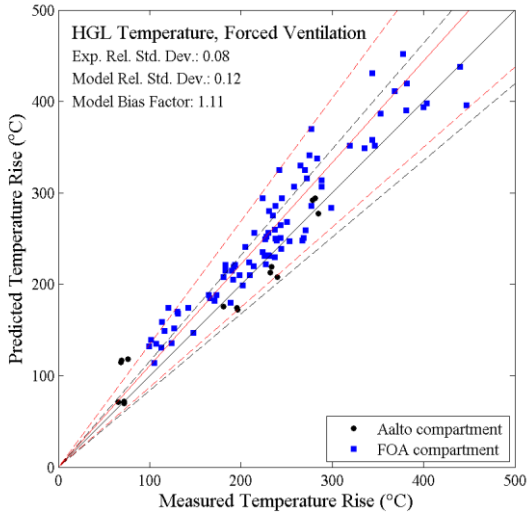
Heptane pool fires in concrete enclosure.

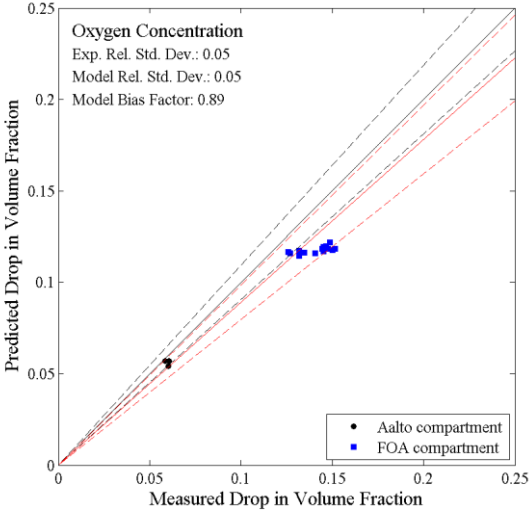
No HRR measurement.



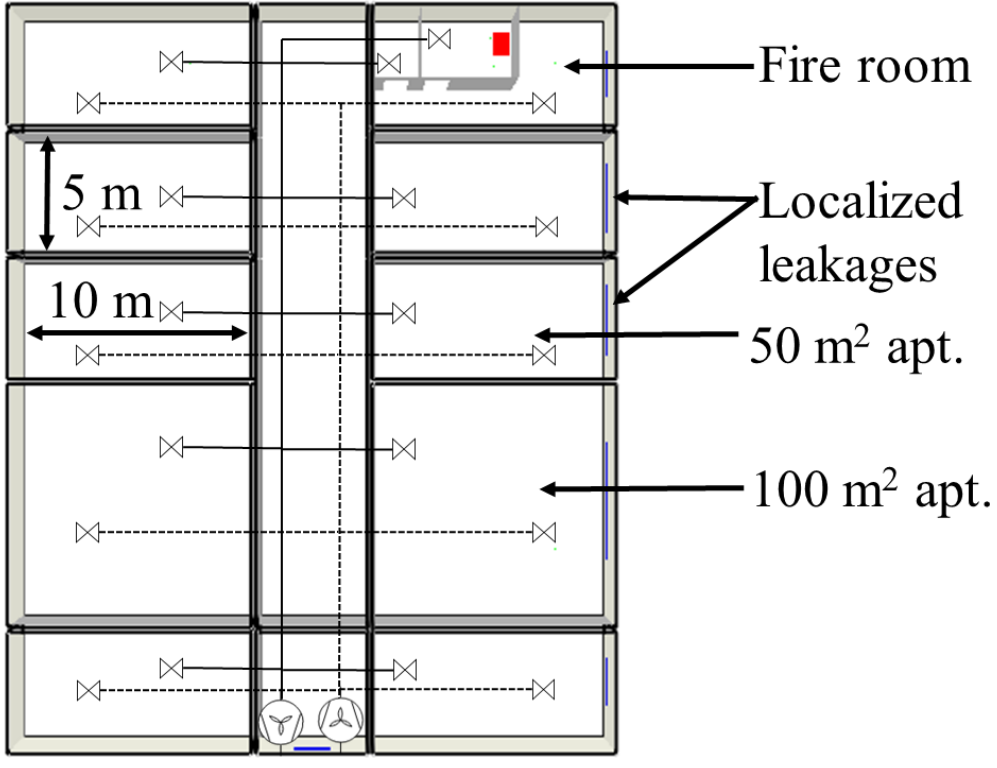
Summary


Compartment Over-Pressure
Exp. Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.19
Model Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.19
Model Bias Factor: 0.87
Predicted Pressure Rise (Pa)
Measured Pressure Rise (Pa)
Aalto compartment
FOA compartment
0
500
1000
1500


HGL Temperature, Forced Ventilation
Exp. Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.08
Model Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.12
Model Bias Factor: 1.11
Predicted Temperature Rise (°C)
Measured Temperature Rise (°C)
Aalto compartment
FOA compartment


Oxygen Concentration
Exp. Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.05
Model Rel. Std. Dev.: 0.05
Model Bias Factor: 0.89
Predicted Drop in Volume Fraction
Measured Drop in Volume Fraction
Aalto compartment
FOA compartment

Apartment case study



Three air-tightness levels

1. Traditional: q50 = 3.0 m³/m²h
2. Normal: q50 = 1.5 m³/m²h
3. Near-zero: q50 = 0.75 m³/m²h

HRR: t²-fires medium – ultra-fast

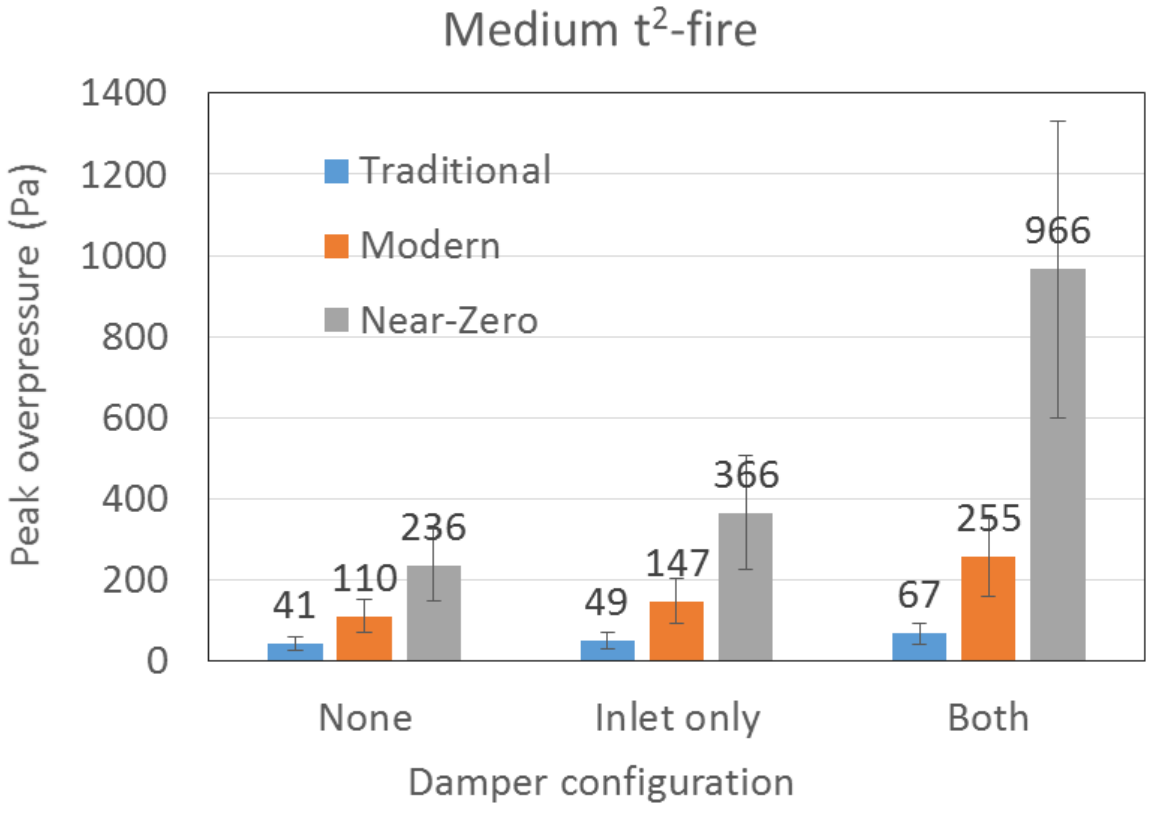
Damper configurations:

1. No dampers
2. Only inlet branch closed
3. Both inlet and outlet closed

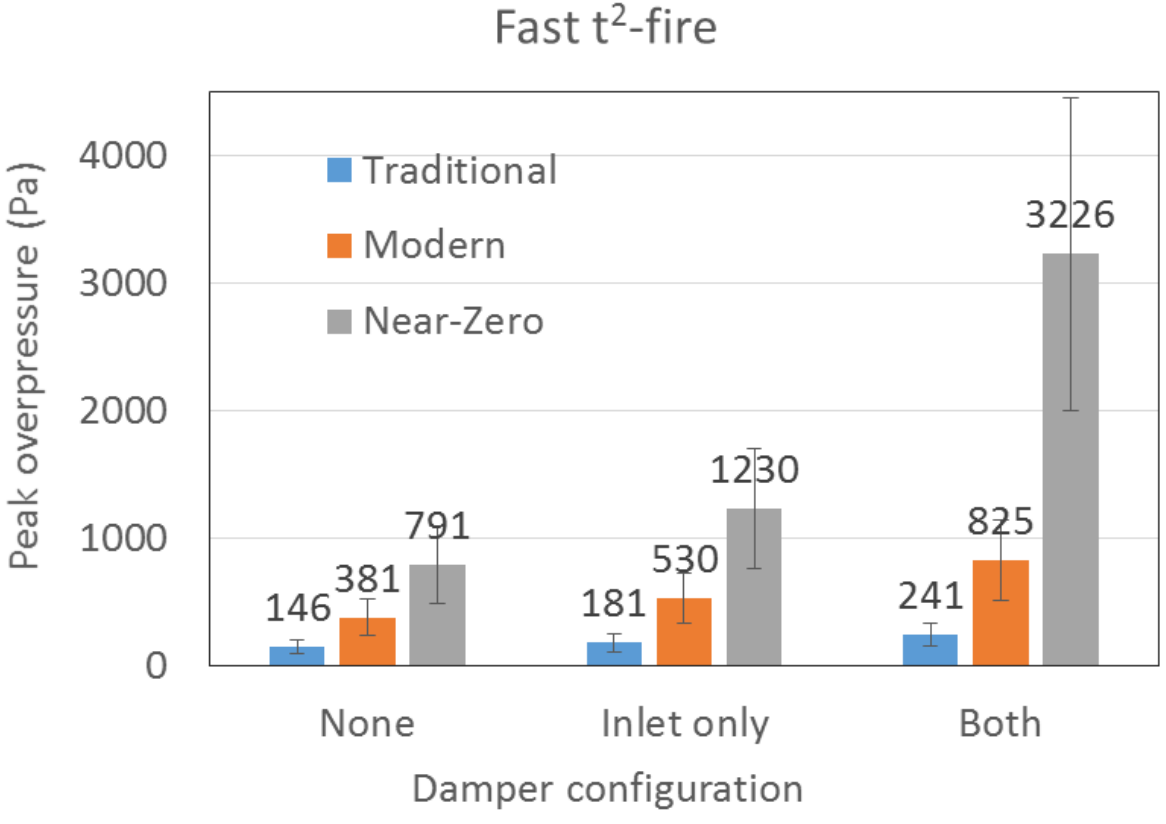
Fan configurations

1. On
2. Off and open
3. Off and outside damper closed

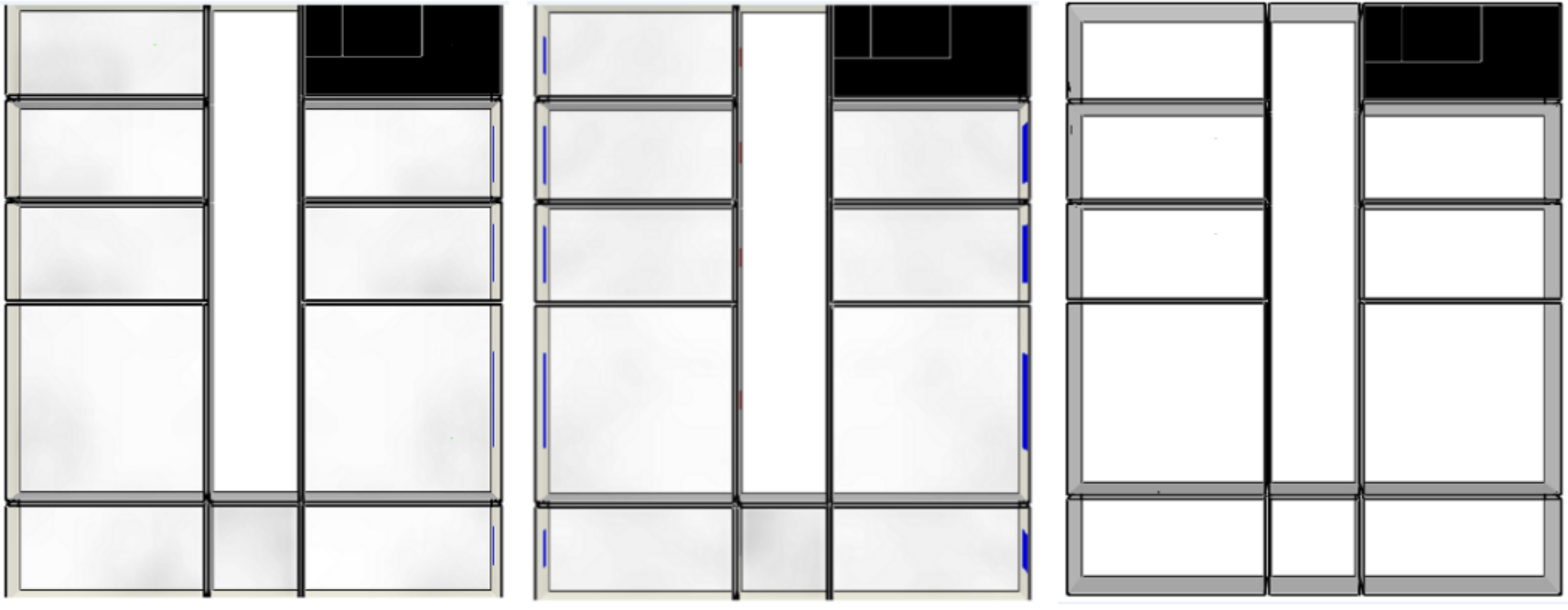
Peak pressures with medium fire



Peak pressures with fast fires

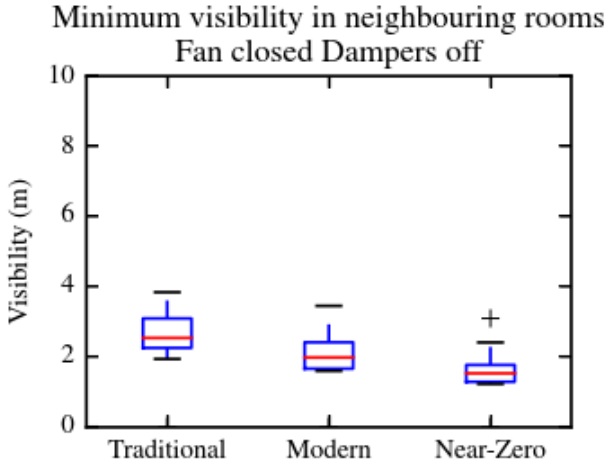


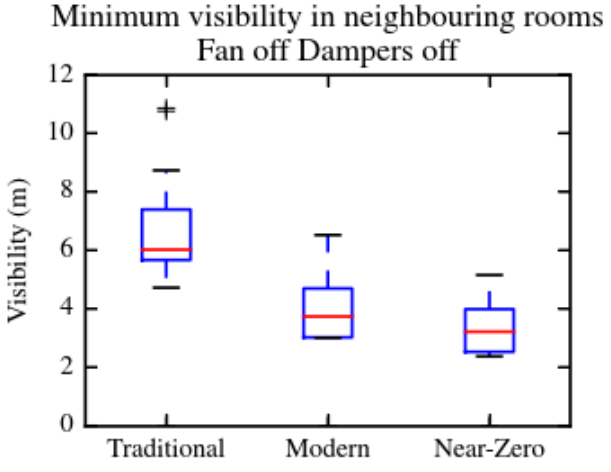
Smoke spreading to neighbours

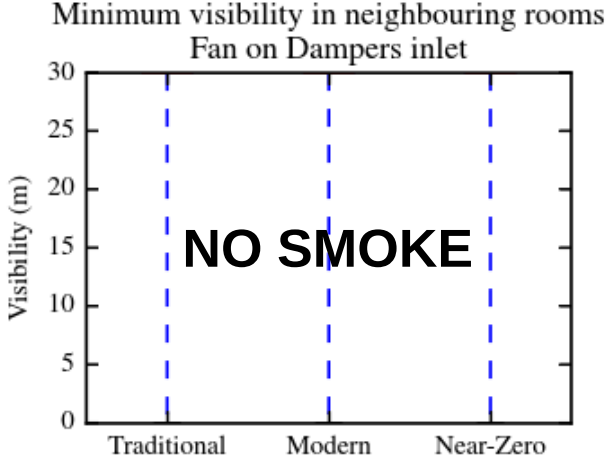


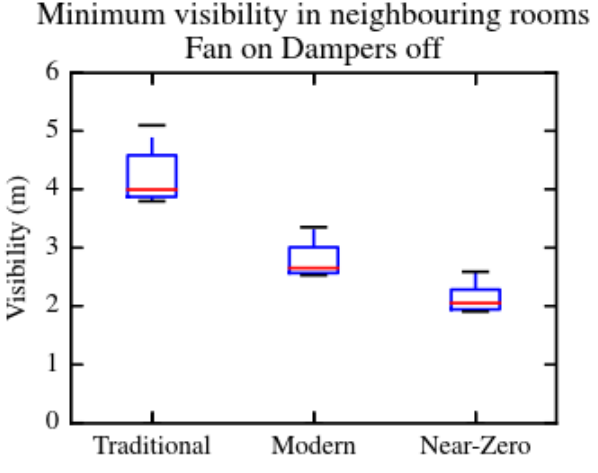
(a) Fan = Off, Dampers = Off (b) Fan = On, Dampers = Off (c) Fan = On, Dampers = Inlet

Smoke spreading: visibility

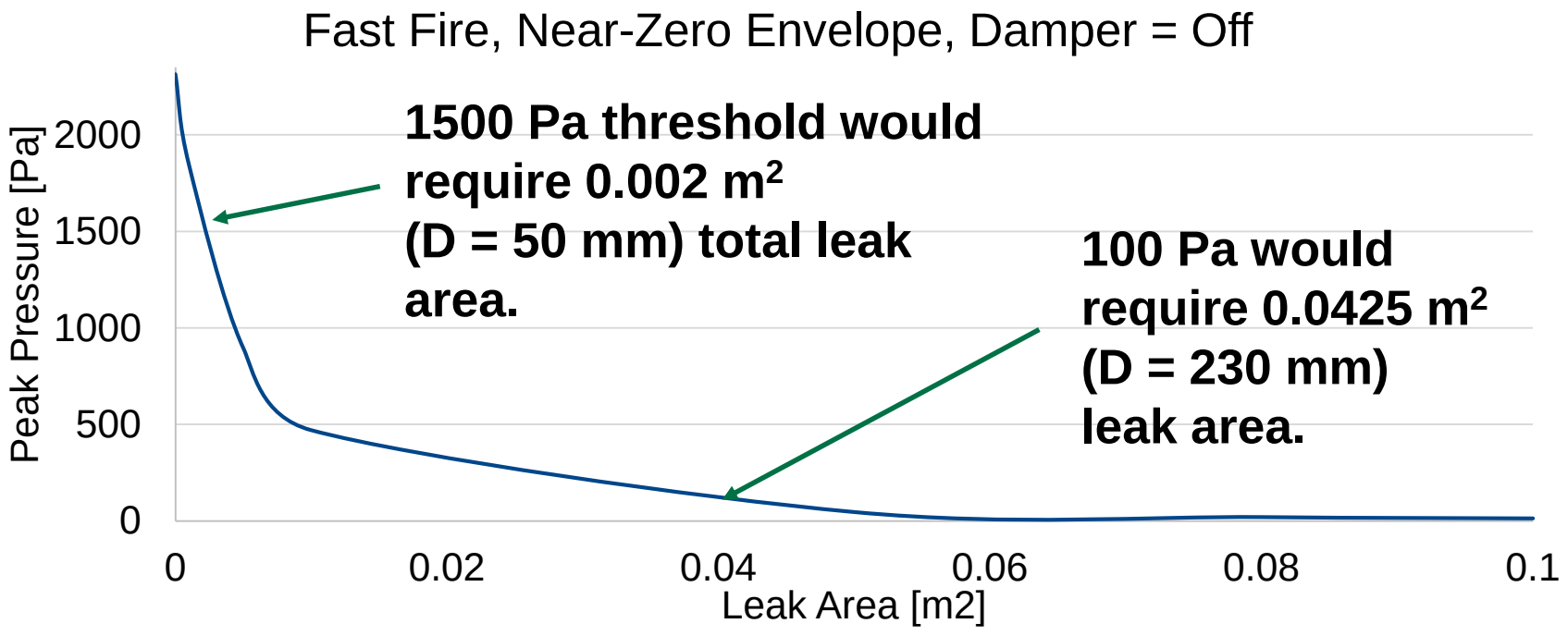




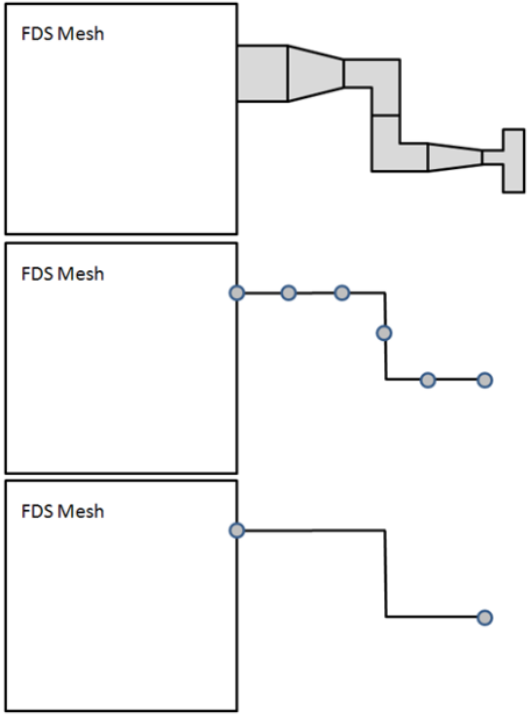




Pressure management



Issues with the HVAC system modelling



1. **Real systems are too complex for ”engineering” the model.**
2. **Fan units are much more than just a fan. Pressure losses of the fan unit can dominate.**
3. **Real systems are always tuned and balanced for normal mode of operation. We can do the same for the FDS model, but a better tool would help.**