



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

SUMMARY

Report:	Bio-Lab Lake Charles Chemical Fire and Release
Recommendation Number:	2020-05-I-LA-R4
Date Issued:	April 24, 2023
Recipient:	Bio-Lab Lake Charles
New Status:	Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Change:	January 20, 2026

Recommendation Text:

Revise the Bio-Lab Lake Charles emergency response plan to require the following:

- a. The site's fire protection system is properly maintained and routinely function-tested in accordance with published industry guidance and NFPA requirements. Require in the emergency response plan that any equipment identified as nonfunctional must be repaired in a timely manner in accordance with NFPA requirements;*
- b. Emergency and fire protection equipment (in particular fire water pumps) must be checked regularly to ensure it is in good working order one month before the start of the U.S. hurricane season, as recommended by the Center for Chemical Process Safety Monograph Assessment of and Planning for Natural Hazards; and*
- c. Site personnel must be trained on the use of all emergency generators and other emergency equipment at least one month before the start of the U.S. hurricane season.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On August 27, 2020, extreme winds from Category 4 Hurricane Laura caused severe damage to multiple buildings and structures storing trichloroisocyanuric acid (TCCA) at the Bio-Lab, Inc. Lake Charles (Bio-Lab) facility in Westlake, Louisiana. Once the buildings at the Bio-Lab facility were damaged, rainwater made contact with the TCCA stored inside and initiated a chemical reaction and the subsequent decomposition of the TCCA. The resulting heat initiated a fire, and the decomposition reaction released a large plume of hazardous gases, including toxic chlorine.

The plume was seen over a large portion of the nearby community. As a result, the Calcasieu Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness issued a shelter-in-place order. Additionally, a portion of the nearby Interstate 10 was closed for over 28 hours. Fortunately, there were no injuries reported from this incident. The Bio-Lab facility resumed production

operations in March of 2023 following an approximately \$250 million redesign and reconstruction effort.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including ineffective preparation for extreme weather, process hazard analysis implementation, and emergency planning, preparedness, and response, as well as the lack of adherence to applicable hazardous materials codes. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued four recommendations to Bio-Lab Lake Charles. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2020-05-I-LA-R4.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Bio-Lab has notified the CSB that they have updated their emergency response plan. The updated plan now addresses maintenance and testing of fire protection equipment including inspections of such equipment prior to hurricane season. The plan also calls for employee training on such equipment prior to hurricane season. Upon review of the documentation submitted by Bio-Lab, the CSB concluded that Bio-Lab has met the objective of the recommendation.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation Nos. 2020-05-I-LA-R4 to: “Closed – Acceptable Action.”