



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-R6
Date Issued:	September 24, 2021
Recipient:	Universal Blastco
New Status:	Open - Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	

Recommendation Text:

Update the Universal Blastco hot work policy and employee training program to specifically identify the use of heat guns as hot work. The policy and programs should make clear that hot work encompasses any method of work that can ignite a fire and not just a spark-or flame-producing work methods.

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 found that one of the contractors, Universal Blastco (Blastco), did not have a standalone hot work policy.

As a result of the investigation, the CSB issued three new recommendations to Blastco. This status change summary pertains to **CSB Recommendation No. 2020-07-I-NC-R6**.