



Chemical Safety Board (CSB) Talking Points for ASSP Members

About CSB:

- The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) was created by Congress in 1990, under the Clean Air Act Amendments, to investigate and help prevent major chemical incidents at industrial facilities. Its investigations identify root causes and issue recommendations to save lives and prevent disasters.¹
- The Chemical Safety Board (CSB) issues recommendations to a broad range of entities — including federal, state and local regulatory agencies (such as OSHA and EPA), industry organizations, companies, standards developers, labor unions and others — to help prevent or reduce accidental chemical releases that cause death, injury or property damage. While these recommendations are not legally binding, the CSB actively advocates for their adoption and monitors their implementation.²
 - For example, the CSB has successfully pushed for updates to standards such as ASSP's Z117 to enhance worker safety.
- Unlike some Federal agencies such as OSHA and the EPA, the CSB is not an enforcement agency. Its work carries no civil or criminal liability. Instead, it focuses on independent, science-based recommendations that promote transparency and collaboration with stakeholders.³

The Impact of CSB:

- CSB has issued over 1,000 safety recommendations, 87% of which have been implemented. These recommendations have led to stronger safety practices, better training and reduced risk in workplaces and communities.⁴
- CSB has investigated nearly 180 major chemical incidents, which collectively caused more than 200 fatalities, 1,300 serious injuries, and billions of dollars in environmental and property damage.⁵
- CSB has a \$14.4 million annual budget and 50 employees. Despite its small size, the CSB provides an outsized return on investment by preventing costly, deadly incidents.⁶
- In 1989, the senate emphasized the necessity for CSB's independence because agencies with rulemaking & investigative functions may overlook systemic hazards or regulatory shortcomings.⁷



- In just the past five years, over 460 chemical incidents have been reported nationwide, underscoring the urgent and ongoing need for CSB's work.⁸
- This past year, the CSB released 3 volumes of chemical incident data to raise public awareness and prevent future accidents — a first-of-its-kind resource.⁹
- Continued funding and support for the CSB is critical to ensuring workers, communities and the environment remain protected from catastrophic chemical incidents.¹⁰
- **Economic Impact:** Preventing chemical incidents protects not only workers and communities but also helps companies avoid costly shutdowns, lawsuits and cleanup costs.
- **Community Safety:** Many CSB investigations involve incidents that impact surrounding neighborhoods, schools and businesses — making CSB's work essential to public trust and community resilience.
- **Global Leadership:** A strong and fully funded CSB reinforces the United States as a global leader in occupational and chemical safety.
- **Bipartisan Support:** Worker and community safety is a bipartisan issue. Historically, Congress has supported CSB's mission across administrations, underscoring its broad importance.



¹ Gerald V. Poje and Isadore Rosenthal, “The Role of the Chemical Safety Board in Preventing Chemical Accidents,” *Symposium Series No. 148* (Institution of Chemical Engineers, 2001), <https://www.icheme.org/media/10150/xvi-paper-05.pdf>.

² Poje and Rosenthal, “The Role of the Chemical Safety Board.”

³ “Agency Roles and Responsibilities,” *Agency Roles and Responsibilities*, U.S. Chemical Safety Board, accessed July 31, 2025, https://www.csb.gov/assets/1/6/csb_roles_and_responsibilities.pdf.

⁴ “CSB Releases New Video, ‘Safety Pays Off: The Value of Vigilance’ ,” CSB, July 1, 2025, <https://www.csb.gov/#:~:text=About%20the%20CSB,a%20wide%20variety%20of%20industries>.

⁵ Two examples of major chemical incidents: Jan 24, 2020: Watson Grinding explosion in Houston killed 3; \$90M in settlements. Nov 27, 2019: TPC Group explosions in Port Neches injured 3; \$450M property damage + \$153M nearby damage. See “CSB Releases New Video, ‘Safety Pays off: The Value of Vigilance,’” CSB, June 23, 2025, <https://www.csb.gov/csb-releases-new-video-safety-pays-off-the-value-of-vigilance/>

⁶ “CSB Releases New Video, ‘Safety Pays off: The Value of Vigilance,’” CSB, June 23, 2025, <https://www.csb.gov/csb-releases-new-video-safety-pays-off-the-value-of-vigilance/>.

⁷ In 1989, the Senate noted, “*it is unlikely that an agency charged both with rule-making and investigating functions would be quick to acknowledge that existing requirements were insufficient to prevent an accident.*” See “BUDGET JUSTIFICATION & ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN,” U.S. CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD, 2002, https://www.csb.gov/assets/1/7/justification_2002.pdf.

⁸ “About the CSB,” CSB, accessed July 31, 2025, <https://www.csb.gov/about-the-csb/#:~:text=In%20July%202022%2C%20as%20part,of%20the%20CSB's%20website%20at>:

⁹ Before CSB began publishing these volumes, no federal agency regularly released incident reports with summaries and root cause analysis made publicly available. See “CSB Releases Volume 3 of Chemical Incident Reports,” CSB, July 22, 2025, <https://www.csb.gov/us-chemical-safety-board-releases-volume-3-of-chemical-incident-reports-incidents-resulted-in-18-billion-dollars-in-property-damage/>.

¹⁰ “CSB Releases Volume 3 of Chemical Incident Reports,” CSB.