

## CSB News Conference

Oklahoma City, OK

August 16, 2018

Good Morning, I am Dr. Kristen Kulinowski, Interim Executive of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, or CSB. I'm here today with Investigator-in-Charge Lauren Grim and other CSB staff. This morning, the CSB is releasing an update on the facts gathered to date on the January 22, 2018, blowout and fire at a gas well at the Pryor Trust site in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. The incident resulted in the deaths of five workers.

This was the deadliest U.S. drilling incident since the 2010 Deepater Horizon rig explosion which killed 11 workers and was also investigated by the CSB.

Let me begin by offering condolences to the family and friends affected by this tragic incident on behalf of the entire CSB. The primary goal of our investigations is to identify improvements in safety that can prevent incidents like this from happening again.

The CSB is an independent, nonregulatory federal agency. We conduct safety investigations to identify the root cause of major chemical incidents. Based on our findings, we make recommendations to prevent future catastrophic events.

This is a complex investigation. Several companies are involved with this well and drilling operation:

- Red Mountain Energy, LLC was the lease holder,
- Red Mountain Operating, LLC – or RMO – was the operator of the well.
- Patterson-UTI Drilling Company, LLC – or Patterson – was the drilling contractor, under the direction and supervision of RMO.

Based on our investigation to date, we can confirm today that the blowout occurred shortly following the removal of drill pipe from the wellbore – an operation called “tripping.”

We have developed a timeline and a short video of the critical events that led to the fatal incident. Both items are available on our website, [www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov).

**[PLAY VIDEO]**

It is important to note that the CSB’s investigation is ongoing.

Our next step is to determine the causes of the blowout.

Investigators are analyzing electronic rig data from the days leading up to the incident. They are also interviewing key personnel and assessing documentation.

Specifically, our investigators are looking at:

- The drilling conditions before the drill pipe was removed from the wellbore;
- The weight of the mud used in the wellbore, which is used to prevent gas influxes into the well;
- The procedure used during the first half of the tripping operation;
- How the volume and density of the weighted pill were determined, and if the pill was adequately sized;
- And the events that allowed the drill pipe to become plugged during the second half of the tripping operation.

We also want to know how and if rig personnel could have been alerted to the potential for a blowout. So we are analyzing the rig's alarm system, alarm set points, and procedures to detect gas influxes.

We are also in the process of testing key pieces of equipment, including the blowout preventer, accumulator system, and other rig equipment.

As our investigators continue to analyze the facts, they will develop a root cause analysis of this incident. Their conclusions and any resulting recommendations will be included in a report that will be issued at the end of the investigation.

At this time, Investigator-in-Charge Lauren Grim and I will take your questions. We will start with those here in the room and then go to the phones. Please state your name and affiliation prior to asking your question. And please use the microphone so the people on the phone can hear your questions.