



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-R8
Date Issued:	September 24, 2021
Recipient:	Universal Blastco
New Status:	Open - Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	

Recommendation Text:

Develop a policy and standard operating procedures for the proper use of heat guns in FRP [fiber-reinforced plastic] operations.

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 conduct effective pre-job planning, such as accounting for the potential for poor performance of the resin in cold temperatures and identifying solutions to avoid or correct the problem. The CSB concluded that to assist with pre-job planning efforts, a Blastco troubleshooting guide or standard operating procedure addressing resin gel time could prevent a similar incident in the future.

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-R8**.