



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

SUMMARY

Report:	Didion Milling Company Explosion and Fire
Recommendation Numbers:	2017-07-I-WI-R2
Date Issued:	December 6, 2023
Recipient:	Didion Milling, Inc.
New Statuses:	Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Changes:	June 9, 2026

Recommendation Text:

Contract a competent third party to develop and implement modifications to the pneumatic conveying and dust collector ductwork systems in accordance with guidance such as NFPA 61, Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Dust Explosions in Agricultural and Food Processing Facilities, NFPA 652, Standard on the Fundamentals of Combustible Dust, and NFPA 654, Standard for the Prevention of Fire and Dust Explosions from the Manufacturing, Processing, and Handling of Combustible Particulate Solids, to include, at a minimum:

- a. Ensure minimum required transport velocity is maintained throughout the system.*
- b. Implement a periodic inspection and testing program for pneumatic conveying and dust collector ductwork systems, following industry guidance such as NFPA 91, Standard for Exhaust Systems for Air Conveying of Vapors, Gases, Mists, and Particulate Solids, and FM Global guidance. The program should include cleaning on a set frequency and measuring transport velocities on a routine basis to ensure proper system function.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On May 31, 2017, an explosion and fire occurred at the Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion) facility in Cambria, Wisconsin. The fire spread throughout the facility resulting in multiple combustible dust explosions both within and external to the production equipment.

Five employees of Didion were fatally injured as a result of the incident. An additional 14 employees were injured. Several of the fatalities and injuries were caused by exposure to the flames generated by the combustible dust explosions and flash fires, while others can be attributed to the collapse of the buildings. The incident resulted in an estimated \$15.37 million in property damage.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including ineffective combustible dust safety management, ineffective process safety leadership, and a lack of regulatory coverage for combustible dusts. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued nine recommendations to Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2017-07-I-WI-R2.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Didion's pneumatic conveying and dust collector ductwork systems were designed by a competent third party in accordance with the suggested NFPA standards. Additionally, Didion has developed and implemented an inspection, testing, and maintenance program that complies with OSHA, NFPA, and FM Global standards for these systems that ensure minimum transport velocity is maintained and that cleaning occurs on a set frequency. Upon review of the relevant documentation provided, the CSB determined that Didion has satisfactorily implemented this recommendation.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2017-07-I-WI-R2 to: "Closed – Acceptable Action."