



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

Report:	West Fertilizer Fire and Explosion
Recommendation Number:	2013-02-I-TX-R18
Date Issued:	January 28, 2016
Recipient:	West Volunteer Fire Department
New Status:	Closed – Unacceptable Action/No Response Received
Date of Status Change:	July 28, 2021

Recommendation Text:

Develop standard operating procedures for pre-incident planning for facilities that store or handle hazardous materials such as fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate (FGAN).

Board Status Change Decision:

A. Rationale for Recommendation

On April 17, 2013, an explosion and fire occurred at the West Fertilizer Company (WFC), a fertilizer blending, retail, and distribution facility in West, Texas. The detonation of fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate (FGAN) fatally injured 12 emergency responders and three members of the public. Local hospitals treated more than 260 injured victims, many of whom required hospital admission. The blast completely destroyed the WFC facility and caused widespread damage to more than 150 offsite buildings.

Although the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) was unable to determine the exact cause of the fire, the radiant heat from the fire, fueled by the structure of the facility, flammable building contents, and the asphalt roof shingles, likely heated the surface of the FGAN pile. The CSB concluded that the presence of combustible materials used for construction of the facility and FGAN storage bins, in addition to the WFC practice of storing combustibles near the FGAN pile, contributed to the progression and intensity of the fire and likely resulted in the detonation.

As part a of its investigation, the CSB found that the West Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) did not conduct pre-incident planning or response training at the WFC facility to address FGAN-related incidents. As a result, the CSB issued a recommendation to the WVFD.

B. Response to the Recommendation

Following an initial response from WVFD summarizing actions taken by the WVFD after the West incident, the WVFD did not respond to any additional CSB requests for information on recommendation implementation since 2016.

C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based on the WVFD's failure to respond to the CSB, the Board voted to change the status of **CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R18** to "Closed - Unacceptable Action/No Response Received."