

Dust Explosions Are Preventable



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(PRWEB) July 12, 2005 -- According to information released by the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) through csb.gov, preliminary research into the hazards of dust explosions reveals that nearly 200 dust fires and explosions have occurred in U.S. industrial facilities over the past 25 years, resulting in approximately 100 fatalities and 600 injuries.

The CSB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating industrial chemical accidents. They are currently investigating the causes and prevention of dust explosions, such as those at West Pharmaceutical Services (North Carolina), Hayes Lemmerz (Indiana) and CTA Acoustics (Kentucky). The CSB claims that a total of 14 people were killed and 81 injured in these three accidents alone.

According to CSB Chairman Carolyn Merritt "dust explosions are preventable," adding later that there is no comprehensive federal program that addresses this problem.

"There are a whole host of dust explosion protection solutions that currently exist, which could prevent, or minimize, the effects of an explosive event," says David Cvetas, President of Cv Technology (www.cvtechnology.com) a prominent dust and gas explosion protection consulting and technology company. "Corporate executives that want to minimize the substantial risks need to take this issue seriously and not wait until an explosion occurs to take action." According to Cvetas, many corporations are slow to accept the reality that a dust explosion could happen to them, despite the massive financial risks and potential loss of life.

"The corporations we work with operate industrial or material processes that produce revenue from a quarter million to several million dollars a day," observes Cvetas. "A single incident can shut a facility down for weeks or months, with devastating effects."

Almost all organic material or un-oxidized metal, when in a dust cloud, will ignite at a temperature below 500C $\frac{3}{4}$ approximately the temperature of a recently extinguished match. Companies in pulp and paper, plastics, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and milling operations that handle powders and bulk solids are also susceptible. Food dusts such as sugar, starch, flour, and cocoa are also major causes of explosions.

Dust Explosion Prevention Today, safety-conscious facility managers are turning to specialized consultants and technology vendors to develop strategies to reduce or eliminate the underlying causes of explosive events.

Cvetas emphasizes that the best dust explosion protection systems blend active and passive technologies, and are as non-intrusive to process operations as possible. He credits his company's success to mixing and matching all available protection strategies and systems to each application, based on hard engineering data.

Cv Technology has also invested a great deal of time investigating technologies throughout Europe, to add to the protection solutions available in the U.S. Such technologies include the Q-Rohr, a device originally developed by Rembe of Germany for safe indoor venting of process-driven explosions.

"Dust explosion prevention systems provide companies with peace of mind that they are operating their plants safely, preventing potential loss of life, and also protecting capital goods and valuable process revenue," explains Cvetas.

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