



U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

RECOMMENDATION STATUS CHANGE

SUMMARY

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| Report: | Martinez Renewable Fuels Fire |
| Recommendation Number: | 2024-01-I-CA-R3 |
| Date Issued: | March 13, 2024 |
| Recipient: | Marathon Martinez Renewables |
| New Status: | Open – Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response |
| Date of Status Change: | Not Applicable – Initial Status |

Recommendation Text:

Implement changes to improve Walk the Line performance at the Martinez facility by ensuring that the facility's practices are consistent with tools in the AFPM Safety Portal and guidance in Marathon Petroleum Corporation's refining reference document titled Operations Excellence. At a minimum:

- (a) Require that operator field walkdowns ensure that valves are correctly aligned before all unit startup activities from planned or unplanned shutdowns, such as those due to non-normal operations, emergencies, turnarounds, and major maintenance;*
- (b) Improve policies and practices for communications among and between shifts to ensure that operators understand abnormal line-ups in their units; and*
- (c) Reinforce Walk the Line concepts, including the expectation for only trained operators to control valve line-ups at their units, through training for all levels of management in the Operations department.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On November 19, 2023, a fire erupted when a metal tube within a fired heater ruptured during the initial startup of a renewable diesel hydroprocessing unit at the Marathon Martinez Renewables facility in Martinez, California. A lack of process flow due to valve misalignment combined with afterburning due to poor combustion conditions caused overheating of the tubes leading to the rupture and fire.

One employee received third-degree burns over 80 percent of his body during the incident and remained in critical condition for a period of over six months. Marathon Petroleum Corporation estimated that over 200,000 pounds of renewable diesel and 2,200 pounds of hydrogen were released. The incident resulted in approximately \$350 million in damage.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including those associated with safe operating limits, worker proximity to fired heaters, low flow through fired heaters, burner operation, valve misalignment, and corporate oversight. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued four recommendations to Marathon Martinez Renewables. This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2024-01-I-CA-R3.