



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	West Fertilizer Fire and Explosion
Recommendation Number:	2013-02-I-TX-R11
Date Issued:	January 28, 2016
Recipient:	Texas Commission on Fire Protection
New Status(es):	Closed - Reconsidered/Superseded
Date of Status(es) Change:	April 1, 2021

Recommendation Text:

Develop minimum standards for course curricula to include hazard awareness of fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate (FGAN) for those fire departments that either have FGAN facilities in their jurisdictions or respond as mutual aid to other jurisdictions with FGAN facilities. In addition, develop a training program specific to FGAN.

Objectives of the program's training course should address the following:

- a) Previous FGAN fire and explosion incidents, incorporating lessons learned*
- b) Hazards posed by other materials and chemicals stored near FGAN, including FGAN incompatibility with those materials and chemicals*
- c) Pre-incident planning for fires involving FGAN*
- d) On-scene emergency response and decision-making requirements for FGAN fires, including risk assessment, scene size-up, and situational awareness*
- e) National Incident Management System and Incident Command System.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On April 17, 2013, an explosion and fire occurred at the West Fertilizer Company (WFC), a fertilizer blending, retail, and distribution facility in West, Texas. The detonation of fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate (FGAN) fatally injured 12 emergency responders and three members of the public. Local hospitals treated more than 260 injured victims, many of whom required hospital admission. The blast completely destroyed the WFC facility and caused widespread damage to more than 150 offsite buildings.

As a part of its investigation, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) found that curriculum manuals used for hazardous materials (HAZMAT) training and certification of firefighters place little emphasis on emergency response to storage sites containing FGAN. This is true for both the Federal and Texas HAZMAT training and certification programs. In addition, lessons learned from previous FGAN-related fires were not shared with other fire departments, including the West Volunteer Fire Department. If previous lessons learned had been applied at West, the firefighters and emergency personnel who

responded to the incident might have better understood the risks associated with FGAN-related fire and acted accordingly.

As a result, the CSB issued two recommendations to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) to develop minimum standards for course curricula on hazard awareness of FGAN and to implement outreach to regional, state and local fire departments with FGAN facilities. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R11 (R11).

B. Response to the Recommendation.

Regarding R11, TCFP stated, and the Board concurs, that as TCFP is a certifying body. As such, they stated that they would defer to TEEEX to develop comprehensive FGAN training curricula. Fortunately, the TEEEX curriculum satisfied all the components of the CSB's recommendation issued to TCFP, as they are nearly identical. The Board acceptably closed this recommendation to TEEEX on October 11, 2018.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based on the Board's agreement that TCFP is a certifying body, the CSB Recommendation for TCFP to develop their own FGAN training course curricula should not have been issued to this recommendation recipient. As such, the Board voted to change the status of **CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R11** to "Closed - Reconsidered/Superseded."