



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

<b>Report:</b>	West Fertilizer Fire and Explosion
<b>Recommendation Number:</b>	2013-02-I-TX-R9 2013-02-I-TX-R10
<b>Date Issued:</b>	January 28, 2016
<b>Recipient:</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
<b>New Status:</b>	R9: Closed – Acceptable Action R10: Closed – Acceptable Action
<b>Date of Status Change:</b>	April 1, 2021

### Recommendation Text:

#### CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R9

*Assist training partners to develop and provide continual oversight for an FGAN training program. In addition, evaluate the training curriculum to confirm that it adequately meets course objectives as well as the details of recommendation 2013-02-I-TX-R8*

#### CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R10

*Develop an outreach program that notifies regional, state, and local fire departments about available FGAN training opportunities. The program should include the following:*

- a. Guidance for fire departments on how to identify FGAN hazards within their communities by engaging State Emergency Response Commissions and Local Emergency Planning Committees*
- b. Details on how to obtain FGAN training by submitting a proposal in response to the funding opportunity*
- c. Information on training partners and programs that provide FGAN training.*

### 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.

As a part of its investigation, the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) found that curriculum manuals used for hazardous materials (HAZMAT) training and certification of

firefighters placed little emphasis on emergency response to storage sites containing FGAN. This was true for both the Federal and Texas HAZMAT training and certification programs. In addition, lessons learned from previous FGAN-related fires were not shared with other fire departments, including the West Volunteer Fire Department. If previous lessons learned had been applied at West, the firefighters and emergency personnel who responded to the incident might have better understood the risks associated with FGAN-related fire and acted accordingly.

While many Federal and state grants support the needs of firefighters and fire departments, these grants often focused more on resources, such as personal protection equipment or firefighting equipment, rather than training. As a result, the CSB made four recommendations to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This status change summary addresses CSB Recommendation Nos. 2013-02-I-TX-R9 and 2013-02-I-TX-R10.

#### B. Response to the Recommendation

On September 16, 2016, FEMA awarded two grants of one million dollars each to the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to develop and deliver HAZMAT training, focused on FGAN hazards.

Regarding **CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R9**, FEMA stated that they addressed the recommendation via the Continuing Training Grants (CTG) Program, and crafted the language for the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with the assistance of the CSB to ensure the training language met the recommendation requirements. In addition, FEMA used an evaluation model to ensure all aspects of the grant were met, and dedicated FEMA program managers monitored the status of the grant throughout the life cycle of the award.

Regarding **CSB Recommendation No. 2013-02-I-TX-R10**, FEMA stated that there are several NTED training courses that provide guidance for fire departments on how to identify FGAN hazards within their communities by engaging state emergency responders and local emergency planning committees. FEMA also provided documentation that details how to submit a proposal to develop and deliver FGAN training. Finally, FEMA provided information on obtaining HazMat training through their website.

#### C. Board Analysis and Decision

Based on the information above, the Board determined that FEMA's actions met the intent of both recommendations. As such, the Board voted to change the status of CSB Recommendation Nos. 2013-02-I-TX-R9 and R10 to "Closed-Acceptable Action."