



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

Report:	Didion Milling Company Explosion and Fire
Recommendation Number:	2017-07-I-WI-R7
Date Issued:	December 6, 2023
Recipient:	Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion)
New Status:	Open – Awaiting Response or Evaluation/Approval of Response
Date of Status Change:	Not Applicable – Initial Status

Recommendation Text:

Contract a competent third party to update the facility emergency response plan and train all employees on updated emergency response plan. The update should include the guidance in NFPA 61, Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Dust Explosions in Agricultural and Food Processing Facilities, and NFPA 652, Standard on the Fundamentals of Combustible Dust, Chapter 8 and Section A.8.10.1, which includes, at a minimum, the following elements:

- a. *A signal or alarm system;*
- b. *Emergency shutdown procedures;*
- c. *Provide instructions for when and how to trigger emergency evacuations;*
- d. *Provide instructions for when to notify emergency responders for need of assistance;*
- e. *Response to potential fire scenarios, such as smoldering fires inside equipment; and*
- f. *Prevent firefighting of process fires inside equipment.*

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On May 31, 2017, an explosion and fire occurred at the Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion) facility in Cambria, Wisconsin. The fire spread throughout the facility resulting in multiple combustible dust explosions both within and external to the production equipment.

Five employees of Didion were fatally injured as the result of the incident. An additional 14 employees were injured. Several of the fatalities and injuries were caused by exposure to the flames generated by the combustible dust explosions and flash fires, while others can be attributed to the collapse of the buildings. The incident resulted in an estimated \$15.37 million in property damage.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated the incident and found several safety issues including ineffective combustible dust safety management, ineffective process safety leadership, and a lack of regulatory coverage for combustible dusts. As a result of these findings, the CSB issued nine recommendations to Didion Milling, Inc. (Didion). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation No. 2017-07-I-WI-R7.