Combustible Dust: Hazards and Precautions

Giby Joseph and Francisco Altamirano
Investigator
U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board
2175 K Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington DC 20037
Telephone 202-261-7633
Fax 202-974-7633

ABSTRACT

Thirteen fatalities within the span of a month in early 2003 signified the catastrophic potential of combustible dust. The West Pharmaceuticals (North Carolina – Jan. 2003) and CTA Acoustics (Kentucky – Feb. 2003) incidents raised the dangers of combustible dust on a national level. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) in the course of conducting these two incident investigations recognized that combustible dust hazards are not well known, and helping industry understand the hazard needs to become a priority.

This paper presents some lesson-learned from recent combustible dust incidents and identifies good practices to increase awareness of the dangers of combustible dusts.