



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Report: | Cuisine Solutions Ammonia Release |
| Recommendation Number: | 2024-03-I-VA-R5 |
| 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:

Update the Cuisine Solutions Sterling site's Emergency Action Plan using guidance such as the IIAR's Critical Task Guidance for Ammonia Refrigeration System Emergency Planning. At a minimum, the updated plan should:

- a. Address indoor and outdoor ammonia releases separately, including the distinct alarms and responses to them;*
- b. Clearly specify appropriate evacuation routes and muster points, including alternates;*
- c. Provide guidance for using windsocks to remain upwind of a release during evacuation;*
- d. Implement shelter-in-place strategies, emergency protective equipment, and emergency shutdowns, as appropriate; and*
- e. Include requirements to conduct annual ammonia release drills that include all onsite personnel (including corporate employees). The annual drills should include separate indoor and outdoor ammonia release scenarios and address the use of windsocks to assist with determining evacuation routes, alternate evacuation routes, muster points, and consideration for the decision to shelter-in-place. Additionally, the drills should exercise each evacuation alarm, emergency protective equipment, and emergency shutdowns, where appropriate.*

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-R5.