WHY BP FAILED TO LEARN THE LESSONS:  
The Texas City Refinery Explosion

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Abstract

An explosion at BP’s Texas City Refinery in March 2005 cost the lives of 15 people and injured nearly 200 more. BP had failed to learn the lesson of earlier incidents, such as the Esso Longford explosion, that major hazards are quite distinct from the hazards that give rise to most occupational injuries and must be managed quite differently. This paper explores the reasons for this failure to learn, focusing on the company’s organisational structure and its incentive systems. It is based on the author’s book, *Failure to Learn*. 