



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

Report:	West Fertilizer Fire and Explosion
Recommendation Number:	2013-02-I-TX-R12
Date Issued:	January 28, 2016
Recipient:	Texas Commission on Fire Protection
New Status:	Closed-No Longer Applicable
Date of Status Change:	April 1, 2021

Recommendation Text:

Implement outreach to regional, state, and local fire departments that either have FGAN facilities in their jurisdictions or respond as mutual aid to jurisdictions with FGAN facilities, informing them about the new FGAN training certification requirements and opportunities to receive training. Include the following in the outreach:

- a. Guidance for fire departments on how to identify FGAN hazards within their communities by engaging State Emergency Response Commissions and Local Emergency Planning Committees*
- b. Encouragement for fire departments in jurisdictions with FGAN facilities to become certified in FGAN training.*

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 informing them about new FGAN training certification requirements and encouraging them to become certified in FGAN training. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R12.

B. Response to the Recommendation.

TCFP stated that they would locate, share, and promote training resources and reference materials. They located and acquired additional training resources and reference materials and made them available to be borrowed at no cost. They also prepared a newsletter on the subject of “Ammonium Nitrate Safety.” They promoted classes that prepare Texas responders to deal with FGAN emergencies and posted them on their media platforms.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

While TCFP conducted outreach that addressed FGAN hazards, they were not able to fulfill this recommendation because there are no FGAN training certification requirements, which is the basis for the recommended outreach. A recommendation for the development of FGAN training certification requirements was issued to another recommendation recipient who declined to implement it based upon rationale with which the Board concurred.

As the recommendation to TCFP was dependent upon the implementation of a separate recommendation issued to a different recommendation recipient that will not be implemented, the Board voted to change the status of **CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R12** to “Closed-No Longer Applicable.”