

PITTSBURGH PLATE GLASS COMPANY

Interoffice

CHEMICAL DIVISION

Correspondence

P. O. BOX 1000

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

Date June 6, 1966

Subject Fire in #1 VDC Drier April 28, 1966

T J. E. Wyche

From J. C. Youts

Reference

VDC DRYING
Plan.

At approximately 8:00 A.M. on April 28, 1966, the methyl chloroform plant operator discovered smoke coming from the sewers near the VDC driers. Ansul powder and carbon dioxide extinguishers were discharged into the nearby sewer openings to extinguish the fire. This proved to be unsuccessful and organic discharge piping from the driers to the sewer was removed. At this time, the organic discharge line from #1 VDC drier was found to be very hot and hence the fire was pinpointed to the drier. A large flow of nitrogen was placed on the drier to extinguish the fire and cool the drier. Water was also placed on the drier but could not be left on continuously because of steam pressure buildup. At about 10:00 A.M., the drier was cool enough to be water washed and was isolated until the following morning.

The drier was disassembled and the dessicant dumped on April 29, 1966. About 50% of the steam coils were found broken and part of the dessicant (activated alumina) was found burned black and fused into large lumps (see Figures 1 and 2). The shell of the drier was found to be in good condition with the exception of a scorched area near the bottom of the drier (see Figure 3). Some of the steam inlets on the bottom flange of the drier appeared to be fused shut (see Figure 4). The remainder of the steam coil found to be intact is pictured in Figure 5. A new steam coil was installed in the drier, the drier hydrostatically tested at 150 PSIG, recharged and placed in service.

A sample of the burned dessicant from the drier was sent to the Laboratory to determine if any peroxide was present. A sample of dessicant from another drier at the same stage of reactivation as was #1 VDC dryer when it caught fire was also sent to the Laboratory for peroxide determination. Neither sample showed any evidence of peroxide and hence the cause of the fire cannot be determined.

To insure against contacting residual VDC in a washed drier with air, hot nitrogen is being used for reactivation and cool nitrogen for cooling and purging.

JCY:nld

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File

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