



# U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

## OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

### Memorandum

To: Board Members

From: Steven Messer  
Acting General Counsel

Cc: Leadership Team  
Adam Henson

Subject: Board Action Report – Notation Item 2025-42 | Recommendation to the State of Oklahoma (OK) (2018-01-I-OK-R19) from the Pryor Trust Fatal Gas Well Blowout and Fire investigation (2018-01-I-OK)

Date: May 15, 2025

On May 13, 2025, the Board approved Notation Item 2025-42, thereby designating (OK) (2018-01-I-OK-R19) with the status of Closed – Unacceptable Action/No Response Received and authorizing the publication of the Recommendations Status Change Summary for this change on the CSB's website.

### Voting Summary – Notation Item 2025-42

**Disposition: APPROVED**

**Disposition date: May 13, 2025**

	Approve	Disapprove	Calendar	Not Participating	Date
S. Johnson	X				5/12/2025
S. Owens	X				5/12/2025
C. Sandoval	X				5/13/2025



## U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

### RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

### SUMMARY

<b>Report:</b>	Prior Trust Fatal Gas Well Blowout and Fire
<b>Recommendation Number:</b>	2018-01-I-OK-R19
<b>Date Issued:</b>	July 12, 2019
<b>Recipient:</b>	State of Oklahoma
<b>New Status:</b>	Closed - Unacceptable Action/No Response Received
<b>Date of Status Change:</b>	May 13, 2025

#### Recommendation Text:

*Establish and implement safety regulations requiring entities who design oil and gas well drilling plans for wells in Oklahoma (e.g., operators) and entities who perform the drilling operation (e.g., drilling contractors) to develop and implement the following prior to conducting drilling operations:*

- (a) Detailed written operating procedures with specified steps and equipment alignment for all operations;*
- (b) Written procedures for the management of changes (except replacements in kind) in procedures, the well plan, and equipment;*
- (c) A risk assessment of hazards associated with the drilling plan;*
- (d) A requirement to follow Recognized and Generally Accepted Good Engineering Practices (RAGAGEP);*
- (e) Development of a Well Construction Interface Document between the operator and the drilling contractor prior to the commencement of drilling activities which at a minimum includes a bridging document and well plan specifying barriers and how to manage them;*
- (f) The performance and documentation of flow checks using acceptable methods at defined points during the operation for a specified duration; and*
- (g) A requirement for employee participation, similar to the Employee Participation requirement in the OSHA PSM standard.*

#### Board Status Change Decision:

##### A. Rationale for Recommendation

On January 22, 2018, a blowout and rig fire occurred at Pryor Trust 0718 gas well number 1H-9, located in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. The fire killed five workers, who were inside the driller's cabin on the rig floor. They died from thermal burn injuries and smoke and soot ("tripping") out of the well.

The cause of the blowout and rig fire was the failure of both the primary barrier—hydrostatic pressure produced by drilling mud—and the secondary barrier—human detection of influx and activation of the blowout preventer—which were intended to be in place to prevent a blowout.

As a result of these findings, the CSB issued one recommendation to the State of Oklahoma. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2018-01-I-OK-R19.

B. Response to the Recommendation

The State of Oklahoma has notified the CSB that they do not intend to implement the recommendation based on the state's position that its agencies do not have jurisdiction to promulgate a regulation governing safety and health at oil well drilling sites. The CSB does not agree with this rationale. The CSB has tried multiple times unsuccessfully to persuade the State of Oklahoma to implement the recommendation. The State of Oklahoma has stated that they will not implement the recommendation and are no longer responsive to communications.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2018-01-I-OK-R19 to: "Closed – Unacceptable Action/No Response Received." The Board is profoundly disappointed by this outcome. This incident resulted in the tragic death of five workers under truly gruesome circumstances. Despite the state's inaction, the Board urges oil well drilling companies and their subcontractors to voluntarily adopt practices like those described in the recommendation in the hope that future tragedies may be prevented or their consequences mitigated.