



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

Report:	Cuisine Solutions Ammonia Release
Recommendation Number:	2024-03-I-VA-R5
Date Issued:	September 25, 2025
Recipient:	Cuisine Solutions Inc., Sterling Site
New Status:	Open – Acceptable Response or Alternate Response
Date of Status Change:	May 13, 2026

Recommendation Text:

Update the Cuisine Solutions Sterling site's Emergency Action Plan using guidance such as the IIAR's Critical Task Guidance for Ammonia Refrigeration System Emergency Planning. At a minimum, the updated plan should:

- a. Address indoor and outdoor ammonia releases separately, including the distinct alarms and responses to them;*
- b. Clearly specify appropriate evacuation routes and muster points, including alternates;*
- c. Provide guidance for using windsocks to remain upwind of a release during evacuation;*
- d. Implement shelter-in-place strategies, emergency protective equipment, and emergency shutdowns, as appropriate; and*
- e. Include requirements to conduct annual ammonia release drills that include all onsite personnel (including corporate employees). The annual drills should include separate indoor and outdoor ammonia release scenarios and address the use of windsocks to assist with determining evacuation routes, alternate evacuation routes, muster points, and consideration for the decision to shelter-in-place. Additionally, the drills should exercise each evacuation alarm, emergency protective equipment, and emergency shutdowns, where appropriate.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On July 31, 2024, anhydrous ammonia was discharged from a pressure relief device in the refrigeration system of the Cuisine Solutions, Inc. facility in Sterling, VA. During the evacuation, workers were exposed to ammonia and four were seriously injured.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including discharging liquid ammonia from pressure relief devices to atmosphere and a lack of emergency preparedness.

As a result of these findings, the CSB issued four recommendations to the Cuisine Solutions, Inc., Sterling Site. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2024-03-I-VA-R5.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Cuisine Solutions Inc. has notified the CSB that they intend to implement the recommendation. They have provided a plan of action that appears when implemented will satisfy the objectives of the recommendation and they have provided a timetable for completion.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2024-03-I-VA-R5 to: “Open – Acceptable Response or Alternate Response.”