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**Early-Age Fiber-Reinforced Concrete  
Properties for Overlays (MPC 18-353)**

**Amanda Bordelon, Ph.D., P.E.**

**Our partners:**



## Authors and Acknowledgement

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## FRC as used in Overlay Design

- Fiber-reinforced concrete used in concrete pavements since 1990s
  - known to improve performance over unreinforced plain concrete
  - delays crack initiation and slows crack propagation
- In design of FRC for overlays, we use flexural residual strength ( $f_{150}$  or  $R_{150}$ )
 
$$SR_{total} = \frac{\sigma_{total}}{MOR_{eff}} \text{ or } = f_{150} \quad MOR_{eff} = MOR(1 + R_{150})$$
- Fresh material parameters used for consistency between mixtures properties: slump, unit weight, air content
- Design software also uses material properties (these are not expected to change with age); these measured as well for this study
  - Compressive or flexural strength
  - Shrinkage
  - Coefficient of thermal expansion

### Pavement Design Methodology that uses FRC:

- Illinois DOT Chapter 53 BCOA
- ACPA BCOA thickness designer or *StreetPave*
- University Pittsburg BCOA-ME
- OptiPave 2.0
- CPTech Center *Residual Strength Estimator*

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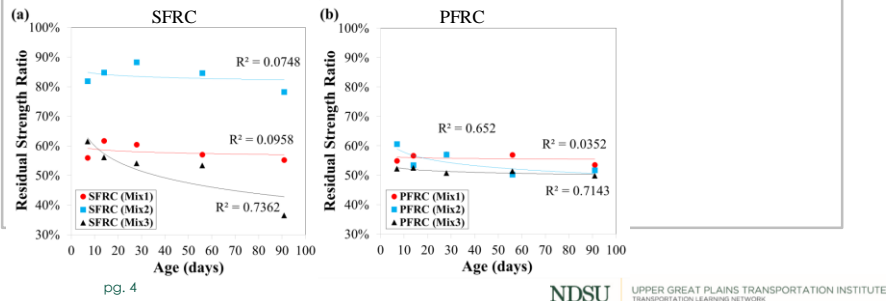
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## Research Motivation and Hypothesis

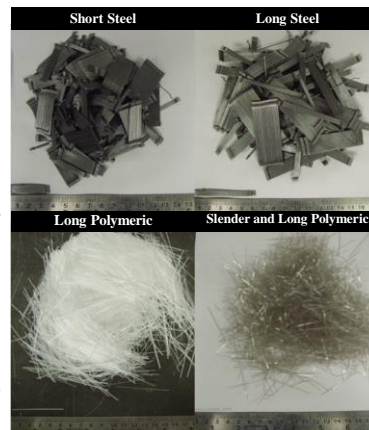
- The test to determine residual strength ratio  $R_{150}$  (ASTM C1609) does not specify the age of concrete during testing, presumed to be 28 days, but some labs do as early as 7 days for faster results
- Hypothesized (based on past experimental and field findings) that the  $R_{150}$  significantly changes with age of concrete
  - At early ages concrete loosely bonded with fiber, fiber debonds more than pulls out, not effectively using fiber to its maximum benefit (designed to stretch)
  - By later ages, concrete bond stronger so fiber stretches as designed

Past study by Bernard 2015 found  $R_{150}$  to decrease with age



## Test Variables

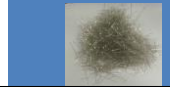
- Different ages (3, 7, 14, 28, 56, and 90 days)
- Four different types of fiber (2 steel, and 2 polymeric)
  - Synthetic is more common for pavements, steel has been tried in bridge decks
- Two different fiber volume contents (0.5% and 1.0%)
  - Note: typical pavement mixtures use 0.2% – 0.5%  $V_f$
- Statistics calculated
  - 3 Replicates for Plain Concrete
  - 1 Replicate for FRC at 0.5%  $V_f$
  - 2 Replicates for FRC at 1.0%  $V_f$
  - Low p-value (<0.05) then FRC property statistically different than plain concrete



## Properties of Fibers

Fiber Type	Short Steel SS	Long Steel LS	Long Polymeric LP	Slender and Long Polymeric SP
Material	Hooked steel	Hooked steel	Polypropylene	Polypropylene-polyethylene
Cross section	Circular	Circular	Rectangular (bi-tapered)	Rectangular (straight)
Length	35 mm (1.4 in.)	60 mm (2.4 in.)	50 mm (2.0 in.)	40 mm (1.6 in.)
Diameter or Thickness & Width	0.55 mm (0.022 in.)	0.9 mm (0.035 in.)	0.4 mm (0.016 in.) x 1.2 mm (0.047 in)	0.11 mm (0.004 in.) x 1.4 mm (0.055 in.)
Aspect ratio	65	65	75	90
Tensile strength	1345 MPa (195 ksi)	1160 MPa (168 ksi)	550 MPa (79.8 ksi)	620 MPa (89.9 ksi)
Elastic modulus	210 GPa (30.5 Msi)	210 GPa (30.5 Msi)	7.0 GPa (1.01 Msi)	9.5 GPa (1.38 Msi)

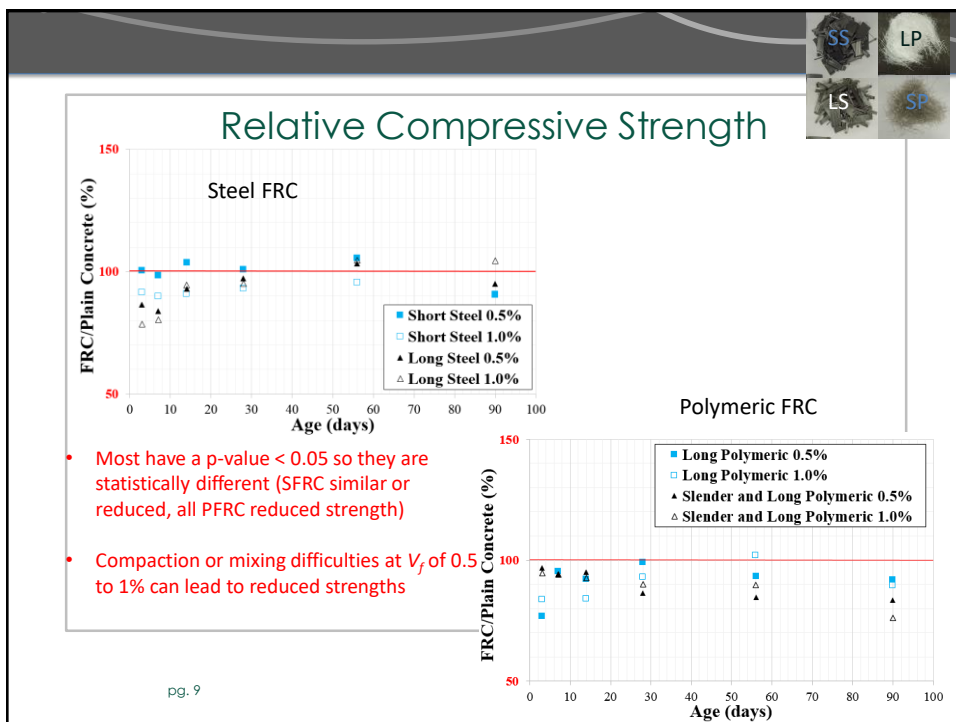
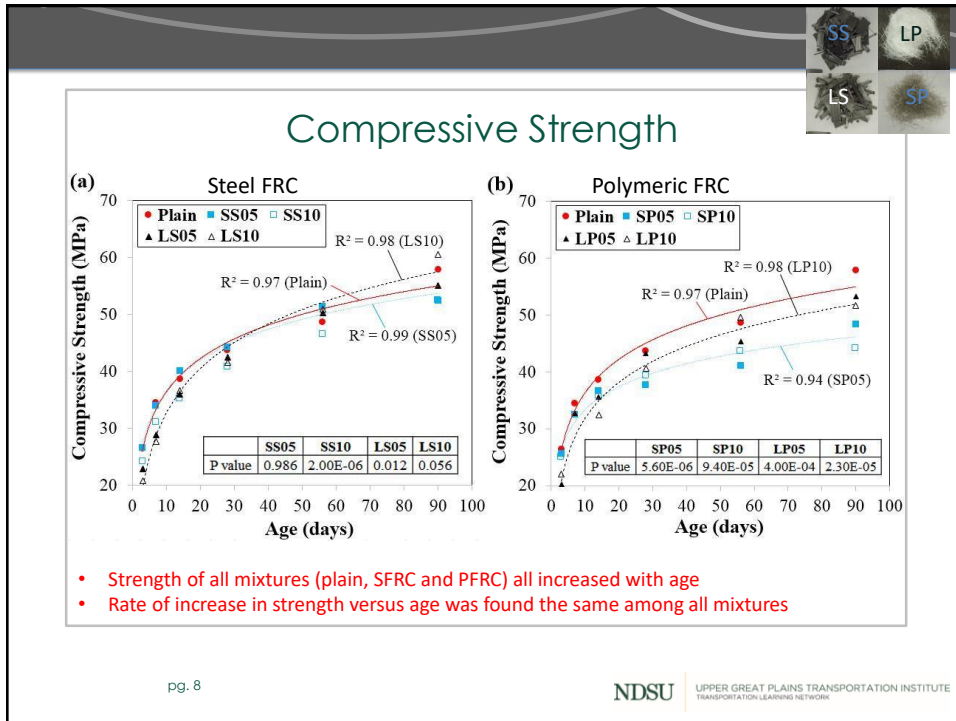
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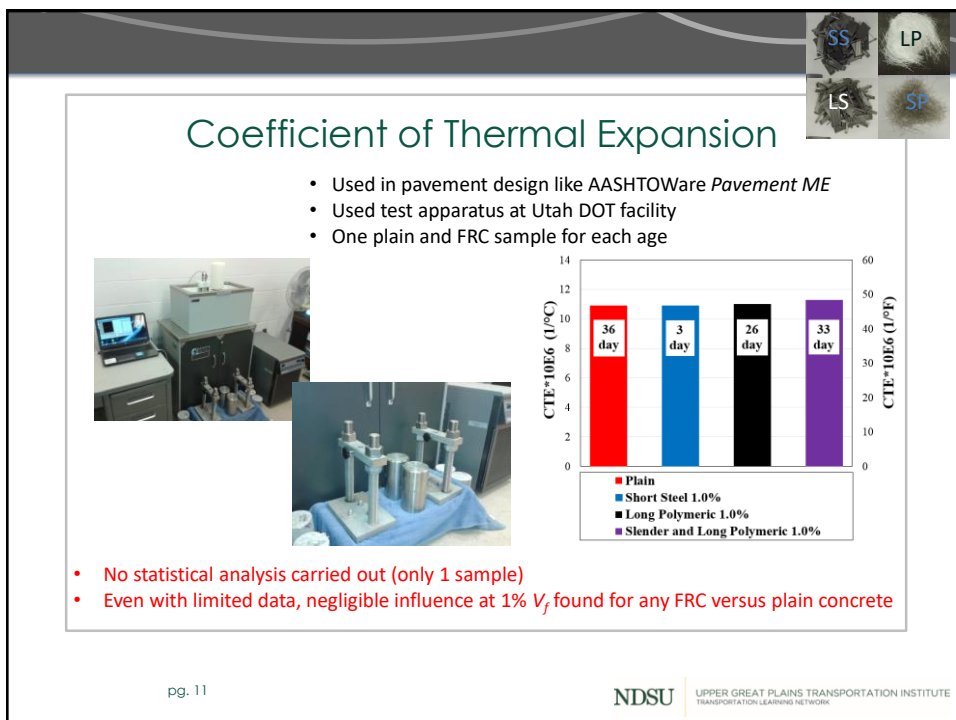
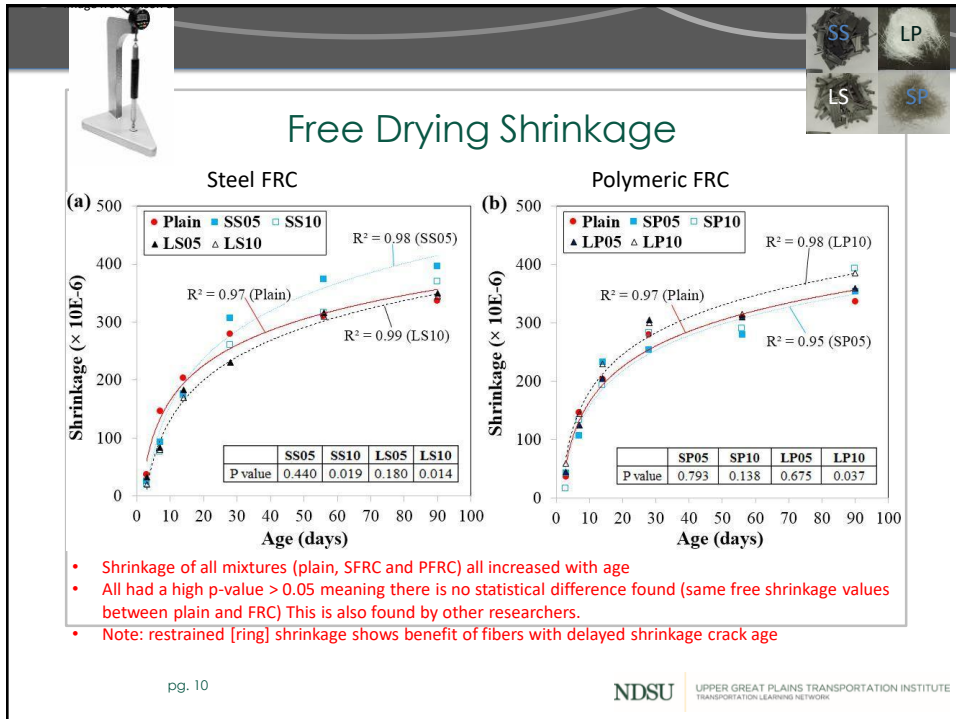


## Plain Concrete and FRC Mixture Proportions

Material		Plain P	Short Steel SS	Long Steel LS	Long Polymeric LP	Slender and Long Polymeric SP
Water				167 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (281 pcy)		
Cement				292 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (492 pcy)		
Fly Ash				125 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (211 pcy)		
Coarse Aggregate				1052 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (1773 pcy)		
Fine Aggregate				857 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (1445 pcy)		
High Range Water Reducer				1028 mL/m <sup>3</sup> (26.4 fl.oz./yd <sup>3</sup> )		
Air Entraining Admixture				107 mL/m <sup>3</sup> (2.7 fl.oz./yd <sup>3</sup> )		
Fiber	(for 0.5% volume fraction)	0	40 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (67 pcy)	40 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (67 pcy)	4.5 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (7.6 pcy)	4.5 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (7.6 pcy)
	(for 1.0% volume fraction)	0	79 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (133 pcy)	79 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (133 pcy)	9.0 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (15 pcy)	9.0 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (15 pcy)

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## FRC Flexural Test

- Values from the ASTM C1609 are primarily test parameters for FRC design in pavements
- Uses the same 6x6x21" beam as ASTM C78 flexural strength but measures post-cracking performance

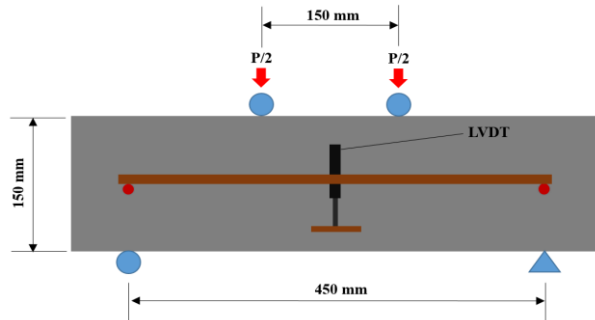


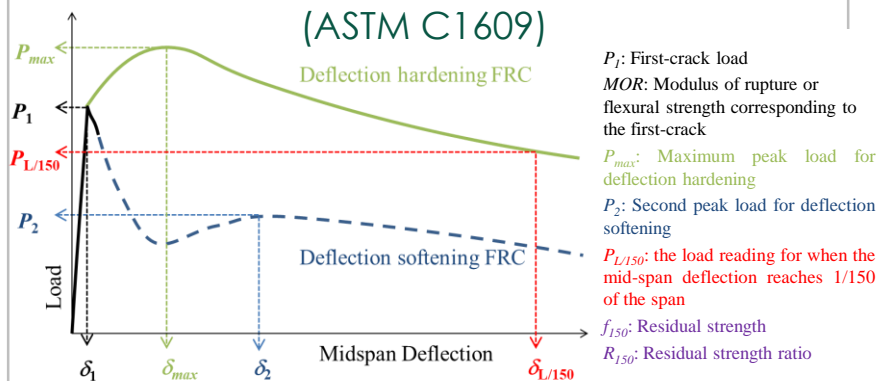
Image from Roesler et al. 2019

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## Parameters from FRC Flexural Test (ASTM C1609)



Typical Load-Deflection Curves of FRC

$$MOR = \frac{P_1 L}{bh^2}$$

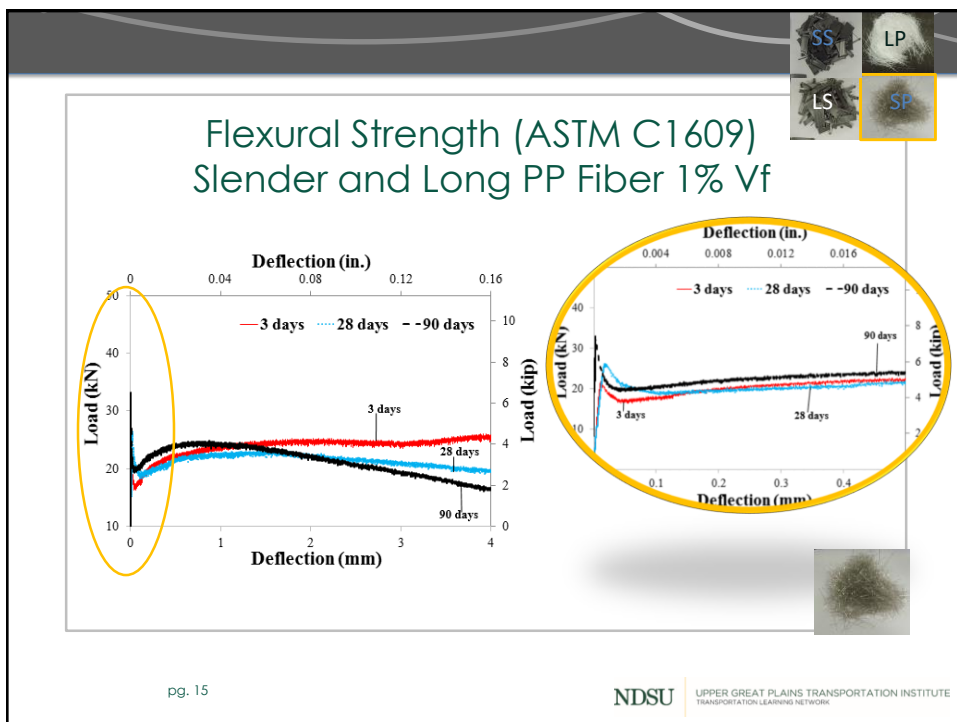
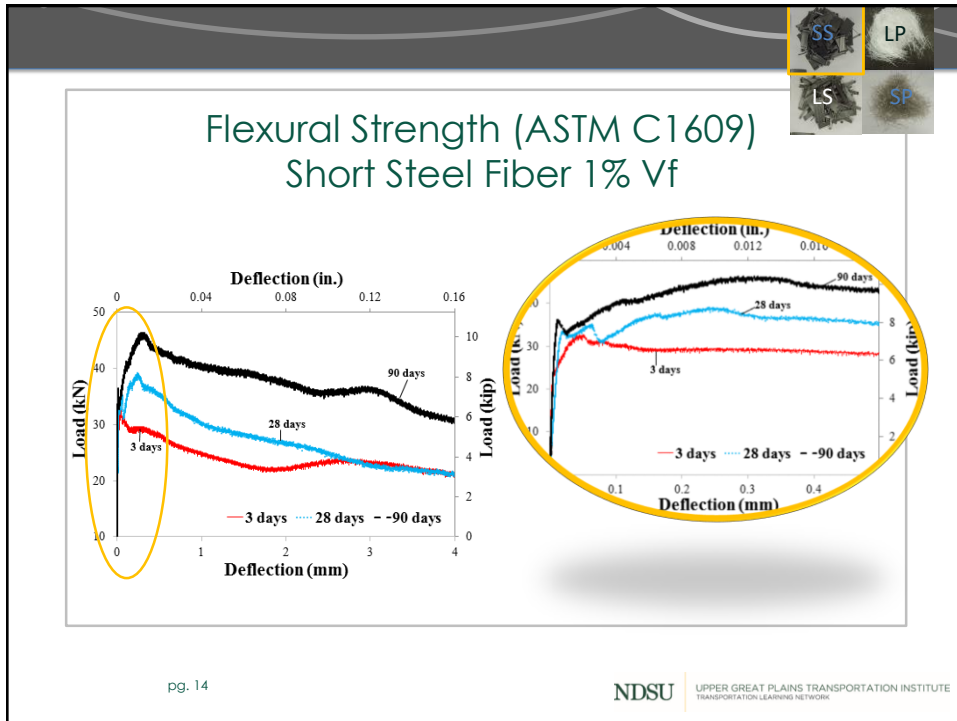
$$f_{L/150} = \frac{P_{L/150} \cdot L}{bh^2}$$

$$R_{150} = \frac{f_{150}}{MOR} \times 100$$

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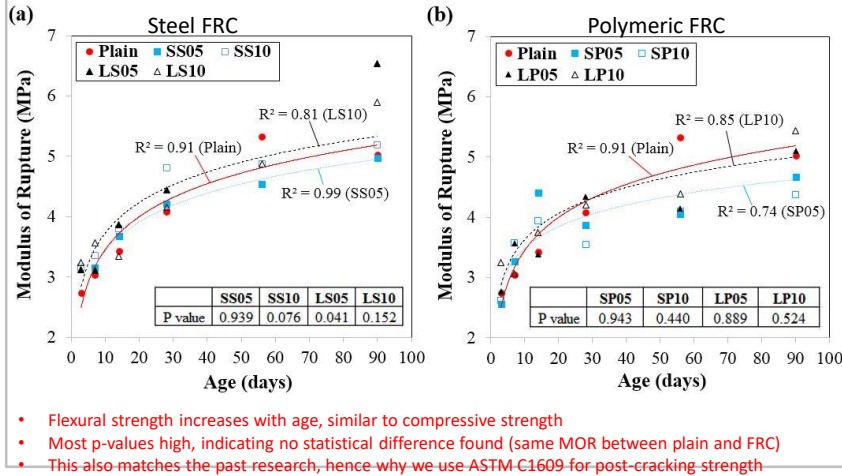
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$$MOR = \frac{P_1 L}{bh^2}$$

## "Flexural Strength" or MOR



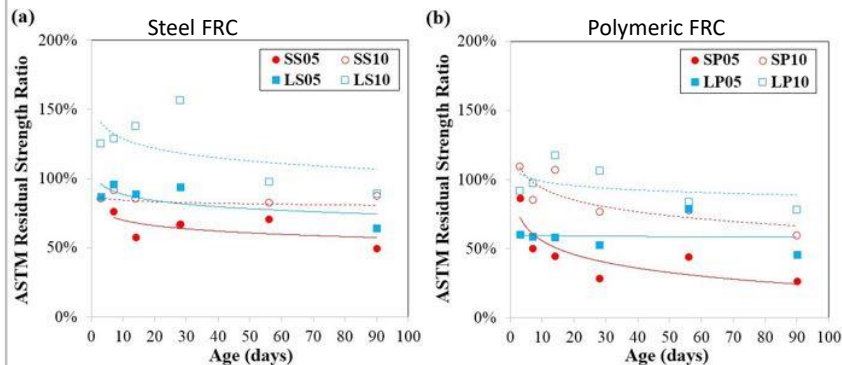
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$$R_{150} = \frac{f_{150}}{MOR} \times 100$$

## Residual Strength Ratio ( $R_{150}$ )



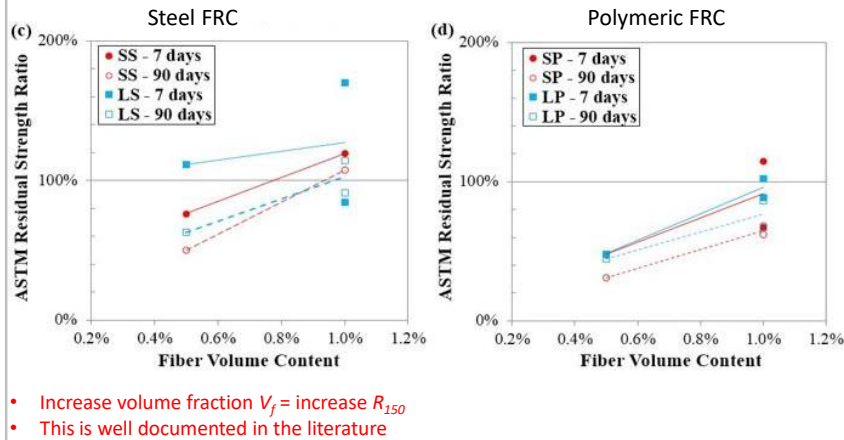
- Residual strength ratio used in ACPA BCOA and Streetpave, Illinois DOT, and U Pittsburg BCOA-ME for FRC overlays
- Since strength increases, the  $R_{150}$  expected and verified to decrease with age!
- 9% reduction from 7 to 28 days, 28% reduction from 7 to 90 days
- Plain concrete does not carry load after cracking ( $f_{150}=0$  and  $R_{150}=0$ )

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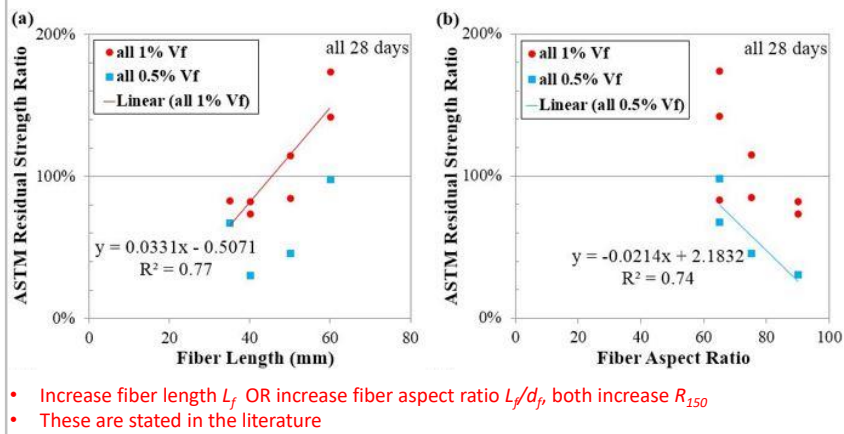
## Trends in Residual Strength Ratio ( $R_{150}$ )



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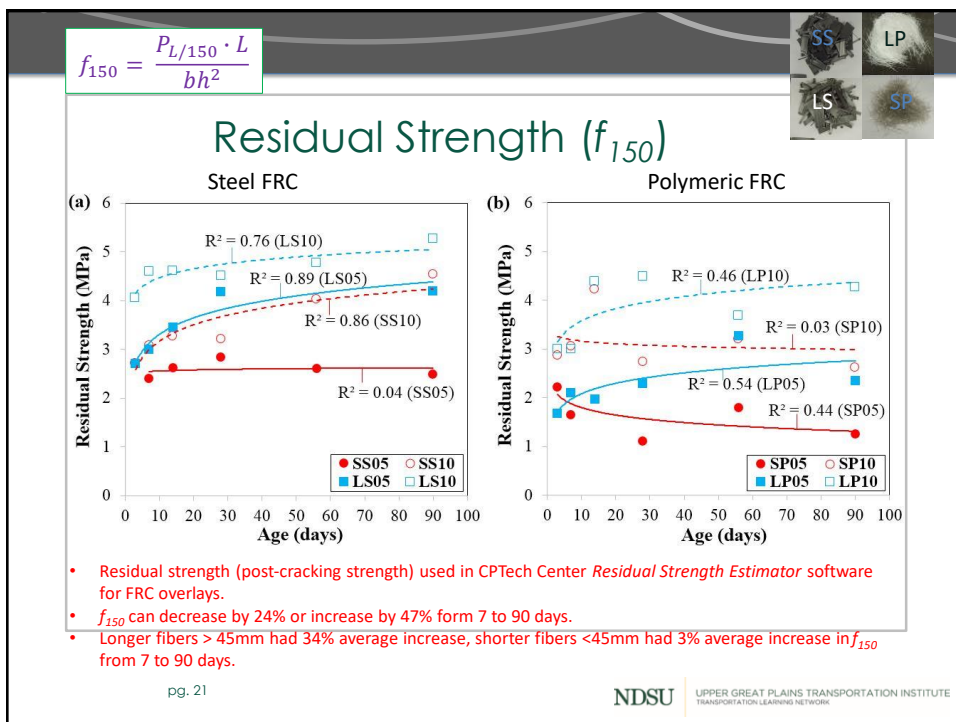
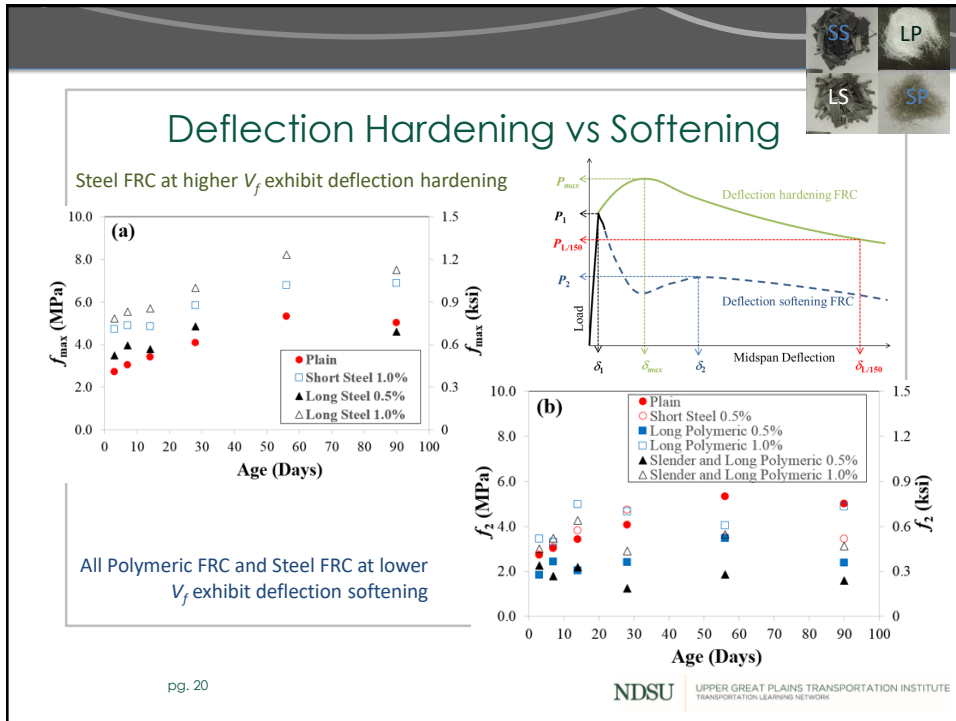
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## Trends in Residual Strength Ratio ( $R_{150}$ )



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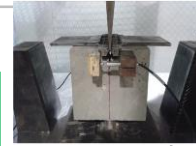
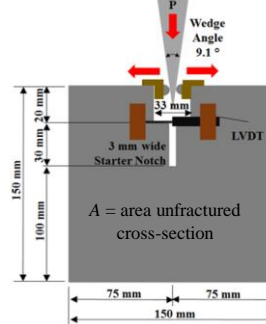
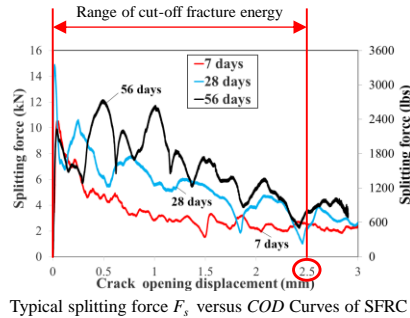
## Wedge Split Fracture Testing

$$G_{FRC, 2.5mm} = \frac{area(F_s \cdot COD)|_0^{2.5}}{A}$$

$G_{FRC, 2.5mm}$  from a field project (Bordelon 2011)

7 days: 588.3 N/m (4% COV)

28 days: 482.6 N/m (14% COV)



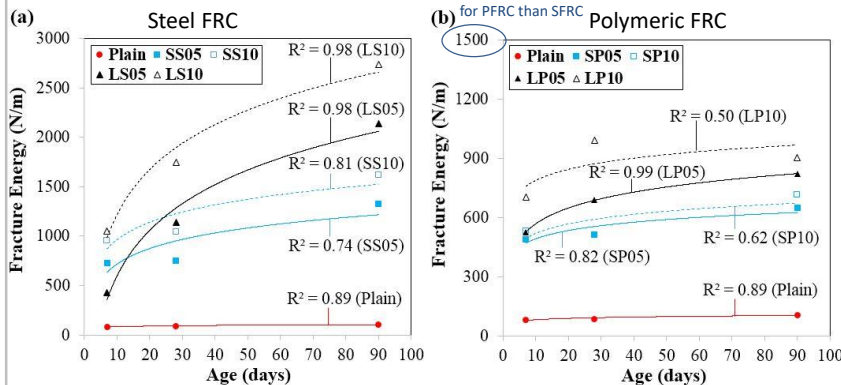
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## Cut-off Fracture Energy ( $G_{FRC, 2.5mm}$ )

Lower fracture energy  
for PFRC than SFRC



- Fracture energy increases with age for plain (31% increase), SFRC (179% increase), and PFRC (38% increase from 7 to 90 days).
- The magnitude of increase in fracture energy for FRC/plain also increases with age (fibers are 8 times tougher at 7 days or 13 times tougher by 90 days).

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## Summary and Recommendations

- Known trends related to FRC properties were verified:
  - Slump and compressive strength can decrease with increasing fiber content or volume fraction
  - Free Shrinkage, Flexural Strength (MOR) and Coefficient of Thermal Expansion (CTE) do not change with addition of FRC (at least up to 1% by volume)
  - Polymeric fibers (such as typically used in pavements today) only produce deflection softening responses. Steel fibers at higher  $V_f$  would be needed if one wanted the pavement to exhibit deflection hardening (higher strength than MOR)
- Fiber-reinforced concrete exhibits a reduced  $R_{150}$  value with age
  - From 7 to 90 days, MOR increased by 60%, the residual strength  $f_{150}$  depended on the fiber type and dosage but overall increased on average by 15%, and the residual strength ratio  $R_{150}$  decreased by 28%.
  - As a minimum, one should report the age of the measured flexural testing
  - An additional recommendation is to specifying an age for which the FRC is tested, in order to improve correlation and prediction with future designs

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### Paper:

"Early-Age Fiber-Reinforced Concrete Properties for Overlays"  
Mountain Plains Consortium MPC 18-353

<https://www.mountain-plains.org/research/details.php?id=385>

or

<https://www.ugpti.org/resources/reports/downloads/mpc18-353.pdf>

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## Additional Publications/Presentations from This Study

- “Age-Dependent Properties of Fiber Reinforced Concrete Used in Thin Overlays”  
*Construction and Building Materials*, Vol. 137, 2017, pp. 288-299.  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0950061817301381>
- POSTERS “Age-Dependent Properties of Fiber Reinforced Concrete Used in Thin Overlays”
  - 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Concrete Pavement in San Antonio, Texas, August 2016
  - 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board (Poster #16-6248) in Washington DC, January 2016

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