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Multiphysics simulations of thermal shock testing of nanofibrous high power targets

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Increase of primary beam power for neutrino beam-lines leads to a reduced lifespan for production targets. The field of High Power Targetry (HPT) is generating new concepts to meet the need for robust targets. One idea being investigated by the HPT Research and Development Group at Fermilab is an electrospun nanofiber target. As part of their evaluation, samples with different densities were sent to the HiRadMat facility at CERN for thermal shock tests. The samples with the higher density, irradiated under a high intensity beam pulse, exhibit major damages at the impact site whereas those with the lower density show no apparent damages. The exact cause of this failure was unclear at the time. In this paper, we present the results of multiphysics simulations of the thermal shock experienced by the nanofiber targets that suggest the failure originates from the reduced permeability of the high density sample to airflow. The air present in the porous target expands due to heating from the beam, but is unable to flow freely in the high density sample, resulting in a larger back pressure that blows apart the mat. We close with a discussion on how to further validate this hypothesis.

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