



MSA Unveils Significant Advance in Thermal Imaging Camera Technology

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New Camera for Firefighters Makes Technological Leap to Improve Safety

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 18 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- A new thermal imaging camera (TIC) unveiled today by MSA (NYSE: MSA), the world's leading manufacturer of safety equipment, is the first device to incorporate technology that provides high-quality imaging in temperatures in excess of 300 degrees Fahrenheit. This breakthrough represents a significant jump over current TIC technology and promises to substantially enhance firefighter safety and effectiveness in life threatening situations.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050218/CLF008-a>

<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050218/CLF008-b>)

Introduced in the mid 1990s, thermal imaging cameras utilize infrared technology to enable firefighters to see through smoke in darkness. In use, TICs work in one of two image modes - high sensitivity and low sensitivity - determined by ambient temperature. As the terminology implies, high sensitivity produces a clearer, more detailed screen image compared to low sensitivity.

The Evolution(R) 5200 TIC, in development at MSA for more than a year, features the widest "high sensitivity" temperature range, allowing the camera to produce high quality images in temperatures up to 320 degrees Fahrenheit. Based on industry research, firefighters spend 80 percent of their time in structural fires in temperatures between 150 degrees Fahrenheit and 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Until now, TICs could only function in high sensitivity mode in temperatures below 190 degrees Fahrenheit.

When temperatures exceed 320 degrees Fahrenheit, the MSA TIC switches into a low-sensitivity mode. Even in this state, however, the new MSA camera produces twice the sensitivity as all other TICs, producing images with more detail, clarity and definition.

The MSA camera also provides imagery that incorporates shaded, heat- seeking color pixels, which help reveal to firefighters the intensity and direction of a fire. The differences in color shading ranges from light yellow to very dark red, indicating changes in structural temperature.

"MSA's mission is about protecting life and the Evolution(R) 5200 TIC very clearly raises the bar, whether it's used to protect firefighters or locate trapped victims," said Ron Herring, Vice President and General Manager of MSA's Safety Products Division. "With its superior image clarity, expanded temperature range and ability to let firefighters pinpoint the direction of a fire, the Evolution(R) 5200 TIC leaps ahead of its predecessors."

MSA, a leader in thermal imaging camera technology, introduced the first hand held device for firefighters in the mid 1990s. By deploying extensive research and new product development processes, the company has steadily improved TIC technology over the years. "We are certainly proud of our accomplishments in this product area," Mr. Herring said. "Our focus has consistently been to offer new features that increase performance while lowering initial and lifetime costs. The camera we introduced today unquestionably delivers one of the biggest jumps yet in TIC technology."

Established in 1914, MSA is a global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of sophisticated safety products that protect people's health and safety. Sophisticated safety products typically integrate any combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive line of products is used by workers around the world in the fire service, homeland security, construction and other industries, as well as the military. Principal products include self-contained breathing apparatus, gas masks, gas detection instruments, head protection, respirators and thermal imaging cameras. The company also provides a broad range of consumer and contractor safety products through retail channels. These products are marketed and sold under the MSA Safety Works brand. MSA has annual sales of more than \$800 million, manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Europe, and more than 30 international locations. Additional information is available on the company's Web site at <http://www.msanet.com> . To learn more about MSA products for the fire service, please visit <http://www.MSAFire.com> .

SOURCE MSA

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/CONTACT: Mark Deasy of MSA, +1-412-967-3357/

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