Overcoming PSM Challenges for Small Sites and Chemical Companies: Observations, Insights, and Guidance from the Trenches

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Abstract

Complete implementation of the OSHA Process Safety Management regulation is a daunting task for small chemical companies. Typically, small companies and sites are much more resource limited in terms of man-power, and also may be constrained in terms of tools, and current knowledge, skills and abilities of its limited staff. Through the OSHA PSM Covered Chemical Facilities National Emphasis Program, performance standards are increasing. So how can a smaller chemical company navigate the PSM landscape and make steady progress in development and implementation of a practical, functional program that can be maintained and improved? From program development to the technical details of process safety information and mechanical integrity, management of ongoing changes, to the all important “buy-in” of personnel from the president to operators and technicians in creation of a process safety culture – how can it be achieved? This paper will present observations and insights from years of experience working “in the trenches” with small companies - regarding common pitfalls and limitations at small sites and successful methods to move forward and overcome obstacles.

Keywords: PSM, Process Safety, Small Company, Limited Resources, Guidance, Process Safety Culture, Chemical Facilities