



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	Pryor Trust Fatal Gas Well Blowout and Fire
Recommendation Number:	2018-01-I-OK-R3
Date Issued:	June 12, 2019
Recipient:	American Petroleum Institute (API)
New Status:	Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Change:	July 10, 2026

Recommendation Text:

For onshore drilling operations, develop and publish a recommended practice providing guidance on safely tripping drill pipe during (1) overbalanced drilling operations, (2) managed pressure drilling operations, and (3) underbalanced drilling operations. At a minimum, include information on:

- (a) Required equipment for tripping operations,*
- (b) Techniques and procedures for controlling or preventing formation fluid influx, and*
- (c) Methods to monitor the well and replace the drill pipe displacement volume with drilling fluid (e.g., mud).*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On January 22, 2018, a blowout and rig fire occurred at Pryor Trust 0718 gas well number 1H-9, located in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. The fire killed five workers, who were inside the driller's cabin on the rig floor. They died from thermal burn injuries and smoke and soot inhalation. The blowout occurred approximately three-and-a-half hours after removing drill pipe ("tripping") out of the well.

The cause of the blowout and rig fire was the failure of both the primary barrier—hydrostatic pressure produced by drilling mud—and the secondary barrier—human detection of influx and activation of the blowout preventer—which were intended to be in place to prevent a blowout.

As a result of these findings, the CSB issued five recommendations to the American Petroleum Institute (API). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2018-01-I-OK-R3.

B. Response to the Recommendation

API published two recommended practices that establish guidelines for tripping operations for onshore oil and gas wells. They are API RP 79-1 *Tripping Operations in Hydrostatically*

Overbalanced Wells (API RP 79-1)¹ which was published in December of 2022 and API RP 79-2 *Tripping Operations with Surface Back-Pressure Managed Pressure Drilling* (API RP 79-2)² which was published in December of 2025. The CSB reviewed these documents and concluded that they address all requirements of the recommendation.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

The CSB appreciates the work of the API, and its Subcommittee 23 Drilling and Production Technology Subcommittee (DPTS)³. These documents will undoubtedly serve as critical resources for the oil and gas industry and will hopefully prevent future loss of control incidents. Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2018-01-I-OK-R3 to: “Closed – Acceptable Action.”

¹ <https://www.apiwebstore.org/standards/79-1>

² <https://www.apiwebstore.org/standards/79-2>

³ DPTS is a subcommittee of API’s Committee on Standardization of Oilfield Equipment and Materials (CSOEM). They are responsible for the technical content of API RP 79-1 and API RP 79-2.