



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

We initiated this audit to determine what factors impede implementation of U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) safety recommendations. CSB was created under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to investigate industrial chemical accidents. CSB issues recommendation reports to government agencies, companies, trade associations, labor unions, and other groups. The reports contain specific, measurable safety recommendations designed to prevent future accidents. In 2004, CSB created the Office of Recommendations to work with recipients to pursue closure of safety recommendations by recipients' taking acceptable actions.

Furthering CSB's Goals

- *Improve safety and environmental protection by ensuring that CSB's recommendations are implemented and by broadly disseminating CSB's findings through advocacy and outreach.*

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2012/20120822-12-P-0724.pdf

U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board Should Improve Its Recommendations Process to Further Its Goal of Chemical Accident Prevention

What We Found

CSB did not consistently achieve its goals and standards, as outlined in its current strategic plan, for timely implementation of its safety recommendations. As of December 2010, CSB had issued 588 safety recommendations, of which 218 (37 percent) were open while actions were in progress to resolve them. Of the 218 recommendations, 54 (nearly 25 percent) were open for more than 5 years. Although CSB does not have enforcement authority, and implementation of some of its recommendations may face lengthy regulatory processes, CSB has not established or maintained sufficient internal controls and processes for safety recommendations. Such internal controls could include updating board orders and making full use of CSB's information management system. Without effective controls and efficient processes, there is an increased likelihood that recipients will not timely implement CSB safety recommendations and chemical accidents may not be prevented to the greatest extent possible.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the CSB Chairperson update board orders that establish policies for the Recommendation Program, timeliness of board votes, and coordination between Offices of Investigation and Recommendation. We also recommend that the Chairperson make full use of the TRIM (Total Records and Information Management) system and implement a formal advocacy program for safety recommendation implementation.

CSB concurred with all our recommendations except one involving calendaring notation items, and we consider that recommendation unresolved and are working toward a resolution. CSB has redrafted Board Order 022, to improve the data quality of its recommendation information. CSB plans to update Board Order 040 to enhance collaboration between investigations and recommendations personnel.

Noteworthy Achievements

CSB established Board Order 046 to develop a most-wanted program to advocate implementation of its safety recommendations. Also, CSB implemented TRIM, a commercial electronic data storage and management system, to enable CSB to track workflow activities related to recommendations as well as other organizational activities.