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CSB Deploys to a Third Accident at Hoeganaes Corporation Metal Powder Plant in Gallatin, Tennessee

May 27, 2011

Investigation Details:
[Hoeganaes Corporation Fatal Flash Fire](#)

Washington, D.C., May 27, 2011 – A four-person investigation team from the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) is deploying to the site of a third serious accident at the Hoeganaes Corporation plant in Gallatin, Tennessee. An explosion was reported earlier today at the plant, injuring five, including three who were in critical condition at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center burn unit in Nashville.

The plant produces atomized iron powder for industrial customers and employs approximately 180 people.

A January 31 flash fire fueled by combustible iron dust killed two workers at the plant, including one who succumbed to burn injuries just six days ago. A similar fire involving iron dust occurred on March 29 and caused one injury. According to a company official, today's accident took place in the vicinity of one of the facility's furnaces.

At a news conference held in Nashville on May 11, the CSB released laboratory test results showing that metal dust collected from various locations around the facility was combustible and capable of exploding when dispersed in air and confined. CSB Investigative Team Lead Johnnie Banks noted that the CSB team had observed significant quantities of accumulated metal dust on surfaces within close proximity to the incident locations and elsewhere throughout manufacturing areas, including on elevated surfaces.

The cause of the most recent incident has yet to be determined. Investigator Banks will be returning to Gallatin tomorrow to lead the CSB's investigation. The team will be interviewing key witnesses, examining the incident scene, and requesting relevant documents.

The CSB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating serious chemical accidents. The agency's board members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. CSB investigations look into all aspects of chemical accidents, including physical causes such as equipment failure as well as inadequacies in regulations, industry standards, and safety management systems.

The Board does not issue citations or fines but does make safety recommendations to plants, industry organizations, labor groups, and regulatory agencies such as OSHA and EPA.

For more information, contact Communications Director Hillary Cohen, 202.446.8094 cell, who is accompanying the investigative team in Tennessee.

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