



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

SUMMARY

Report:	Loy Lange Box Company Pressure Vessel Explosion
Recommendation Number:	2017-04-I-MO-R2
Date Issued:	July 29, 2022
Recipient:	Loy-Lange Box Company
New Status:	Closed – Acceptable Alternative Action
Date of Status Change:	May 21, 2024

Recommendation Text:

Engage a qualified third-party to conduct a comprehensive review or audit of Loy Lange’s regulatory compliance practices and current compliance status.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On April 3, 2017, an explosion occurred at the Loy-Lange Box Company (Loy-Lange) in St. Louis, Missouri when the bottom head of a pressure vessel (called a Semi-Closed Receiver (SCR)) catastrophically failed. The pressure vessel failure caused a boiling liquid expanding vapor explosion (BLEVE) which fatally injured a Loy-Lange employee working nearby. The pressure vessel then launched from the Loy-Lange building into the air and crashed through the roof of a nearby business, fatally injuring three members of the public.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found that the failed pressure vessel resulted from oxygen pitting corrosion and generalized corrosion which thinned the pressure vessel bottom head until it could no longer contain the pressure inside the vessel. The CSB determined that the cause of the incident was deficiencies in Loy-Lange’s operations, policies, and process safety practices that failed to prevent or mitigate chronic corrosion in the pressure vessel as well as Kickham Boiler and Engineering, Inc.’s performance of an inadequate repair to the SCR in 2012 that left damaged material in place. The CSB identified additional issues in their overall regulatory compliance as well as with their records and data management. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued three recommendations to Loy-Lange. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2017-04-I-MO-R2.

B. Response to the Recommendation

In August of 2023 Loy-Lange notified the CSB that they had retained a safety consultant following the incident and that they had also worked with their insurance carrier’s safety coordinator to improve safety in their facility. The CSB has reviewed documentation submitted by Loy-Lange to verify their statements. Though the efforts they describe do not address regulatory compliance, as required by the recommendation, they do address efforts to improve safety with the support of third parties as envisioned by the Board.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based upon the information above, the Board voted to change CSB Recommendation No. 2017-04-I-MO-R2 to: “Closed – Acceptable Alternative Action.”