



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE SUMMARY

Report:	Didion Milling Company Explosion and Fire
Recommendation Numbers:	2017-07-I-WI-R8
Date Issued:	December 6, 2023
Recipient:	Didion Milling, Inc.
New Statuses:	Closed – Acceptable Action
Date of Status Changes:	August 6, 2026

Recommendation Text:

Contract a competent third party to assess and update the pre-deflagration detection and suppression engineering controls, such as those discussed in Chapter 9 of the 2019 edition of NFPA 69, Standard on Explosion Prevention Systems, for adequacy to detect and alarm employees of an emergency situation, such as a smoldering fire, and trigger an evacuation.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On May 31, 2017, an explosion and fire occurred at the Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion) facility in Cambria, Wisconsin. The fire spread throughout the facility resulting in multiple combustible dust explosions both within and external to the production equipment.

Five employees of Didion were fatally injured as a result of the incident. An additional 14 employees were injured. Several of the fatalities and injuries were caused by exposure to the flames generated by the combustible dust explosions and flash fires, while others can be attributed to the collapse of the buildings. The incident resulted in an estimated \$15.37 million in property damage.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including ineffective combustible dust safety management, ineffective process safety leadership, and a lack of regulatory coverage for combustible dusts. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued nine recommendations to Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2017-07-I-WI-R8.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Didion contracted with a third party to assess and update the pre-deflagration detection and suppression engineering controls associated with their combustible dust handling equipment. This was primarily accomplished through dust hazard analysis. Didion's facility employs several safeguards as determined to be necessary through DHA which collectively detect, suppress, and/or notify employees of emergency situations. Upon review of the relevant documentation provided, the CSB determined that Didion has satisfactorily implemented this recommendation.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2017-07-I-WI-R8 to: “Closed – Acceptable Action.”