



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

Report:	Evergreen Packaging Mill – Fire During Hot Work
Recommendation Number:	2020-07-I-NC-R5
Date Issued:	September 24, 2021
Recipient:	Evergreen Packaging
New Status:	Open - Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	

Recommendation Text:

Develop and implement a policy that requires the involvement of emergency response personnel in planning and coordination of activities involving the use of flammable materials in confined spaces. In the policy, require that emergency response personnel be stationed directly outside the confined space in which flammable materials are used. Ensure that the emergency response personnel are appropriately trained and equipped for confined space entry, confined space rescue and fire response.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On September 21, 2020, a paper mill operated by Evergreen Packaging (Evergreen) in Canton, North Carolina, was undergoing a planned shutdown, and associated maintenance and capital project work was ongoing throughout the facility. In one of Evergreen’s pulp bleaching units, two contract companies were performing simultaneous maintenance work inside two connected process vessels, called an “upflow tower” and a “downflow tower,” when a fire started inside the upflow tower after an electric heat gun, which was being used to warm resin, fell into a five-gallon bucket containing the flammable resin. The fire fatally injured two contractors.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found that the workers did not recognize or control the ignition hazard presented by the electric heat gun. The CSB concluded that Evergreen’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) was not on immediate standby in the vicinity. The CSB concluded that safety at Evergreen’s facilities would improve from the development and implementation of a policy that requires the involvement of emergency response personnel in planning and coordination of activities involving the use of flammable materials in confined spaces.

As a result of the investigation, the CSB issued three new recommendations to Evergreen Packaging. This status change summary pertains to **CSB Recommendation No. 2020-07-I-NC-R5**.