

INSIGHTS

U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board Releases Strategic Plan for 2017-2021

October 20, 2016

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The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (“CSB”) released its Strategic Plan for 2017-2021 today. The Strategic Plan is the result of 18 months of staff and stakeholder development and review. The plan serves as a blueprint for the CSB’s investigative priorities over the next five years. Chairperson Vanessa Allen Sutherland described the Board’s mission as “driving chemical safety change through independent investigations to protect people and the environment.” The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to help the Board advance its mission.

The three goals listed in the Strategic Plan are to: (1) prevent recurrence of significant chemical incidents through independent investigations; (2) advocate safety and achieve change through recommendations, outreach, and education; and (3) create and maintain an engaged, high-performing workforce.

Individual board members were very pleased with the Strategic Plan and the Board’s goals. Dr. Kristen Kulinowski, PhD commended the team for its focused effort and stated that she “loves our new mission, it is very crisp, and I can remember it. It epitomizes for me why we are all here.” Board Member Manny Ehrlich agreed. “This plan has established really solid foundational underpinnings for the period for which it is going to be in effect.”

For industry, the CSB’s goals are consistent with the Board’s current decision-making on deployment decisions. The CSB is a small government agency tasked with investigating significant chemical incidents and hazards. Chairperson Sutherland noted that approximately 5 to 15 incidents occur every day, and historically the CSB has investigated about 2 to 4 incidents per year. The Strategic Plan makes clear that the Board will likely investigate incidents that provide the Board with the opportunity to offer the broadest range of recommendations. In our experience, when the Board can draft a recommendation that goes beyond the four corners of the plant’s facility, the Board is more likely to investigate an incident. It is through its post-incident recommendations that the Board attempts to meet its vision of keeping the nation safe from chemical disasters.

According to the CSB, it has investigated 148 incidents and made 784 safety recommendations. As of September 2016, approximately 76% of the CSB's recommendations have been closed satisfactorily from the Board's perspective.

Click [here](#) to read the CSB's Strategic Plan.