

# Liquid scintillator tiles for high radiation environments

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## Abstract

Future experiments in high energy and nuclear physics may require large, inexpensive calorimeters that can continue to operate after receiving doses of 50 Mrad or more. We present the results of a study of a scintillator tile based on EJ-309 liquid scintillator using cosmic rays, test beam, and <sup>60</sup>Co irradiations that shows little degradation of light output under irradiation.

*Keywords:* organic scintillator, liquid scintillator, radiation hardness, calorimetry

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## 1. Introduction

Sampling calorimeters using plastic scintillator tiles with wavelength-shifting (WLS) fibers as their active element, such as the CDF plug calorimeter [1] and the CMS Barrel [2] and Endcap [3] hadron calorimeters, are popular due to

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5 their low cost and ease of construction. Plastic scintillator is available com-  
 mercially from companies such as St. Gobain and Eljen Technology. When  
 irradiated, however, the performance of plastic scintillator and WLS fibers de-  
 teriorates; light self-absorption (yellowing) increases and light output decreases.  
 The resulting loss of light output for this kind of tile has been studied using  
 10 irradiations from electron linacs and  $^{60}\text{Co}$  sources [4, 5]. Generally, the light  
 output decreases exponentially with dose, with an decay constant on the order  
 of a few Mrad. Future high energy and nuclear experiments, however, may  
 have to operate in environments that will deliver doses of tens of Mrad. Previ-  
 ous studies of liquid scintillator have shown little decrease of light output with  
 15 dose [6, 7, 8]. In this paper, we present the design and optimization of a liquid  
 scintillator tile that can operate in this kind of environment.

## 2. Tile design

Our tile is based on EJ-309 scintillator, from Eljen Technology, which uses  
 naphthalene as the substrate with wavelength shifting additives. EJ-309 has a  
 20 light output that is 75% of anthracene, a wavelength of maximum emission of  
 424 nm, a refractive index of 1.57, and a flash point of 144° C. The high flash  
 point is important for its suitability for a collider environment.

The design of a tile to hold the liquid needs to consider light collection  
 efficiency, light collection uniformity, and cost. The container should not leak,  
 25 and there should not be interactions between the container and its contents that  
 degrade the light output over time or compromise the integrity of the container.  
 Figure 1 shows the mechanical construction of our prototype. The case is made  
 of aluminum. Two transparent quartz support tubes run through the liquid and  
 can hold either a WLS fiber or liquid wavelength shifter. When a WLS fiber was  
 30 used, the end of the fiber not connected to the photodetector was coated with Al  
 to increase the light output unless otherwise noted. The support tube is sealed  
 to the case with a Viton fluoroelastomer o-ring. The thicknesses of the top and  
 bottom Aluminum plates are 0.5 mm. The total internal volume is 88 mm x

88 mm x 4 mm. The inner surface of the container is a lapped and polished Al-  
35 6061 available from McMaster Carr. The material comes with a plastic coating  
that can be used to maintain its mirror quality during the machining process  
and then is removed before the welding step. The liquid was transferred into  
the container in an inert atmosphere, as contamination with Oxygen decreases  
the light output.

40 Several variations on this design were constructed. For the default design,  
the thickness of the liquid is 4 mm. A version with a 6 mm thickness was also  
made. The default support tubes, from Atlantic International, were quartz with  
an inner diameter of 1.3 mm and were used with Kuraray Y-11 fiber (doping of  
200 ppm), double-clad. The index of refraction was measured at the Quattrone  
45 Nanofabrication Facility at the University of Pennsylvania to be **need jeff's num-  
ber**. As an alternative, two types of Quartz tubes filled with liquid wavelength  
shifter (capillaries) were also used. One set, of ordinary quartz, had an outer di-  
ameter of 2 mm, an inner diameter of 1 mm, and a measured index of refraction  
of **need Jeff's number**. Another used special radiation-resistant quartz and had  
50 an outer diameter of 1 mm and an inner diameter of 0.4 mm, with a measured  
index of **need jeff's number**. The liquid wavelength shifter was a prototype  
material from Eljen, and is not yet a commercial item. The liquid wavelength  
shifter has an emission maximum from between 481 and 492 nm and a decay  
time between 2 and 8 ns. The solvent was the same as that used for EJ-309.  
55 Sapphire tubes were also tested with both liquid and plastic wavelength shifter.

In what follows, the results shown are for the mirrored tile with 4 mm thick-  
ness, ordinary quartz support tubes, and a 0.9 mm diameter Y-11 WLS fiber,  
unless otherwise stated.

### 3. Light yield and uniformity as measured in test beam

60 The light yield and uniformity of the tiles was measured in the H2 test  
beam facility at CERN using 120 GeV muons. The trigger required coincidence  
of two out of four plastic scintillator hodoscopes. The effective beam cross

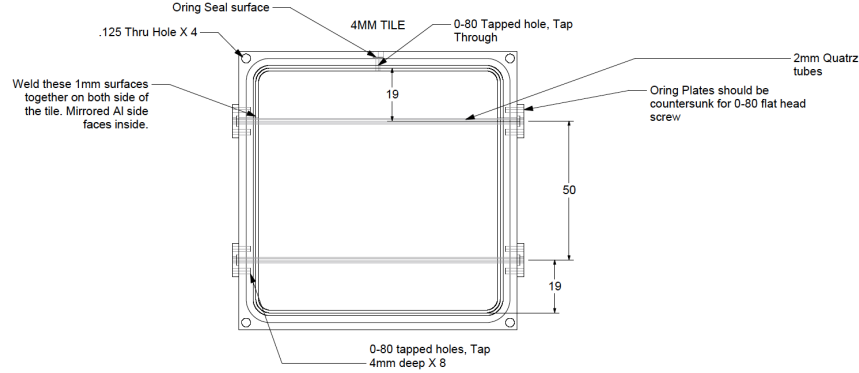


Figure 1: Mechanical design of a liquid scintillator tile. Units are [mm].

sectional area, after trigger requirements, was  $14 \times 14 \text{ cm}^2$ . The positions of the muons were measured with five wire chambers. The position obtained from the counter closest to the prototype was used. We also required the signal in each wire chamber be consistent with that of a single muon, and that the difference in positions in sequential chambers be consistent within uncertainties. As many groups were using the same test beam, there was material upstream of our counters. For some runs, several iron blocks were used to support experiments upstream of our counters. Because the muons were high energy, the probability of a muon-induced shower was non-negligible. (This was verified later at a test beam at FNAL that had a cleaner beam line and through simulation.) We present here the results from the runs and tiles with the smallest upstream material.

The WLS fiber was connected to a clear fiber using a connector designed

at FNAL. The clear fiber was lead away from the beam line. The light output was measured using a Hamamatsu R7600U-200-M4 photomultiplier tube and a custom ASIC that integrates and digitizes the resulting charge, called the “QIE” [9]. The photomultiplier has a peak quantum efficiency of 40% at a wavelength of 400 nm and produces a clear single photoelectron (pe) peak. The integrated charge is digitized every 25 ns. Ten digitizations were recorded per muon trigger. The sum of the signal in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> sample was used.

The average number of pe’s produced per minimum ionizing particle (mip) was estimated by doing a Gaussian fit to the peak centered on the pedestal. The mean number of pe’s was calculated using the fraction of events in this peak, assuming a Poisson distribution. The nominal tile produced 1.7 pe’s per mip. Tiles for the CMS hadron calorimeter typically produce 3 pe’s per mip [2]. The results have a systematic uncertainty related to the handling of the events with showering muons. We evaluate this uncertainty by looking at the results after truncating the distribution at around 25 pe’s (2500 adc counts). The results were stable to within 5%. In addition, runs taken with varying amounts of material in front of our detector, from several radiation lengths to a **what was the upstream material for the best**, resulted in a 15% variation in light yield. We therefore take a 16% uncertainty due to upstream material.

The uniformity of the light collection was also studied at the CERN test beam. Figure 2 shows the fraction of events with at least 1 pe versus the impact position of the mip along the axis parallel to the support tubes (left) and perpendicular to the support tubes (right). As expected, there is little dependence on the coordinate parallel to the support tubes. The light yield does depend on the perpendicular distance. The light collection efficiency is maximum for muons near the WLS fiber and is approximately 30% lower for muons in the center or edges of the tile. For most hadron calorimetry applications, we verified through simulation that this degree of non-uniformity would not adversely affect jet resolutions.

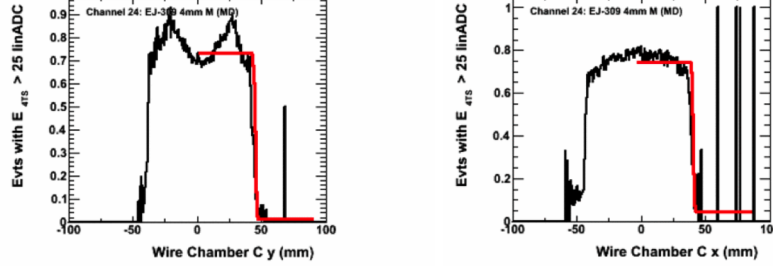


Figure 2: For the nominal liquid tile, fraction of mips with at least one pe as a function of the impact position of the mip along the axis parallel to the support tubes (left) and perpendicular to the support tubes (right). Geng Yuan will remake to publication quality

#### 105 4. Light yield dependence on tile parameters

The dependence of the light yield on variations in the design parameters was studied using cosmic ray data taken at the University of Maryland. Scintillator-based counters above and below the tile were used for triggers. The tile light output was measured using a Hamamatsu R7600U-200-M4 photomultiplier tube.   
 110 Fibers were connected to the tube using optical glue. Data was collected with a Tektronix MSO 5204 oscilloscope. No attempt was made to select minimum ionizing muons. The muons thus are low energy and will produce more light than those studied at the CERN test beam.

We found an average of  $2.88 \pm 0.05$  pe for the nominal tile. A similar tile   
 115 but without the mirroring yielded  $1.98 \pm 0.03$  pe, a reduction of a factor of 1.45. A tile with a 6 mm thickness of liquid, non-mirrored, yielded  $2.61 \pm 0.05$  pe, an increase over the 4 mm non-mirrored tile of a factor of 1.32. Figure 3 shows the collected charge (arbitrary units) for the three different configurations.

The light yield was also studied using a capillary, filled with liquid WLS,   
 120 instead of a quartz tube containing plastic WLS, since plastic WLS is susceptible to radiation damage. The capture efficiency of the WLS for the two different configurations depends crucially on the index of the surrounding media. For the WLS fiber, there is an air gap with an index of 1. For the capillary, the liquid WLS is instead bordered by quartz, with an index of jeff's number. The

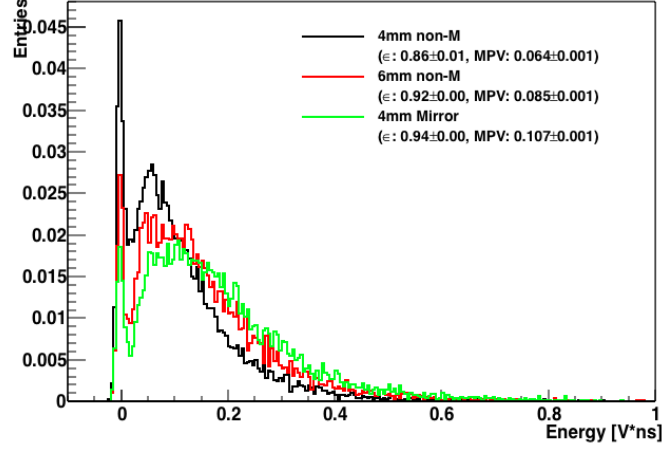


Figure 3: Comparison between the light output (arbitrary units) of liquid scintillator tiles with different thickness and different treatment of the aluminum surface in contact with the liquid scintillator. The light is readout with the same 0.9 mm-thick Y11 plastic WLS fiber. The three distributions are normalized to have the same number of events in the pedestal. Geng Yuan will remake to publication quality. I hate the normalization of these plots. can we normalize to number of muons? also, what is mpv? needs to be clear

125 plastic and liquid WLS have very similar indices of refraction (1.57). In both cases, the shifted light propagates in the WLS, but the capture efficiency is higher for the lower index air. Figure 4 shows the charge collected (in arbitrary units) from cosmic muons for the two different configurations. The fraction of events in the pedestal, which is the Gaussian-shaped peak at low charge, can be  
 130 used to calculate the fraction of muons producing at least one pe (light collection efficiency) and the mean number of pe's per muon. The light collection efficiency is 92% for the plastic WLS and 45% for the liquid. The light yield for the liquid is half that of the plastic. The light collection efficiency with the liquid could be improved if lower index quartz could be found.

135 Finally, we tested the performance of the same tile, 4 mm-thick, with a mirrored aluminum surface, as a function of the thickness of the readout plastic WLS fiber. We tested three plastic fibers, with a thickness of 0.5 mm, 0.9 mm,

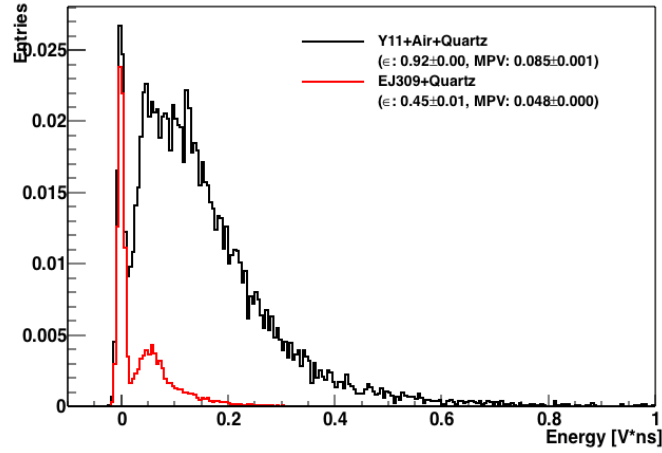


Figure 4: Comparison between the light output of a liquid scintillator tile equipped with a plastic WLS fiber, and a capillary filled with liquid WLS. The two distributions are normalized to have the same number of events in the pedestal. Geng Yuan will remake to publication quality, and will make a more sensible normalization since i hate this normalization to the pedestal. why not normalize to the same number of muons?

and 1 mm. We measured that the higher the fiber thickness, the higher the efficiency and light output, as shown in Figure 5. This would be much more useful as a plot of pes versus fiber thickness. If we can not get this, I say remove it.

## 5. Radiation hardness tests

Several different tests were made using irradiations with a  $^{60}\text{Co}$  source at the University of Maryland. Performance of the tile under irradiation in a proton-  
proton collision environment will be the subject of a future paper.

A dark-glass vial containing 125 ml of liquid scintillator was irradiated with  $\gamma$ -rays to a dose of 50 Mrad, at a dose rate of 1 Mrad/hr. Figure 6 compares the integrated charge (arbitrary units) from the same tile when filled with unirradiated liquid and irradiated liquid. The efficiency and light output from the two



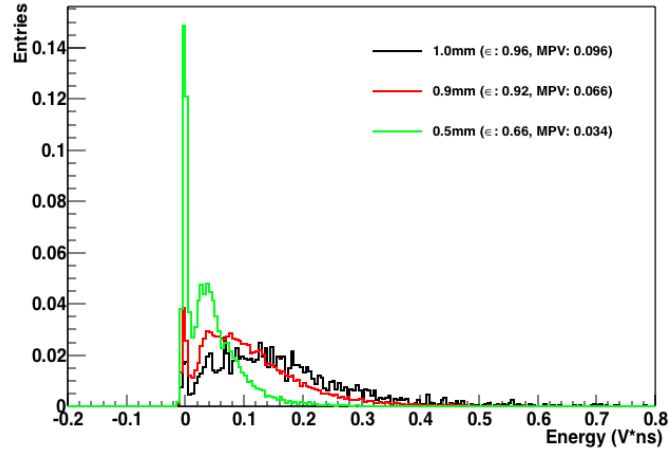


Figure 5: Comparison between the light output of liquid scintillator tiles readout with plastic WLS fibers with different thickness. The three distributions are normalized to have the same number of events. Geng Yuan will remake to publication quality

150 measurements are consistent within the uncertainty, indicating that EJ-309 is radiation-tolerant to  $\gamma$ -ray irradiations.

I want to try irradiating an entire tile with the rad hard 1mm tubes from Randy and put the results here as well.

## 155 6. Comparison with simulation, and optimization

We use the GEANT4 [10] package to simulate the optics of our tile. GEANT4's optical package includes simulations of refraction, reflection, wave length shifting, and light attenuation. A variety of options for the reflection are available. We used the "Specular Spike" option for the Al and an absorption length of 2 m for the EJ-309. When simulating the WLS fiber, an air gap was included  
160 between the fiber cladding and the support tube, while no such gap exists for the simulation of the capillary. An index of refraction of 1.57 is used for the EJ-309. The index for sapphire used was 1.77. For quartz, values between 1.46

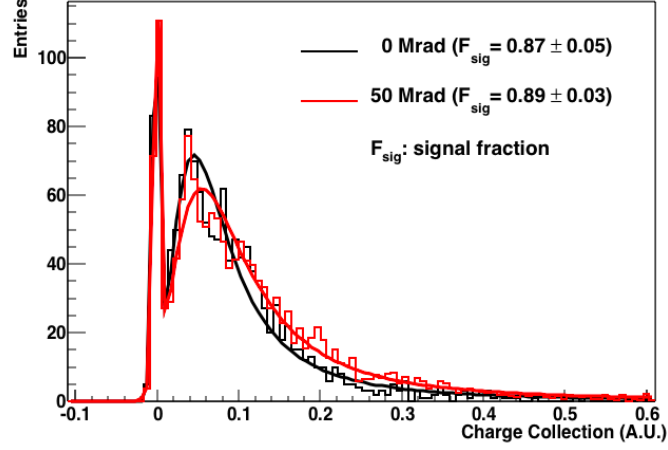


Figure 6: Comparison between the light output of a liquid scintillator tile filled with unirradiated (black) and irradiated (red) liquid scintillator. The two distributions are normalized to have the same number of events in the pedestal. Geng Yuan will remake to publication quality

and 1.55 were used. Photons are generated at random positions inside the liquid  
 165 volume, with a wavelength corresponding to the emission maximum of EJ-309.

As shown in Figure 7 left, we find the simulation reproduces the light collection non-uniformity when a reflectivity of 0.9 is used for the mirrored Al.

We find that the light collection efficiency is a strong function of the reflectivity of the Al (Figure 7 right).

170 We find the best light collection comes when the support tube has the lowest possible index of refraction for liquid WLS. The opposite is true for a fiber with an air gap (and plastic WLS). For a 1 mm diameter for the WLS, the light collection efficiency increase by a factor of Zishuo please add this number going from an index of 1.55 to 1.46 for liquids. Presumably this difference would  
 175 decrease as the reflectivity of the Al increases. For a fiber with an air gap, the efficiency decreases by a factor of Zishuo please add this number going from an index of 1.77 to 1.46.

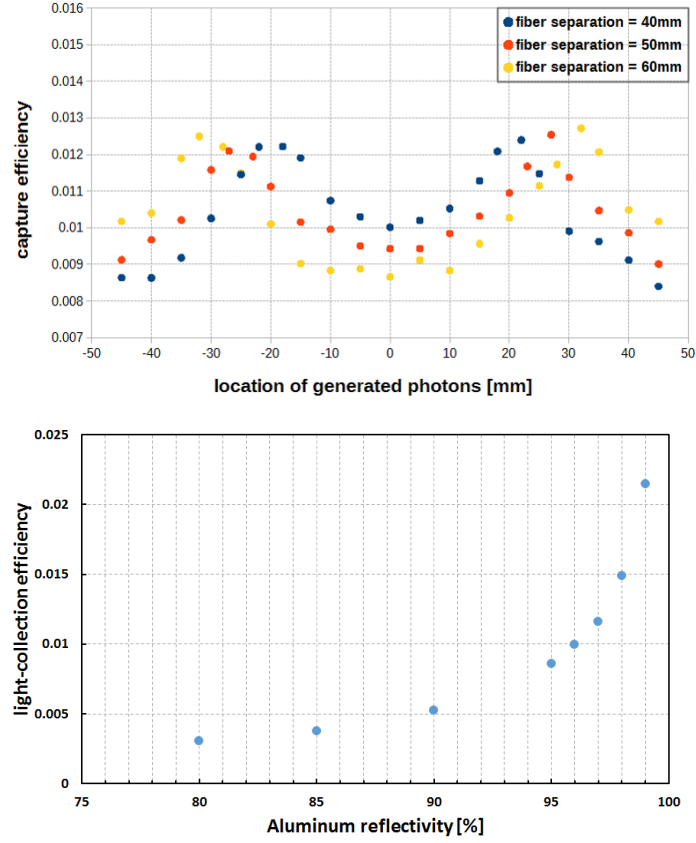


Figure 7: (left) Ratio of light yield to maximum light yield from simulated tile as a function of the distance perpendicular to the support tubes. **figure is place holder until Zishuo gives right one** (right) Light collection efficiency vs Aluminum reflectivity **Zishuo can you make this a ratio plot? pick some point and divide the rest by it?**

## 7. Conclusions

We presented results for a liquid scintillating tile using WLS fiber readout. For our nominal design,  $1.7 \pm 0.2$  pe's were produced for minimum ionizing particles.

## 8. Acknowledgments

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