



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS CHANGE

SUMMARY

Report:	DuPont Corporation Toxic Chemical Releases
Recommendation Number:	2010-6-I-WV-R4
Date Issued:	October 17, 2011
Recipient:	DuPont Belle Plant
New Status:	R4: Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Change:	June 17, 2013

Recommendation Text:

Revise the facility emergency response protocol to require that a responsible and accountable DuPont employee always be available (all shifts, all days) to provide timely and accurate information to the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority (KCEAA) and Metro 9-1-1 dispatchers.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On January 22 and 23, 2010, three accidents occurred over a 33-hour period at the DuPont Corporation's Belle, West Virginia, chemical manufacturing plant. The series of accidents began when an alarm led operators to discover that 2,000 pounds of methyl chloride, a toxic and extremely flammable gas, had leaked unnoticed into the atmosphere over five days. The next morning, workers discovered a leak in a pipe carrying oleum, which produced a fuming cloud of sulfur trioxide, another toxic gas. A release of highly toxic phosgene occurred later that day, exposing a worker who died the following evening in a hospital.

In investigating these three incidents, the CSB identified common deficiencies in multiple DuPont Belle plant safety management systems, including maintenance and inspections, alarm recognition and management, accident investigation, emergency response and communications, and hazard recognition. Three recommendations were issued to the DuPont Belle Plant; this summary addresses the Board's actions concerning the recommendation to improve the site's emergency response protocol.

B. Response to the Recommendation

DuPont reported that the Belle Site Emergency Response Team was restructured with the creation of an Off Site Emergency Communication Coordinator position. This position is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days a year by a trained DuPont supervisor who is fully qualified to coordinate emergency response communications between the site and all off site emergency responders including the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority.

DuPont also reported that additional personnel were hired during the 3rd quarter of 2011 and were deployed during the 1st quarter of 2012 to support the enhanced site emergency response

team. The DuPont site Emergency Communication Coordinator roles were staffed and deployed in March of 2012.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

As CSB Recommendation No. 2010-6-I-WV-R4 appears to have been addressed by the DuPont Belle site in the restructuring of its Emergency Response Team, the Board voted to change the status of this recommendation to: "Closed – Acceptable Action."