



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	LyondellBasell La Porte Fatal Chemical Release
Recommendation Number:	2021-05-I-TX-R2
Date Issued:	May 25, 2023
Recipient:	LyondellBasell Industries
New Status:	Closed – Acceptable Alternative Action
Date of Status Change:	December 4, 2025

Recommendation Text:

Update LyondellBasell policy documents to require that LyondellBasell competent employee(s), as defined by 29 C.F.R. 1926.32(f), verify that contractors are competent, adequately trained, and qualified to perform the required work. To make this determination and to ensure work on process equipment is conducted in a safe manner, LyondellBasell competent employees may be required to oversee the work conducted by contractors on the process equipment. In the updated policy documents, include requirements to ensure that contract employees are informed of relevant process hazards and relevant details about the process equipment and are provided with equipment-specific procedures necessary to safely conduct their work.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On July 27, 2021, three contract workers at the LyondellBasell (LYB) La Porte Complex in La Porte, Texas were removing an actuator from a plug valve in the site's acetic acid unit. While attempting to remove the actuator, the pressure retaining components of the valve were inadvertently removed causing the eventual ejection of the plug from the valve body and a release of acetic acid.

Approximately 164,000 pounds of acetic acid mixture was released from the unit. All three contract workers were sprayed with the acetic acid mixture fatally injuring two of the workers and seriously injuring the third. An additional twenty-nine personnel were transported to offsite medical facilities for evaluation and treatment.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including a lack of procedures, hazard awareness, training, as well as the potential for improvement related to plug valve design. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued two recommendations to LyondellBasell. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2021-05-I-TX-R2.

B. Response to the Recommendation

LYB's initial and follow-up responses provide information describing a position within their procedures for working on live process equipment meeting OSHA's definition of competent person. Though this position does not encompass the duties traditionally addressed in a contractor management program specified by the recommendation, it does meet the operational and safety requirements of the recommendation. The actions taken by LYB meet the objectives or a majority of the objectives envisioned by the Board in issuing this recommendation.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change the status of CSB Recommendation No. 2021-05-I-TX-R2 to: "Closed – Acceptable Alternative Action."