



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-R9
Date Issued:	May 21, 2021
Recipient:	Railroad Commission of Texas
New Status:	Open – Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	

Recommendation Text:

Develop and send a Notice to Operators to all oil and gas operators that fall under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Commission of Texas that describes the safety issues described in this report, including:

- 1. Nonuse of Personal H2S Detector*
- 2. Nonperformance of Lockout / Tagout*
- 3. Confinement of H2S Inside Pump House*
- 4. Lack of Safety Management Program*
- 5. Nonfunctioning H2S Detection and Alarm System*
- 6. Deficient Site Security*

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 Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) is the applicable state regulator, the CSB issued one recommendation to the RRC.