



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

Report:	Aghorn Operating Inc. Waterflood Station H2S Release
Recommendation Number:	2020-01-I-TX-R8
Date Issued:	May 21, 2021
Recipient:	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
New Status:	Open – Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	

Recommendation Text:

Issue a safety information product (such as a safety bulletin or safety alert) that addresses the requirements for protecting workers from hazardous air contaminants and from hazardous energy.

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On October 26, 2019, an Aghorn Operating Inc. (Aghorn) employee responded to a pump oil level alarm at Aghorn's Foster D waterflood station in Odessa, Texas. In response to the alarm the employee worked to isolate the pump. He closed the pump's discharge valve but only partially closed the pump's suction valve. At some point on the night of the incident, the pump automatically turned on and water containing hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), a toxic gas, was discharged from the pump. The employee was fatally injured from his exposure to the H₂S. Subsequently, the spouse of the employee gained access to the waterflood station and searched for her husband. During her search efforts, she was also exposed to the released H₂S and was fatally injured.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found that the employee was not wearing his personal H₂S detection device upon entering the waterflood station on the night of the incident, and there was no evidence that Aghorn management required the use of these devices. The CSB also found that at the time of the incident, Aghorn did not have any written Lockout/Tagout policies or procedures. As a result of these findings and the fact that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the Federal regulator responsible for oversight of these safety issues, the CSB issued one recommendation to OSHA.