



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	Cuisine Solutions Ammonia Release
Recommendation Number:	2024-03-I-VA-R3
Date Issued:	September 23, 2025
Recipient:	Cuisine Solutions, Inc., Sterling Site
New Status:	Open – Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	Not Applicable – Initial Status

Recommendation Text:

Reduce the likelihood or mitigate the consequences of liquid or two-phase atmospheric discharges from the ammonia refrigeration emergency pressure relief system at the Sterling plant. At a minimum:

- a. Identify liquid or two-phase release scenarios, particularly for horizontal surge drums and other vessels containing saturated liquid with little vapor space;*
- b. Implement engineering controls to reduce the likelihood of high liquid level, overflow, or boiling overpressure scenarios;*
- c. Implement engineering controls to mitigate the consequences of these scenarios where their likelihood cannot be acceptably reduced, such as through emergency pressure control systems, atmospheric knockout drums, or automatic shutdown systems; and*
- d. Contract a competent third party to audit the pressure relief systems. The audit should ensure that (i) all relevant relief scenarios have been identified, (ii) preventive and mitigative engineering controls adequately address the hazards, and (iii) engineering controls are maintained in such a way that they function properly when required.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On July 31, 2024, anhydrous ammonia was discharged from a pressure relief device in the refrigeration system of the Cuisine Solutions, Inc. facility in Sterling, VA. During the evacuation, workers were exposed to ammonia and four were seriously injured.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including discharging liquid ammonia from pressure relief devices to atmosphere and a lack of emergency preparedness.

As a result of these findings, the CSB issued four recommendations to the Cuisine Solutions, Inc., Sterling Site. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2024-03-I-VA-R3.