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UVA-Induced Fade of Penetrant and FPI Indications

Rick Lopez
Center for Nondestructive Evaluation
Iowa State University
rlopez@cnde.iastate.edu
(515) 294-5903

Acknowledgments

- This work was funded by the Federal Aviation Administration under contract #DTFA03-98-D-00008, delivery order #IA052 and performed at Iowa State University's Center for Nondestructive Evaluation as part of the Center for Aviation Systems Reliability program.
- Team includes Iowa State University, Boeing Commercial Airplane Company, Boeing Phantom Works, Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney, General Electric Aircraft Engines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Sherwin Inc., and D&W Enterprises

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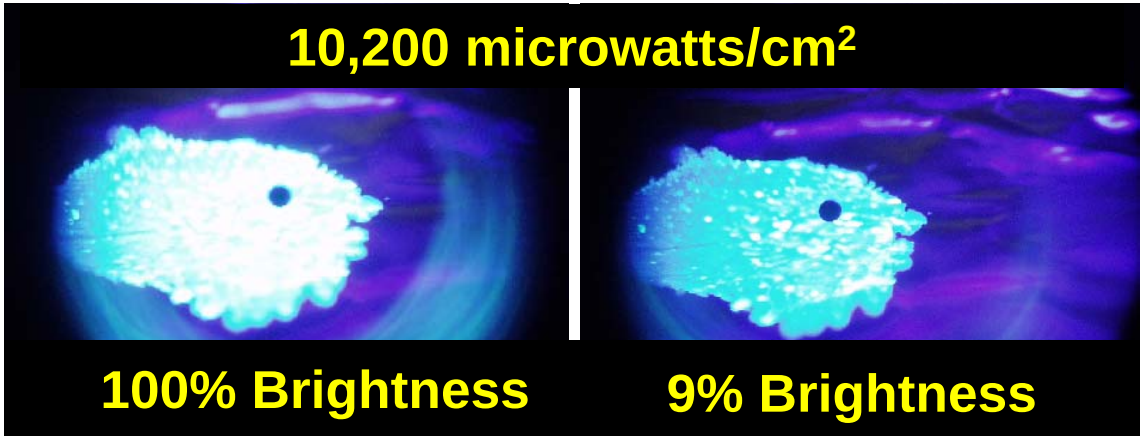
Overview

- Contrast between the indication and background affects detectability. Signal-to-noise ratio=contrast
- Convention would say that higher UVA intensity results in brighter indications
- UVA sources with output of 50,000 µWatts/cm^2 (@15”) are commercially available
- Inspection UVA intensity many times higher than that traditionally used may cause indications to be missed due to rapid fade
- All penetrants can be shown to fade when exposed to UVA radiation, only the rate of fading varies

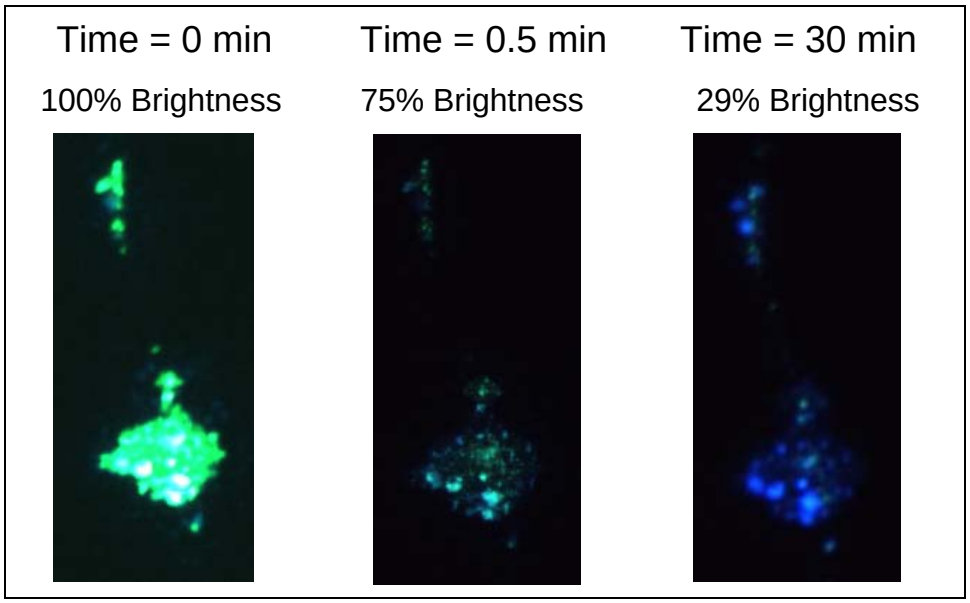
Why it Happens

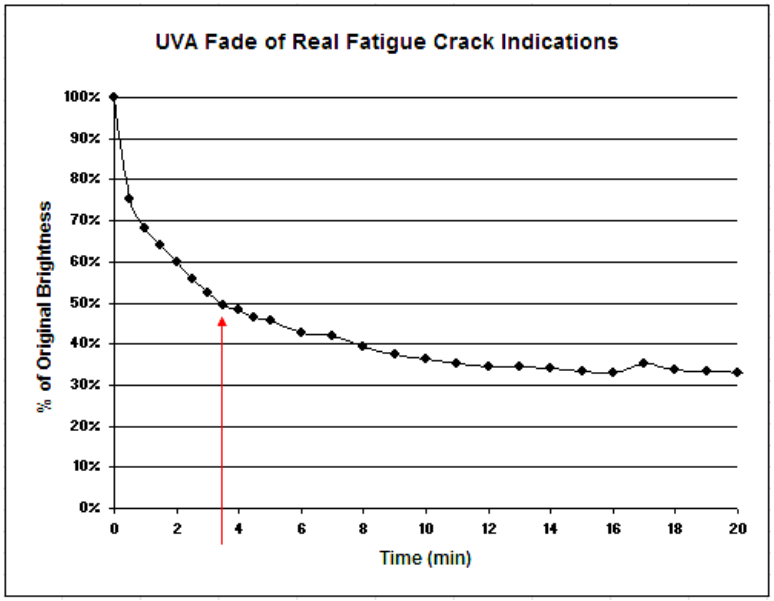
- Dye molecules in penetrant absorb, and are made more reactive by UVA excitation
- Excited molecules undergo oxidation and/or reduction = photobleaching (fade)
- Increased temperature, or increased airflow speeds the fade rate at a given UVA intensity



Who Should Be Aware

- The brightness of a crack indication may be reduced by half in 3.5 minutes at 20,000 µW/cm^2
- Fade rate follows an exponential decay curve, and the initial slope for higher intensities is quite steep
- Inspectors working with critical parts, or time-consuming inspections should be aware of this issue



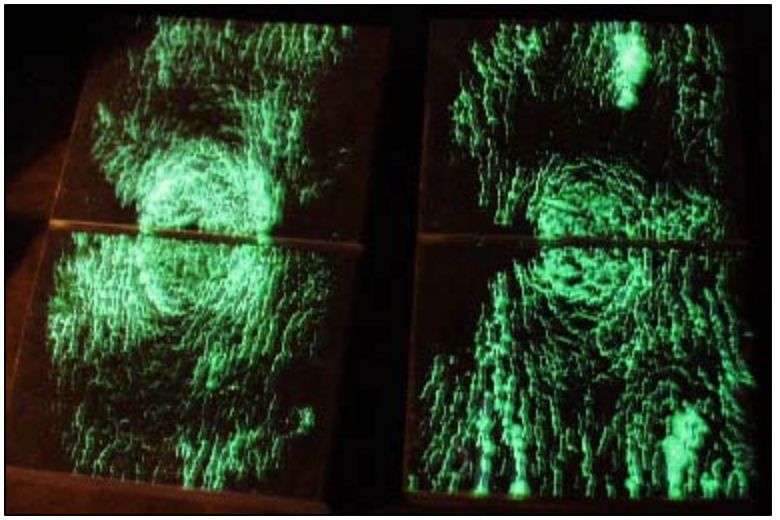


50% brightness reduction in 3.5 minutes

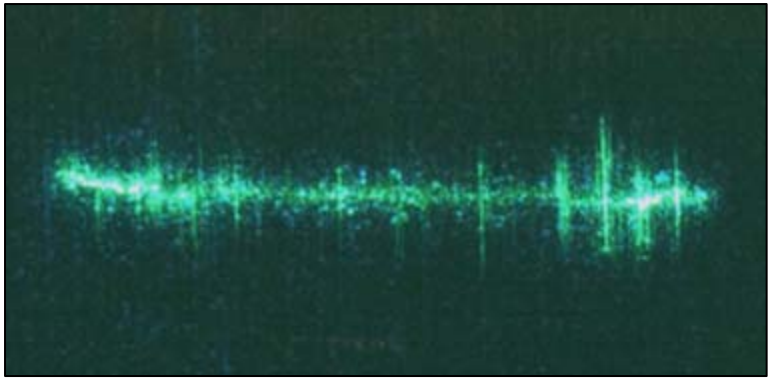
Material: Inconel **Crack Length: 0.060”** **UVA Intensity: 19,200 µW/cm^2**

What Work Was Done

- Real crack indications were faded, as well as small quantities of undiluted penetrant
- A variety of UVA sources were utilized to determine relative effect
- The effects of increased heat and/or airflow were evaluated



Thermally-cracked aluminum blocks processed per AMS 2647



FPI indication from an 0.080” long low-cycle fatigue crack in Inconel-718

How Was It Performed

- Brightness measurements were made with a Photo Research PR-880 photo-spotmeter
- UVA intensity measured with Spectroline DSE-100X and broadband DIX-365 sensor
- UVA illumination provided by:
  - 100W mercury vapor (a)
  - 35W gas discharge (b)
  - Twin 40W fluorescent bulbs (c)
  - 100W short-arc mercury bulb (d)


(a)


(b)


(c)


(d)

How Was It Performed

- UV-grade fused silica discs were used to evaluate environmental conditions
  - Fused silica provides a superior transmission curve for UVA and visible wavelengths
  - Interstitial penetrant between 2 fused silica discs allowed for reduced oxygen fade testing without a vacuum setup
- Digital hotplate and a fan provided controlled heat and airflow
- Fatigue and thermal crack panels were processed according to industry standards

Photometer, UVA source, and digital hotplate used for some runs

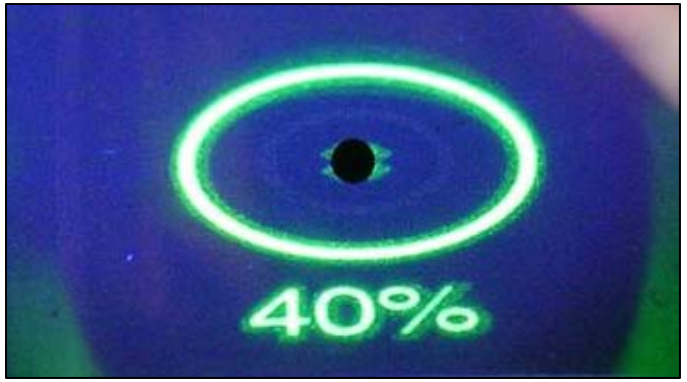
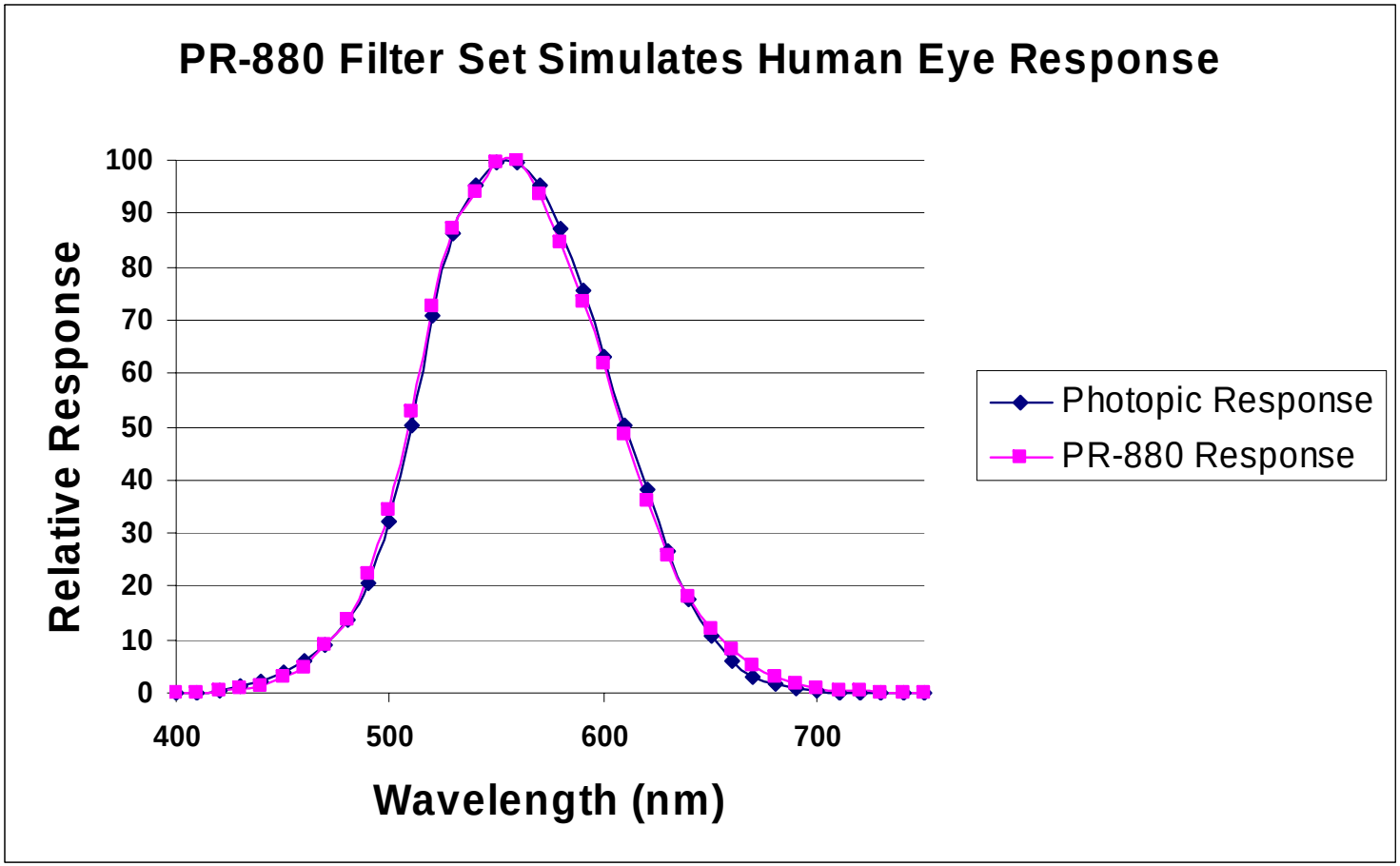


Image taken through photometer eyepiece while measuring the 40% area of a Universal Technical Equipment card

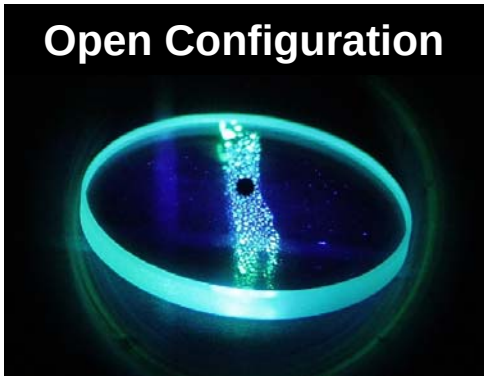
How Was It Performed

Photometer's color response matches human vision, although the unit's overall sensitivity has not yet been correlated with an inspector's detection sensitivity



Bulk Penetrant Fade

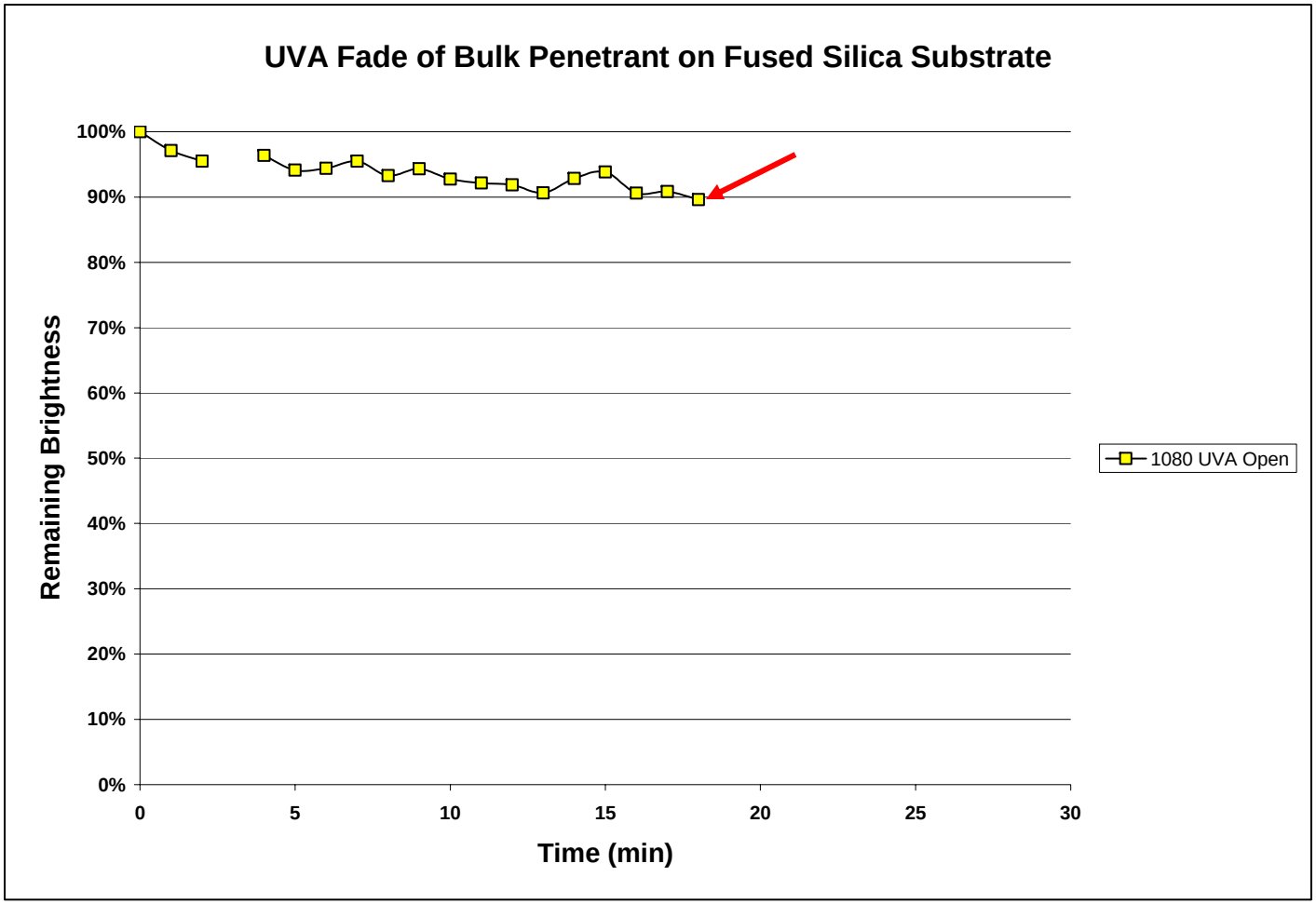
- Either 1 (open configuration) or 2 (closed configuration) fused silica discs were used to control and individually measure the effect of UVA, heat, and airflow on photobleaching
- UVA intensity ranged from 1,000 to 74,000 $\mu W/cm^2$ (estimated using inverse square law)
- Heat was provided by a hot plate set to 150°F
- Approximately 800 ft^3/min airflow was provided by a fan
- Closed configuration had penetrant filling interstice between two discs to approximate testing in a vacuum environment



Single disc with a swabbed and paper towel-blotted penetrant line

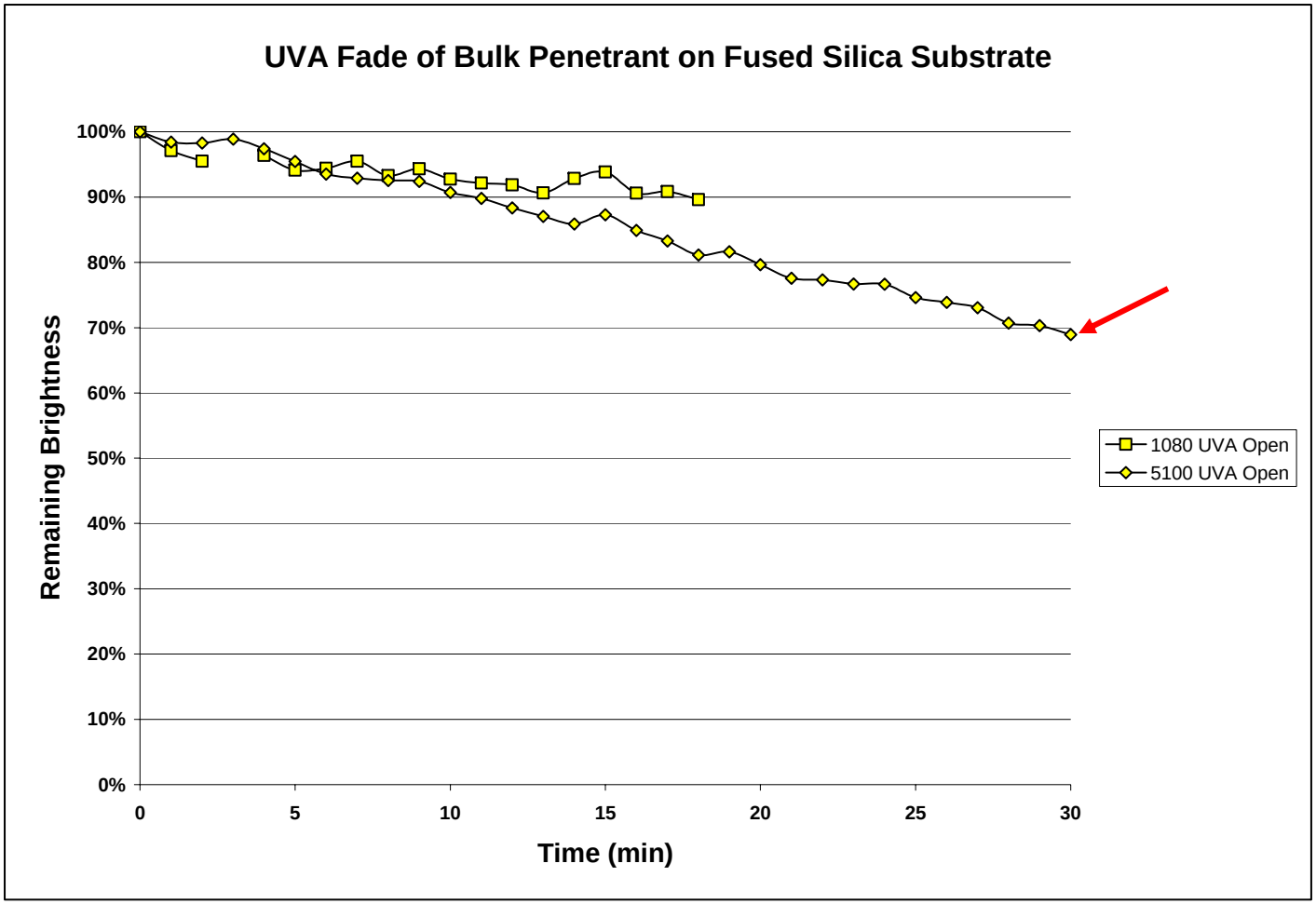
Two-disc penetrant sandwich effectively removing air interaction

Bulk Penetrant Fade



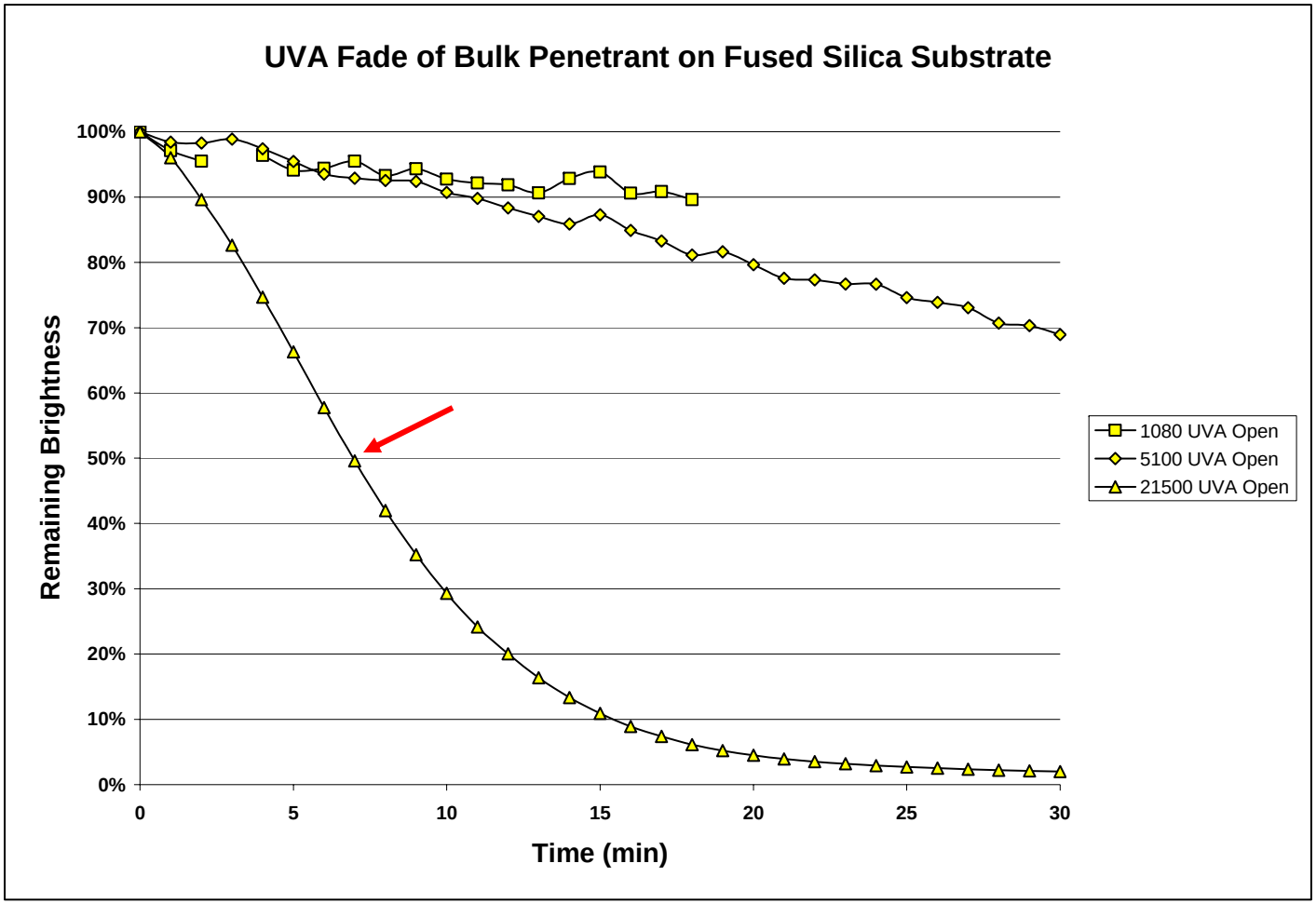
UVA Intensity: 1,000 µW/cm2 – Open Configuration

Bulk Penetrant Fade



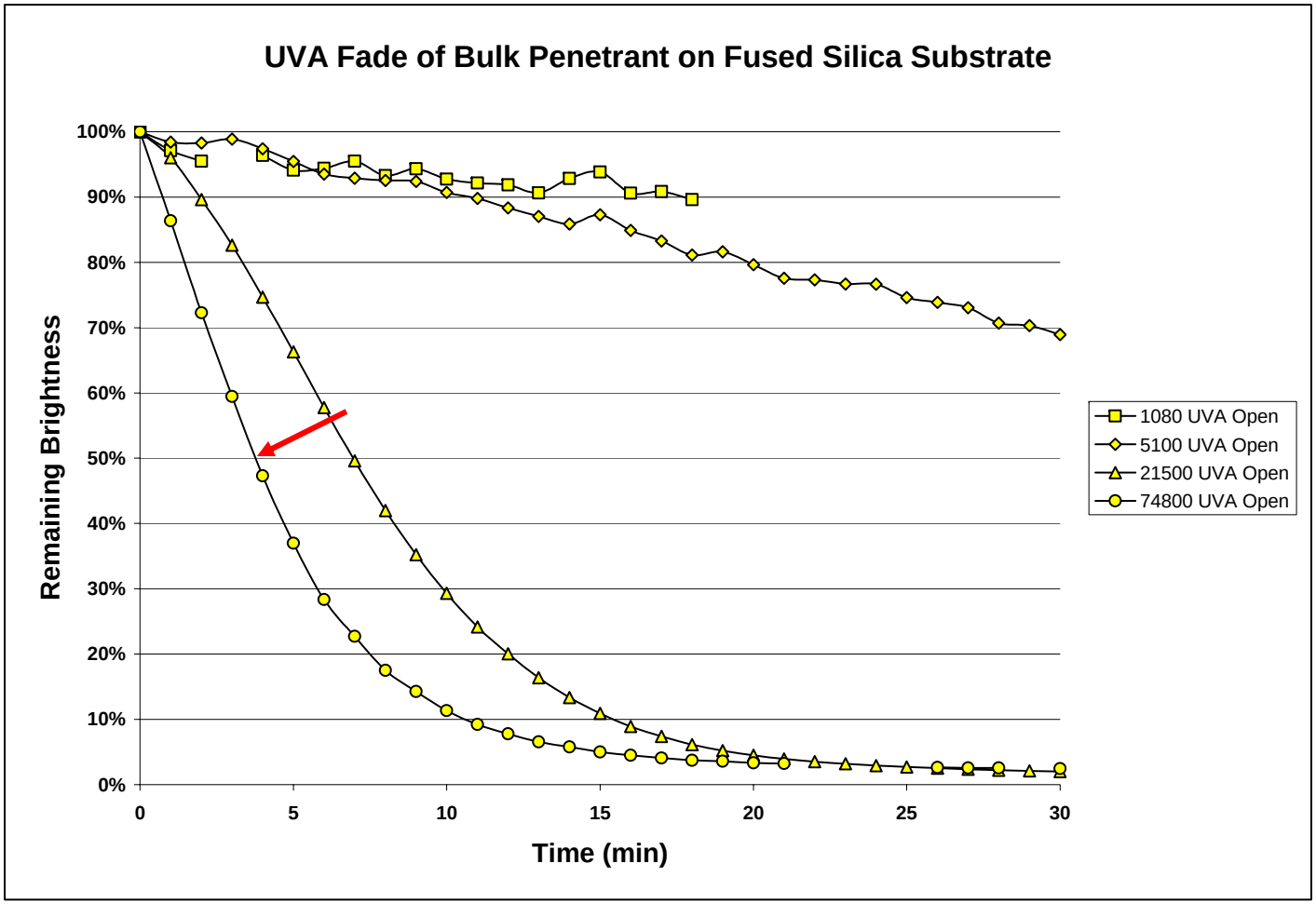
UVA Intensity: 5,000 µW/cm2 – Open Configuration

Bulk Penetrant Fade



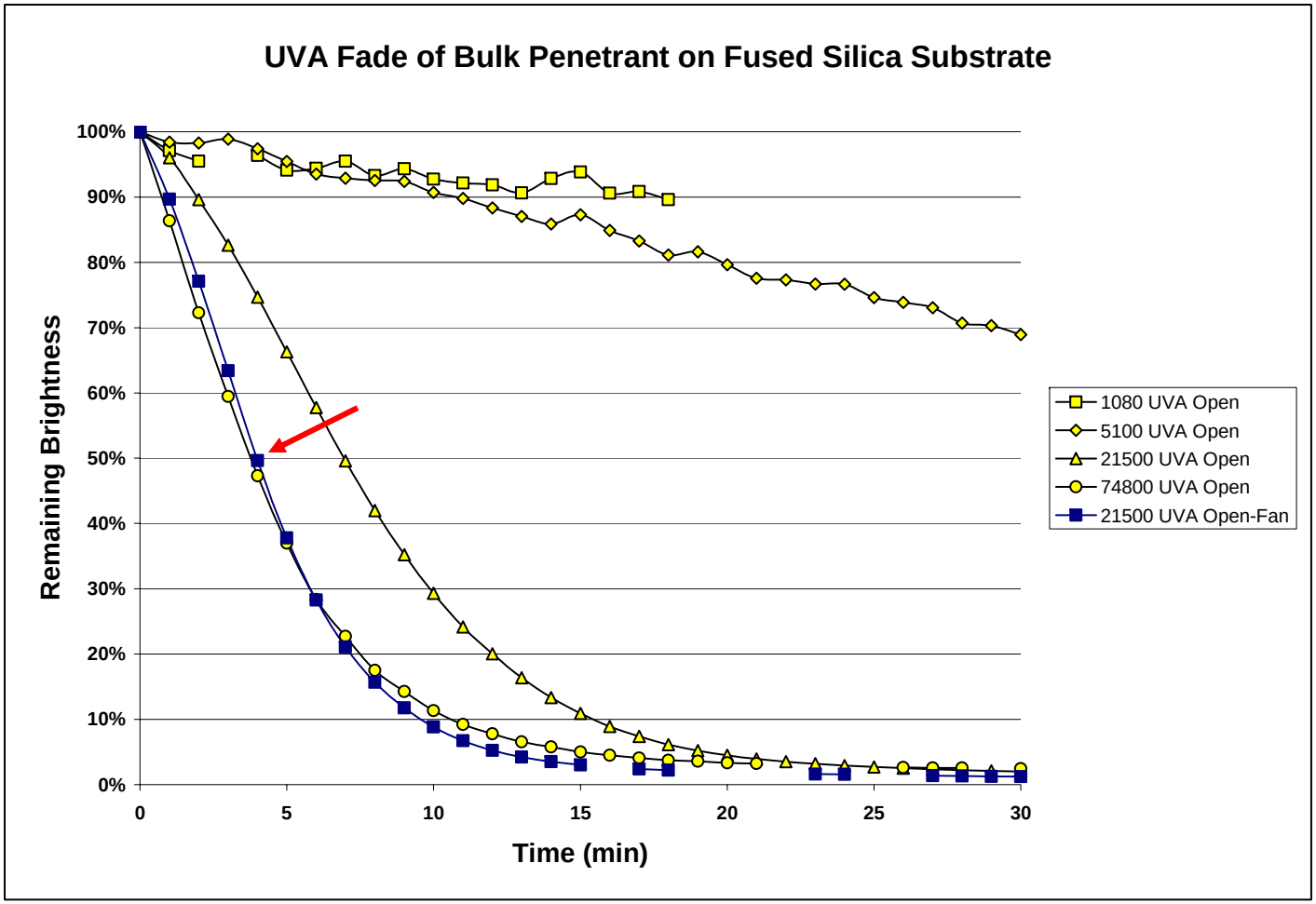
UVA Intensity: 20,000 µW/cm2 – Open Configuration

Bulk Penetrant Fade



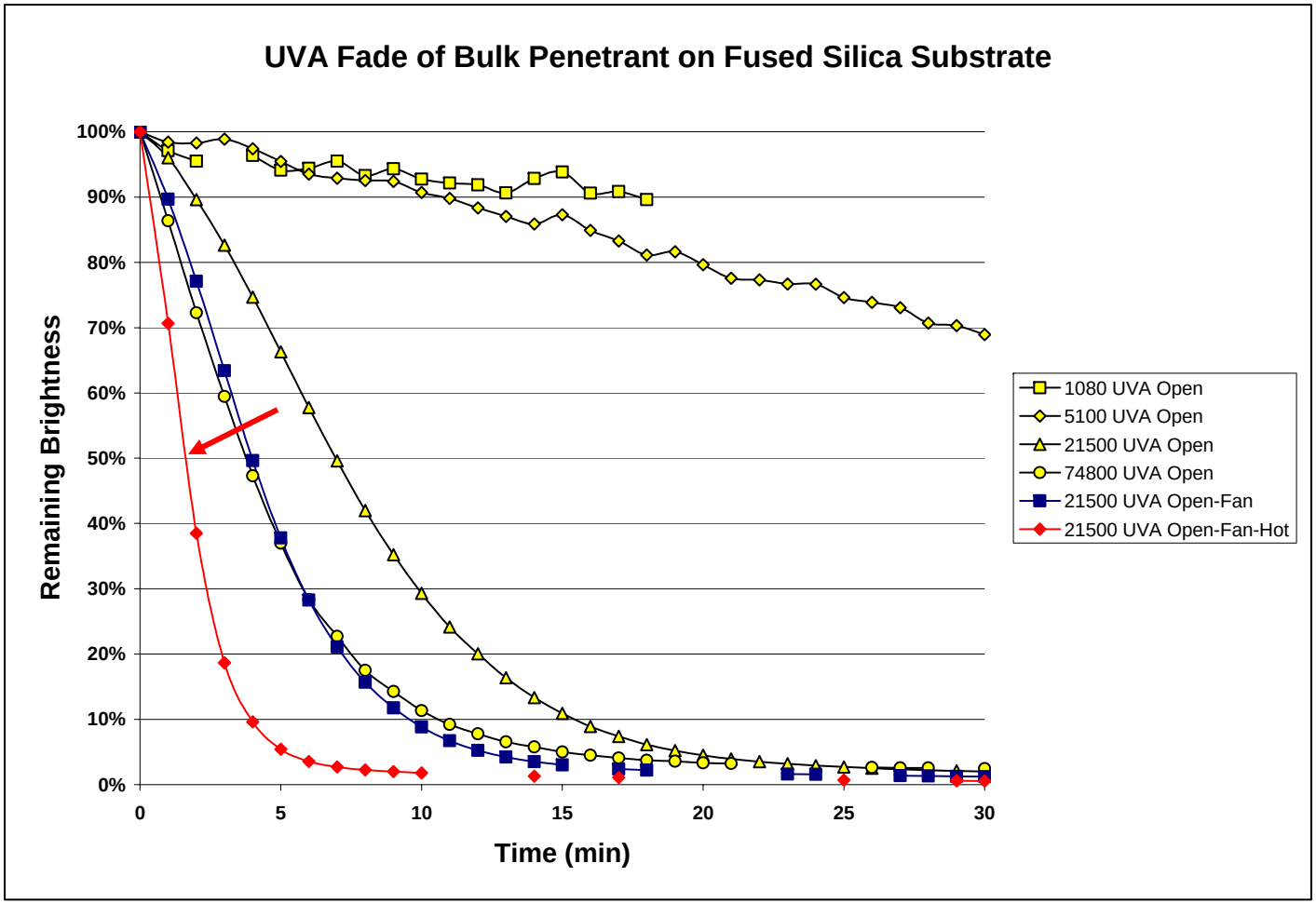
UVA Intensity: 75,000 µW/cm2 – Open Configuration

Bulk Penetrant Fade



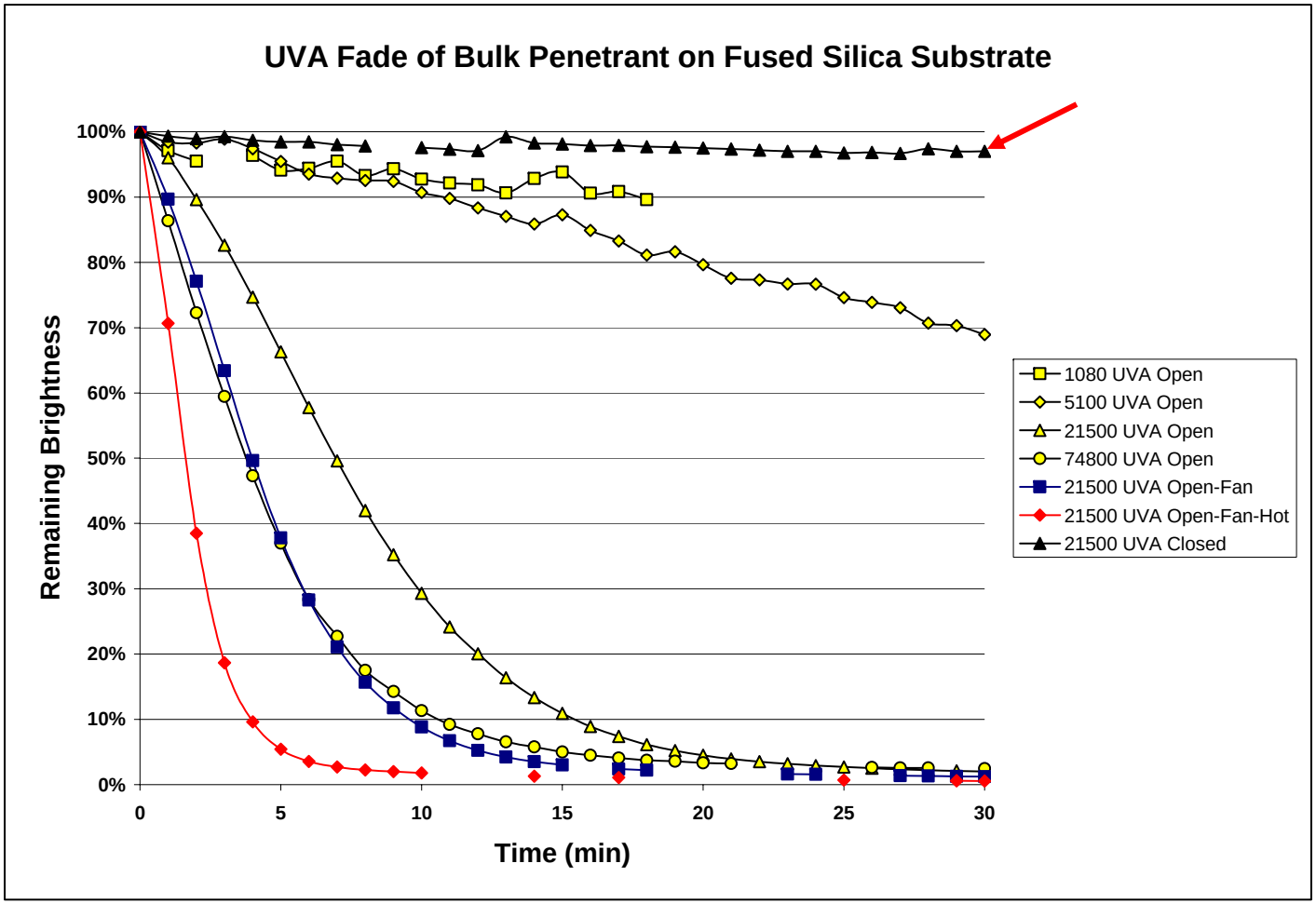
UVA Intensity: 20,000 µW/cm2 – Open + Fan

Bulk Penetrant Fade



UVA Intensity: 20,000 µW/cm2 – Open + Fan + Heat

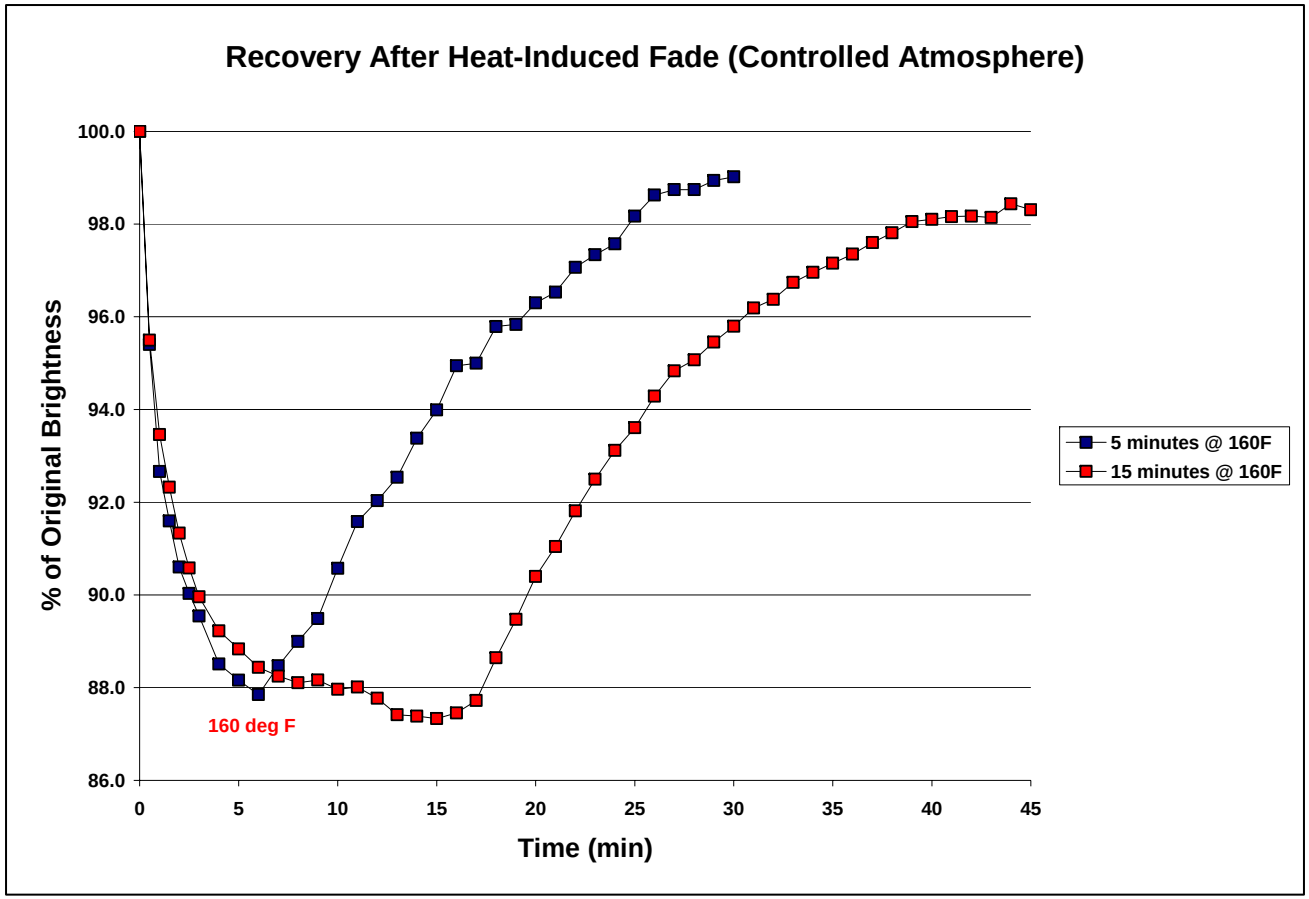
Bulk Penetrant Fade



UVA Intensity: 20,000 µW/cm2 – Closed Configuration

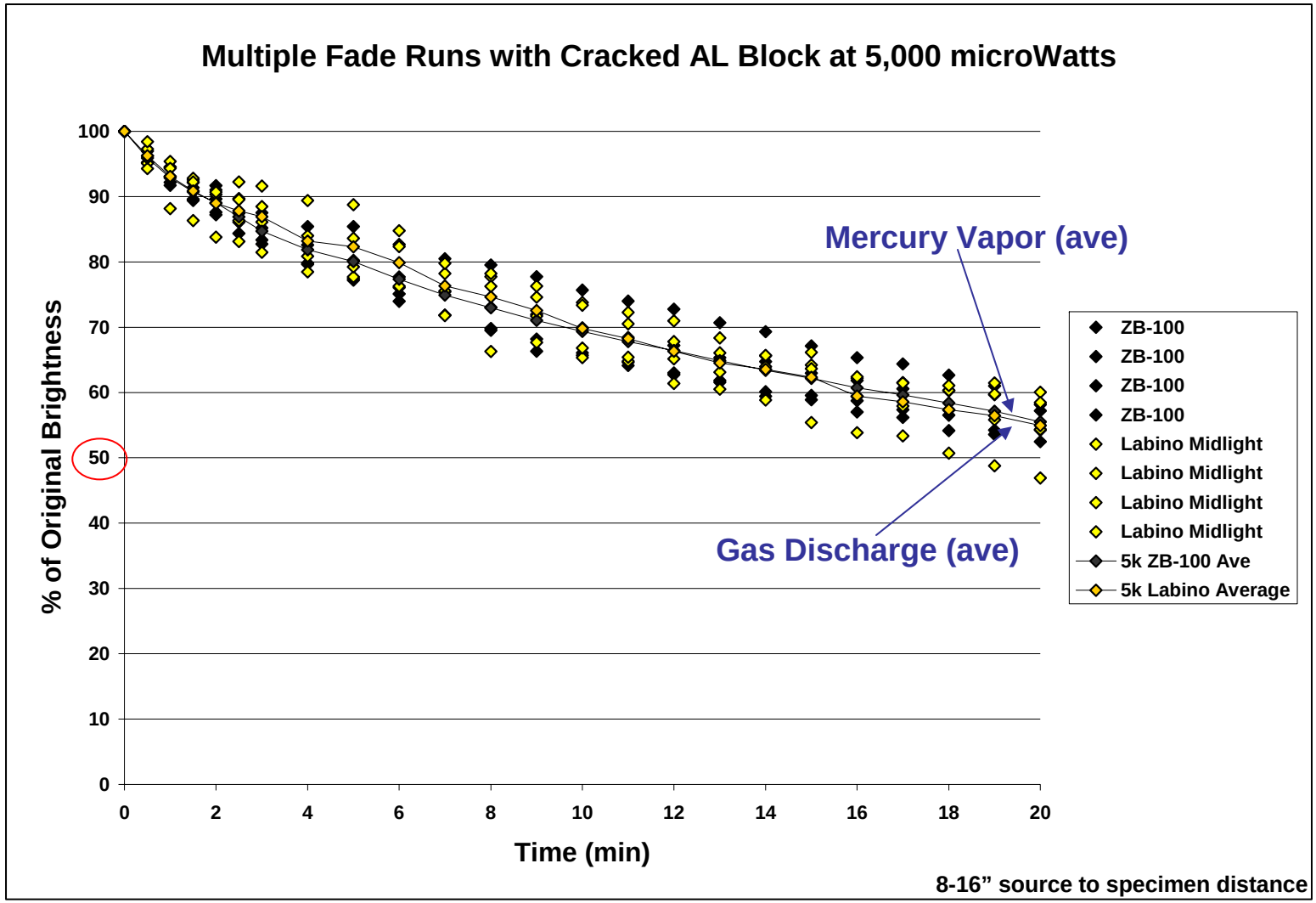
Bulk Penetrant Heat Fade

- ZL-37 penetrant heated to 160°F in a closed configuration and then cooled nearly regained nearly all of original brightness (1,500 µW/cm2)
- Recovery from the 13% brightness loss was similar when held at 160°F for 5 or 15 minutes



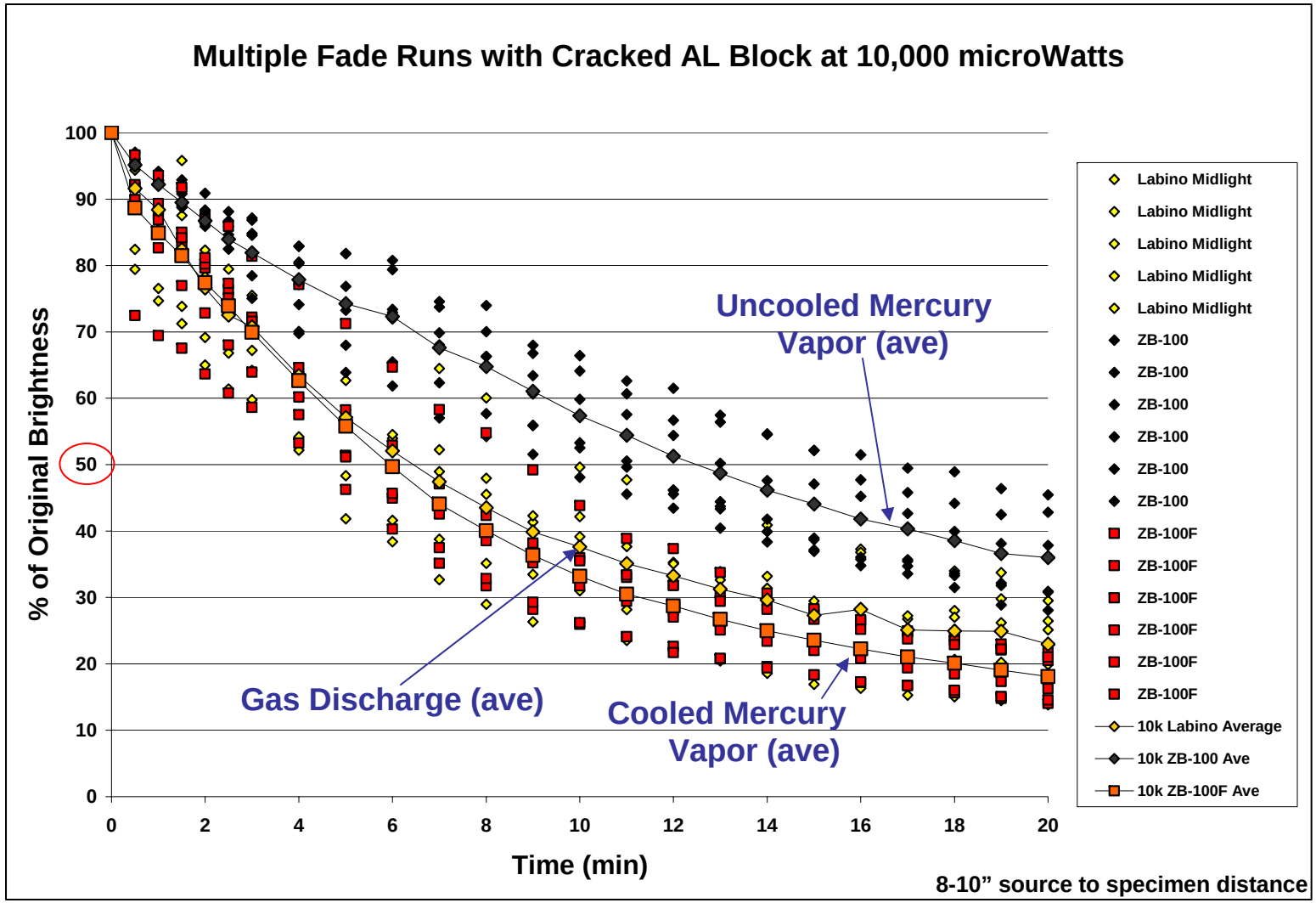
Real Indications: AL Blocks

With a UVA meter reading of 5,000 µW/cm^2 the gas discharge and mercury vapor (fanless) sources reduced indication brightness by 45% in 20 minutes.



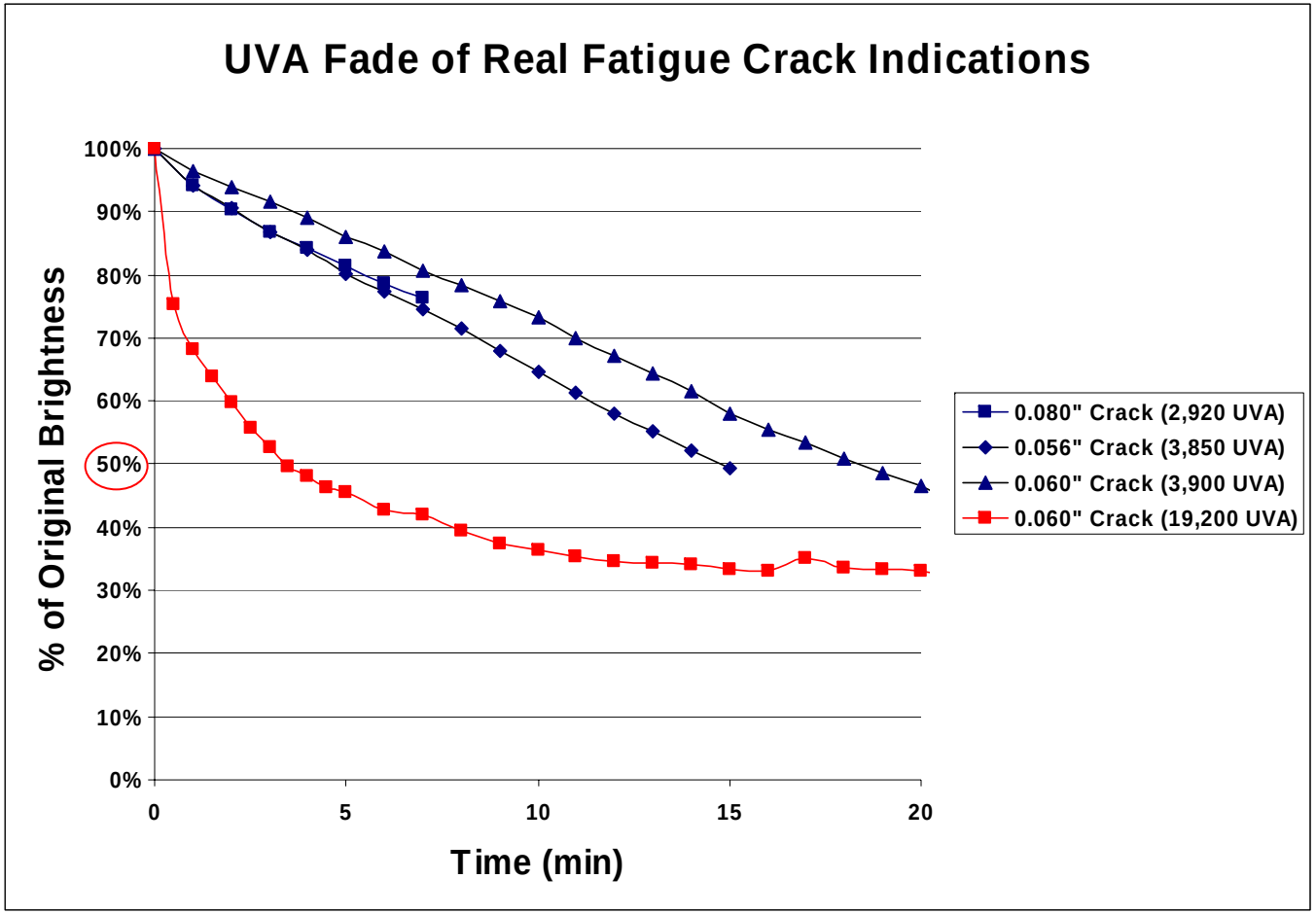
Real Indications: AL Blocks

At 10,000 µW/cm^2 UVA intensity the indications were reduced in brightness by half in 6 to 12 minutes, and the effect of the cooling fan is noticed



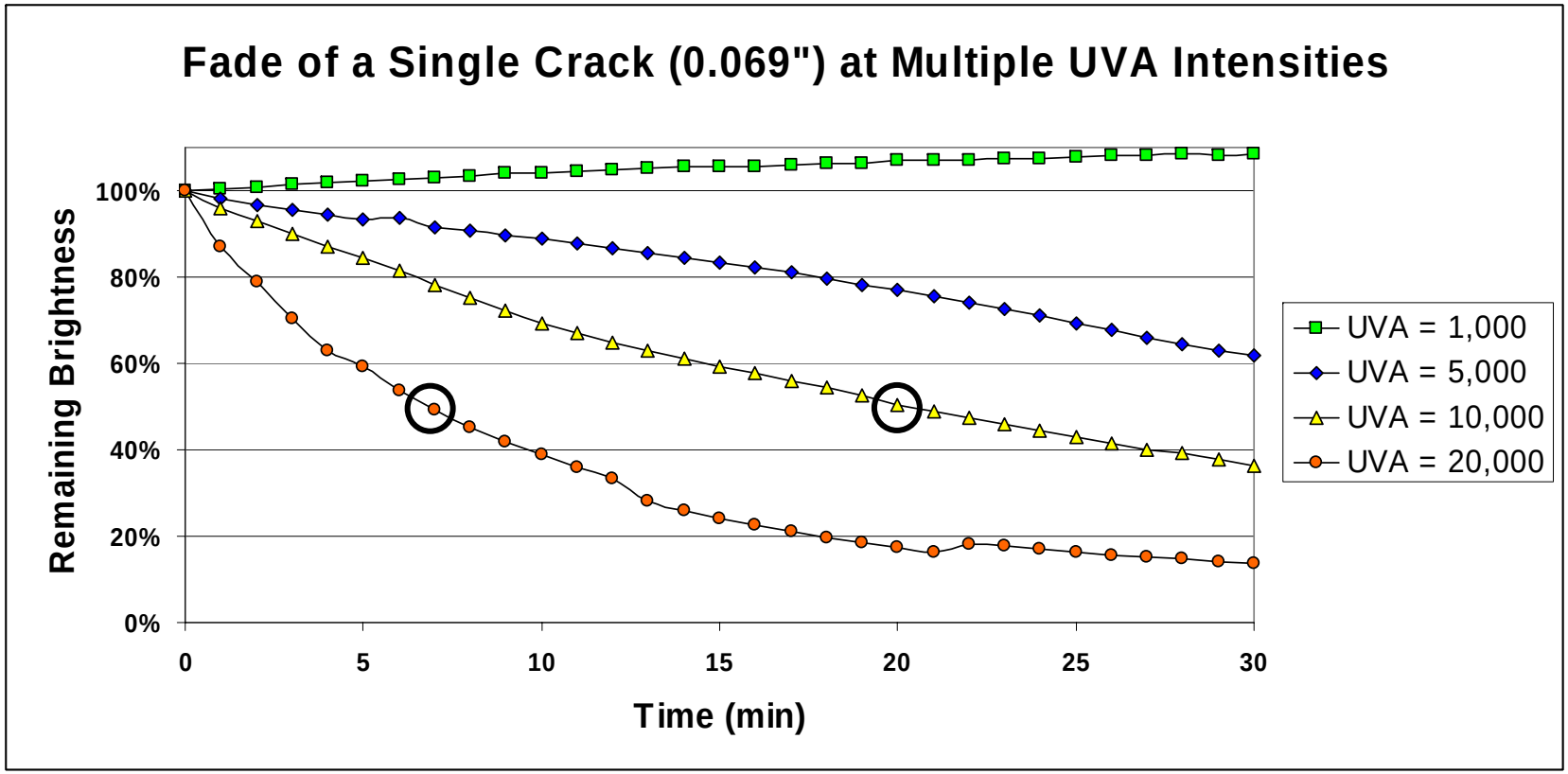
Real Indications: LCF Blocks

- As seen with previous data, higher UVA intensity speeds fade rate
- 50% reduction of a 0.060” indication in 3.5 minutes (19,200 µW/cm^2), and two 0.060” indications in 15 and 19 minutes (3,900 µW/cm^2)



Results on Real Cracks

- The same crack was processed according to AMS 2647, and then exposed to UVA intensities from 1,000 to 20,000 µW/cm^2
- A brightness increase in the 1,000 µW/cm^2 data likely due to bleed-out
- 50% reduction in 7 minutes (20,000 µW/cm^2), and in 20 minutes (10,000 µW/cm^2)

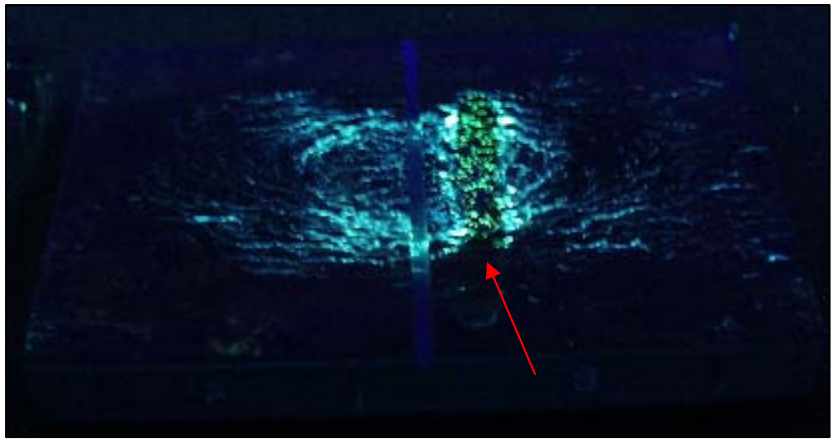


Conclusions

- No penetrant or UVA source evaluated was immune to photobleaching
- Three factors have been shown to affect fade rate: UVA intensity, temperature, and airflow
- S/N ratios of real indications were halved in 3 to 7 minutes (with no heat or airflow) with 20,000 $\mu W/cm^2$ intensity
- Larger, deeper cracks contain more penetrant volume and fade more slowly for a given condition set
- In a controlled environment, brightness reduction due to heating is recoverable

Conclusions

- A maximum UVA intensity of 5,000 µW/cm2 for critical applications may be a prudent limit
- Allow parts to cool prior to UVA inspection, and not blow fans into inspection booth
- Do not allows parts to develop under strong UVA
- Fan cooling of the same UVA source increases the fade rate when intensity, bulb style, and filter remain constant



Thermally-cracked aluminum block crack indications re-bled dimmer, but yellow-green after UVA-induced fade