



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	Watson Grinding Fatal Explosion and Fire
Recommendation Number:	2020-03-I-TX-R2
Date Issued:	June 29, 2023
Recipient:	Matheson Tri-Gas Inc.
New Status:	Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Change:	November 24, 2023

Recommendation Text:

Provide your customers with information about (1) the safety issues described in this report and (2) why our customers should develop and implement effective process safety management systems as part of their own internal safety programs, including informing customers about CGA [Compressed Gas Association] P-86, Guideline for Process Safety Management, the Center for Chemical Process Safety's Guidelines for Risk Based Process Safety, or an equivalent approach.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On January 24, 2020, a leak of propylene from a high velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) thermal spray process resulted in an explosion at the Watson Grinding and Manufacturing Co. (Watson Grinding) facility in Houston, Texas. The leak was caused by a disconnected hose inside one of the facility's coating booths.

The explosion fatally injured two employees and a member of the public. Two additional employees were injured. The explosion damaged hundreds of nearby structures, including homes and several businesses. Watson Grinding filed for bankruptcy on February 6, 2020, and the company is no longer in business.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including a lack of effective process safety management practices and emergency preparedness at the facility. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued one recommendation to Matheson Tri-Gas Inc. (Matheson). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2020-03-I-TX-R2.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Matheson developed and sent to its customers this Safety Alert:

<https://www.mathesongas.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Safety-Alert-Process-Safety-Management-2023.pdf>.

It provides information on the Watson Grinding incident, provides a link to the CSB's Investigation Report, and encourages customers to develop and implement an effective process safety management system. The Safety Alert is also posted on Matheson's website.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2020-03-I-TX-R2 to: "Closed – Acceptable Action."