



U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

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ECOS Spring Meeting

March 29, 2023

Steve Owens
Chairperson

www.csb.gov



CSB Background

- **Established in 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments**
 - Concern after Bhopal tragedy and other major chemical accidents
- **First funded in November 1997**
 - Began operations in January 1998 (25th anniversary)
 - CSB has deployed to over 170 incidents and issued over 900 recommendations
- **5-Member Board (including Chairperson)**
- **Non-regulatory and non-enforcement agency**
 - But can issue subpoenas enforceable in court
 - Can refer other matters to EPA for enforcement



Authority: 42 USC § 7412(r)(6)

■ Charge:

- Investigate accidental chemical release resulting in fatality, serious injury or substantial property damage
- Issue reports with findings on cause or probably cause
- Make recommendations to companies, industry groups, agencies, legislative bodies, standard-setting entities, and others

■ Scope

- Chemical production, processing, handling or storage

■ Accidental Release Reporting Rule

- Issued in March 2020
- Data reported to CSB to date covers 247 incidents that resulted in fatalities at 36 facilities, serious injuries at 135 facilities, and substantial damage to 114 facilities nationwide



Challenges

■ Backlog in investigation reports

- Current backlog of 11 reports
- Backlog was 17 reports in July 2022, but 6 reports issued since then
- Goal: Eliminate remaining backlog by end of CY 2023

■ Significant staff shortage

- FY 2021 and 2022: lowest staff levels since 2001, but hiring now
- Very low number of investigators; other key staff needed too
- Prior Administration sought to eliminate the CSB

■ Board vacancies (not 5 members since 2011)

- Currently 3 members



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