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**To:** [Multiple recipients of list;](#)  
**Subject:** FDS 5 Beta Release  
**Date:** den 30 mars 2007 14:28:13

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All

I sent out an email about a month ago to inform you of an impending beta test, sometime during the NCAA basketball tourney here in the US. We just barely made it. As always, there are just so many things that need to be put in order before a release, even a test release. Some of you have already figured out for yourselves where we are uploading new materials on SourceForge. Good hacking.

Those of you who are interested in beta testing the new FDS 5 should go to <http://fds-sv.sourceforge.net/>. This is our new web page (the old one for FDS 4 is still there, so that current users can still find materials). At the new site, follow the link under "How to acquire the latest versions ...". You're on your own from there. Everything is being tested -- FDS, Smokeview, the manuals, the web page, the support procedures, everything. We're still just a handful of people developing and supporting FDS/Smokeview, and in order to make progress, we have to better automate just about everything we do. So please let us know if something is easy or hard -- is it easy to update your version of FDS/SV? Are you able to post questions, or get information?

Windows users will notice that FDS 5 is being installed under "c:\Program Files\" like most other software. Mac users will notice that there is now a similar self-extracting set up program like the one for Windows. Linux users are still pretty much left to their own devices as to where to put things. We assume that typical Linux users would quibble with our set-up anyway.

Each installation comes with manuals in the Documentation folder. Under Windows, these manuals now appear on the main program menu. FDS is still a command line application, in the absence of any third party Graphical User Interface, but check the User's Guide for a slightly different command line procedure. Smokeview can be invoked from the main menu. We've also included a set of "Verification" cases in a folder off the main installation directory. These cases are very important -- in FDS 5, we're emphasizing V&V more than ever before. For the beta test, we want you to first run a sampling of these Verification cases. Many are discussed in the FDS Verification Guide. These cases test basic features of FDS, and will provide a means of demonstrating which features are

working, and which are not. Too often, FDS users report problems with enormous input files, so large that we cannot figure out the problem. Also, we find that many first time users are now "skipping" the somewhat tedious process of running little test cases to make sure the code is working right. Just because FDS/SV is now widely used does not mean that it is bug-free. In fact, in FDS 5, we have had to make major changes to many parts of the code, and we expect lots of minor problems to pop up. This is the whole point of the beta test. We want to fix the simple bugs now, so that when we go to a full release we do not have to change the version on a daily basis. This is time-consuming for us, and disruptive for you. So let's all pitch in now so that we can issue a very stable 5.0, the sooner the better.

Beta testers should report problems or ask questions via the "Support Requests" button under "Tracker" on the SourceForge FDS/SV page. DO NOT SEND BUG REPORTS DIRECTLY TO US. Use the SourceForge utilities. It's all part of the test. We all have to get used to this new way of working. Calling Kevin or Glenn or Bryan is not going to work any more. Sorry, it's not that we don't want to talk to you. It's just that we can't get anything done if we're on the phone all day. Or responding to email. SourceForge has many powerful features that allow you to check if someone has had the same problem as you, or if you've stumbled across a "Confirmed Bug". By the way, do not use Tracker--> Confirmed Bugs to report a bug. That list is for our use.

When you report a bug to "Support Requests," include your name, organization, and a URL if you want to be added to the list of beta testers. You are an essential part of making FDS/SV a reliable tool, and we want you to be recognized. We appreciate the time and effort (and ultimately, money) that users contribute to the program. This is the only way that we can continue to develop and maintain it with very limited resources.

There are still a number of issues that we have not resolved in FDS. Smokeview is in fairly decent shape. The "restart" feature in FDS is not working properly yet. Various other features like fan curves, leaks, and so on, have been implemented, but not rigorously tested. We are going to continually add Verification cases to the repository on SourceForge, many of which we assume will come from the beta testers.

OK, enough for now. Test everything. If you are having serious problems with something (like SourceForge itself), email [bryan.klein@nist.gov](mailto:bryan.klein@nist.gov). But try as much as possible to exercise the support features. Also, there are procedures on SourceForge to keep you apprised of news and tidbits. Keep up with this. I'll use the

"fdsusers" email list only for important announcements.  
You get enough spam already without me adding to it.

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