



Engineers, Inc.



Noel Putaansuu joins MDE's staff

Noel Putaansuu has joined MDE to enhance MDE's fire origin and cause investigation capabilities. With twenty years of fire investigation, laboratory and litigation experience, Mr. Putaansuu will be a valuable addition to the MDE team.

Fire scene examination is the key to determining the cause and origin of a fire or accident. Accurate documentation, early after the incident, will provide the best opportunity to determine the cause and origin. Mr. Putaansuu is prepared to travel to the site, equipped to document and map the site, determine the area of the origination and preserve the evidence required to substantiate the findings. Evidence can be further analyzed by the experts in the comprehensive forensic laboratories at MDE.

Fires cause horrific damage to life and property. To establish cause, a dedicated, objective and systematic effort must be made to eliminate all the possible ignition sources and determine the circumstances that brought the elements together to result in a fire. The addition of Mr. Putaansuu to the team of Chemists, Master Mechanics, Professional Engineers, and Certified Fire Investigators serves to continue MDE's commitment to excellence.

Mr. Putaansuu started his career in Fire Science at Weyerhaeuser Company in the

Fire Technology Laboratory. At that time, this laboratory was the largest fire testing facility on the West Coast. He was instrumental in developing the fire test apparatuses of the facility. This included the ASTM E108 Roofing fire test apparatus, the E119 vertical furnace for vertical assemblies, the E84 Surface burning characteristics of materials, toxicology studies using the University of Pittsburgh apparatus and a multitude of bench scale test devices.

As a volunteer working with Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue, Mr. Putaansuu has experience as a firefighter as well as training firefighters in the principles of fire behavior. Mr. Putaansuu also enjoys teaching college level Fire Science courses.

As a project manager at Western Fire Center, Inc. Mr. Putaansuu worked on high profile cases such as the ValuJet passenger jet crash. He was also the project manager in the design and construction of two large-scale calorimeters.



Noel Putaansuu on scene of a large scale test burn.

At Exterior Research and Design, Mr. Putaansuu held the position of Senior Laboratory Technician and Fire Specialist. There, Mr. Putaansuu was involved in the testing of various building materials including roofing and windows. Often these tests pertained to the accelerated aging of these building materials.

Dennis Martin Has Retired

We regret to inform you that Dennis Martin, an original founder of MDE, has retired. Dennis suffered a stroke in May 2001 and has been working part time since then. However, due to insurance issues, Dennis has decided that it is in his best interests to retire from MDE and start his own firm. Dennis's friendship, leadership and expertise will be greatly missed. We wish Dennis the best of luck in the future.

Coming News! In the next newsletter we will be introducing Keith Cline, Materials Engineer, and Mark Nordstrom, Civil Engineer. These two additions serve to make the fully comprehensive team here at MDE even better!

MDE Engineers, Inc.

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J. Lee Durston, Lab Technologist/Graphics

Potential litigation is a constant factor of the fire testing laboratory effort. Mr. Putaansuu's knowledge and experience in standardized testing is often used by Counsel to establish a test program to support litigation.

Large scale fire testing may be required in some fire investigation cases. Large scale fire testing is the testing of full size objects or rooms. At times, full size rooms such as a garage or a basement have been mocked up to reproduce a fire scene in every significant detail. The test plan has been to set two fires. One fire would be set by the method the opposing counsel advocated. The second by the method that followed our client's point of view. In many cases the difference was demonstrative and clearly proved our client's point of view.

In addition to these dramatic large scale tests, Mr. Putaansuu utilizes the latest technology in fire scene investigation. Fire

scenes are examined using the most current fire math models. CFAST, FDS, and DETACT are some of the state of the art fire math models that are useful in fire investigation and litigation. These powerful tools are valuable in analyzing fire scenarios and providing visual presentations.

Mr. Putaansuu has extensive experience in mapping a fire scene and producing a three dimensional Computer Aided Drafting model of the fire scene. He uses the Total Station Mapping Systems together with the latest in 3D CAD technology. Examples of this technology can be seen below. This allows him to map even the most detailed job and precisely convey a model in a three dimensionally rendered environment. This model can later be used for the litigation process, exhibits, animations, fire modeling and/or test programs.

Mr. Putaansuu can be reached directly at 206.957.2152 or can be e-mailed at noelp@mde.com.



The latest in fire scene investigation technology uses Fire Math modeling and 3D models such as these for demonstrative evidence.

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