



# Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

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Memorandum

To: Board Members

From: Chris Lyon *Chris Lyon*  
Acting General Counsel

Cc: Adam Henson, Recommendations Specialist  
Leadership Team

Subject: Board Action Report – Notation Item 2024-16

Date: November 27, 2023

On November 24, 2023, the Board approved Notation Item 2024-16, thereby designating Recommendation 2018-02-I-WI-R16, to Honeywell UOP (from the Husky Energy Superior Refinery Explosion and Fire investigation (2018-02-I-WI)), with the status of Open – Acceptable Response or Alternate Response.

**Voting Summary – Notation Item 2024-16**

**Disposition: APPROVED**

**Disposition date: November 24, 2023**

	Approve	Disapprove	Calendar	Not Participating	Date
S. Johnson	X				11/22/2023
S. Owens	X				11/22/2023
C. Sandoval	X				11/24/2023



# U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

## RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

### SUMMARY

<b>Report:</b>	Husky Energy Superior Refinery Explosion and Fire
<b>Recommendation Number:</b>	2018-02-I-WI-R16
<b>Date Issued:</b>	December 23, 2022
<b>Recipient:</b>	Honeywell UOP
<b>New Status:</b>	Open – Acceptable Response or Alternate Response
<b>Date of Status Change:</b>	November 24, 2023

#### Recommendation Text:

*Participate in the API committee that develops a technical publication for the safe operation of FCC units.*

#### Board Status Change Decision:

##### A. Rationale for Recommendation

On the morning of April 26, 2018, the primary and sponge absorber of the Husky Energy Superior Refinery exploded during the planned shutdown of the facility's fluidized catalytic cracking (FCC) unit. Debris from the explosion struck an asphalt storage tank approximately 200 feet away. Asphalt leaked from the damaged tank and over the containment wall spreading into the FCC and crude unit operating areas before eventually catching fire. Husky Superior Refinery reported that 39,000 pounds of a flammable hydrocarbon vapor mixture as well as approximately 17,000 barrels of asphalt were released during the incident.

36 refinery and contract workers received medical treatment as the result of the incident. Of those 36 injuries, 11 met the criteria to be considered OSHA recordable. None of the injuries suffered were deemed life-threatening. It was reported that the explosion shook buildings up to a mile away. The plume from the burning asphalt was visible from neighboring communities. An evacuation order was issued by county officials to protect the public from the smoke plume and as a precaution for fear the incident would escalate.

As a result of the incident the facility was destroyed. The incident resulted in \$550 million of onsite and \$110,000 of off-site property damage. This incident was recorded as having the 33rd largest adjusted property damage loss in the hydrocarbon extraction, transport, and processing industry since 1974<sup>1</sup>. In September 2019 a permit was issued to rebuild the refinery and construction began soon after. Husky Energy merged with Cenovus Energy, Inc., a Canadian oil and natural gas company, on January 1, 2021. The refinery is expected to resume operations in 2023 as Cenovus Superior Refinery.

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<sup>1</sup> Marsh JLT Specialty, "100 Largest Losses in the Hydrocarbon Industry," 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://www.marsh.com/us/insights/research/100-largest-losses-hydrocarbons-industry-html>. [Accessed 5 October 2022].

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including ineffective transient operation safeguards, a lack of process knowledge, ineffective process safety management systems, a lack of available industry knowledge and guidance, and failures in emergency preparedness. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued one recommendation to Honeywell UOP (UOP). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2018-02-I-WI-R16.

B. Response to the Recommendation

UOP notified the CSB that the company intends to participate in the American Petroleum Institute's (API) committee responsible for drafting a technical publication on safe operation of FCC units when such a committee is formed.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2018-02-I-WI-R16 to: "Open – Acceptable Response or Alternate Response."