Southern Impact Testing Alliance

One-Stop Shop Combined Capabilities Impact Testing for Space, Department of Defense or Private Industry

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www.nasa.gov
Southern Impact Testing Alliance (SITA)

Efforts to form this Alliance began in 2008 to showcase the impact testing capabilities within the southern United States.

SITA Partners Include:

- Arnold Engineering Development Center Hypervelocity Range Facility
- Auburn University’s Space Research Institute
- Marshall Space Flight Center Impact Testing Facility
- University Alabama Huntsville Aerophysics Research Center
Advantages for the customer:

- Impact testing customers can utilize SITA partner capabilities to provide supporting data during all program phases—materials/component/flight hardware design, development, and qualification.

- This approach would allow programs to reduce risk by providing low cost testing during early development to flush out possible problems before moving on to larger scale/higher cost testing.

- Various SITA partners would participate in impact testing depending on program phase—materials characterization, component/subsystem characterization, full-scale system testing for qualification.

- SITA partners would collaborate with the customer to develop an integrated test approach during early program phases.

- Modeling and analysis validation can start with small-scale testing to ensure a level of confidence for the next step large or full-scale conclusive test shots.
Marshall Space Flight Center Impact Testing Facility

- MSFC ITF serves as an important installation for space and missile related materials science research

- ITF was established and began its research in spacecraft debris shielding in the early 1960’s and played a major role in the International Space Station debris shield development

- As a result of return to flight testing after the loss of STS-107 (Columbia) MSFC ITF realized the need to expand their capabilities beyond meteoroid and space debris impact testing. MSFC partnered with the Department of Defense and academic institutions as collaborative efforts to gain and share knowledge that would benefit the Space Agency as well as the DoD.

MSFC ITF current capabilities:

- Hypervelocity Impact Testing
- Ballistic Impact Testing
- Environmental Impact Testing
Hypervelocity Impact Range

**Micro-light Gas Gun (MLGG)**
- Bore size up to 4 mm (0.16 in) diameter
- Velocity Range: 0.3 – 7.5 km/s
- Target chamber approx 1.3 m (4 ft) dia. X 1.6 m (5 ft) long
- Shot Frequency: 5-7 per day or more depending on shot configuration

**Light Gas Gun (LGG)**
- Bore size up to approx 2 cm (0.8 in) diameter
- Velocity Range: 2.5 - 7.5 km/s
- Target chamber approx 3 m (10 ft) dia. X 6 m (20 ft) long
- Shot Frequency: 2-3 per day

Projectile types for both guns include but are not limited to spheres and cylinders of materials such as aluminum, borosilicate glass, polymers, and ceramics.
Ballistic Impact Range

Large Ballistic Gun (LBG)

• 7.5 cm diameter barrel or custom-made barrel to accommodate a range of projectiles up to 15 cm diameter
• Velocities up to Mach 2

Small Ballistic Gun (SBG)

• Used for hail, and launch and ascent debris simulation
• Projectiles up to 3 cm (1.2 inch) diameter
• Velocities up to Mach 2

The Ballistic Impact Range is an outdoor range used to accommodate full-scale targets and small arms test firing.

This range is used for laboratory ballistic evaluation of items from ball ammunition (up to 50 caliber AP) to 30 mm high explosive incendiary (HEI) rounds, vehicle launch and ascent debris impacts, and ice impacts on radomes and other structures.
Environmental Impact Range

**Single/Multi-Particle Gun**
- Velocities from 500 – 2000 m/s (1640-6562 ft/s)
- Simulating dust, sand, and rain particles from 5 mm down to 10 microns

**Exploding Wire Gun**
- Velocities up to 7 km/s
- Particle sizes: 0.4 - 4.0 mm

**Rain Gun**
- Velocities up to 1430 m/s (4700 ft/s)
- Water drops from 1 - 5 mm dia.
- 30, 45, 60, and 90 degree impacts available, others possible
- Specimen sizes up to 20 mm dia.

ITF test systems provide capabilities for rain, hail, sand, and dust impacts. Applications previously tested include radome, IR window, rotor blade materials.
RANGE G TRACK AND RECOVERY TUBE SYSTEM

Two-Stage Light-Gas Gun (Powder/Hydrogen)

Track Guidance System

Recovery Tube

Launcher Blast Tank Range Tank Recovery Tube

1,900 ft
MODEL / WATER DROPLET IMPACT SEQUENCE
(TWO IMPACTS)

Model Velocity: 2,460 m/sec    Range Pressure: 354 torr

1.2-mm-diam Water Droplets
SNOWFIELD GENERATOR INSTALLATION IN AEDC RANGE G
The UAH Aerophysics Research Center began operations in 1991 on Redstone Arsenal, AL following the donation to UAH by GM Delco of three two-stage light gas guns.

Primary Function is conducting experimental research on hypersonic flight and hypervelocity impact.

Programs supported range from basic research through prototype development. While the government laboratory community is the principal customer, student/faculty research, SBIR projects and contractor IR&D efforts are also performed.
45' Long x 4.25” Diameter Pump Tube
25' Long Interchangeable Launch Tubes
Launch Tube Diameters from 0.75” to 1.2”
6’ Diameter x 14’ Long Impact Chamber
Launch Mass’s up to ~ 130 g.
Launch Energy’s up to ~ 1 MJ.
University of Alabama in Huntsville – 133 MM Pump Tube Light Gas Gun

60’ Long x 5.25” Diameter Pump Tube
50’ Long Interchangeable Launch Tubes
Launch Tube Diameters from 1.15” to 1.4”
8’ Diameter x 22’ Long Impact Chamber
Launch Mass’s up to ~ 300 g.
Launch Energy’s up to ~ 1 MJ.
University of Alabama in Huntsville –
254 MM Pump Tube Light Gas Gun

125’ Long x 10” Diameter Pump Tube
75’ Long Interchangeable Launch Tubes
Launch Tube Diameters from 2.2” to 6.0”
10’ Diameter x 41’ Long Impact Chamber
Launch Mass’s up to ~ 12 kg.
Launch Energy’s up to ~ 25 MJ.
University of Alabama in Huntsville – Overall Mass/Velocity Test Capability

Projectile Velocity [km/sec]

2S4-84mm LOG

$08$ mm LM

Equivalent MACH # at Sea Level

1 Megajoule

10 Megajoules

20 Megajoules

Projectile Kinetic Energy Curves

254 mm LGG

133 mm LGG

108 mm LGG

Projectile Mass [grams]
Auburn University Space Research Institute

- **Arc Driven Plasma Drag Gun**
  - Accelerates 5 to 50 particles per test (10-150μm diameter)
  - Velocity 5 to 12 km/s
  - Individual particle size, velocity and location identified.
  - Micrographs and measurements
  - Minimal gun debris, clean targets

- **Cryogenic & Elevated Temperature**
  - Liquid Helium Cooling
  - Infrared Heating
  - Target Temp: 24 to 450K

- **Oil Free Pumping**
  - suited for optical samples where post test characterization is desired.
### SITA Capabilities Summary Page

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<td>2.5 - 7.5 km/s</td>
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<td>Large two-stage light gas gun</td>
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<td>Small Ballistic Gun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Range is also rated</td>
<td>small arms</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Exploding Wire Gun</td>
<td>≤10 km/s</td>
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<td>254 mm two-stage light gas gun</td>
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<td>38,76,77 mm two-stage light gas gun</td>
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<th>Erosive Field Characteristics</th>
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<th><strong>Concentration</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Dust</td>
<td>800 ft</td>
<td>200,325, 650 microns</td>
<td>&lt; 2.0 gm/m³²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>800 ft</td>
<td>1.0 - 2.0 mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow (Cirrus, Dendritic)</td>
<td>800 ft</td>
<td>0.2 - 3.0 mm</td>
<td>&lt; 1.0 gm/m³²</td>
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<td>Plasma Drag Gun</td>
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Contact Summary

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