

Monsanto

FROM (NAME & LOCATION)

H. M. Lacy - Texas City

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

MON-1370

DATE

September 19, 1983

cc:

SUBJECT

REFERENCE

TO

: Department 53
Operating Personnel

BASF has informed us of a serious accident at a PA Plant in Eastern Europe involving a salt bath cooler explosion. We do not have all the details and our plant is designed and instrumented to avoid a similar situation, but it is appropriate to communicate what information we have.

This PA Plant, operating with similar catalyst and reactor conditions as ours had an apparent "partial" power failure with some circuits affected and others continuing in service.

The reactors continued to operate but an operator noticed, while checking his area, that a salt bath agitator had stopped (and had apparently been out of service for several minutes). For whatever reason, this was not detected by any indication in the control room.

The operators restarted the agitator from outside and the cooler exploded. Apparently, temperatures had gone out of control and water continued to feed, likely at a very high rate, while the reactor was running without cooler agitation. When the agitator was restarted, the explosion resulted. We understand there was one fatality, possibly from shock, and another major injury from burning salt, but that the second individual is recovering. We do not know whether or not these reactors had the newer type cooler (which we installed in 1981) in service.

The points to consider for our operation are as follows:

- 1) In our plant, an agitator failure is interlocked so that reactors should shut down. Be sure that in case of an agitator outage, that this does happen. This interlock is not to be bypassed under any circumstances.

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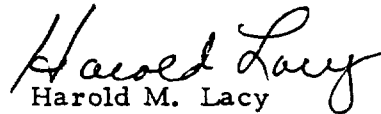
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- 2) In case we should, for whatever reason, observe an agitator not running with the reactor in service, we should immediately:
 - a) Clear the area.
 - b) Tripout the reactor. .

This accident was probably intensified by the agitator being down for some time with the salt bath cooling system becoming more and more unstable. However, with the potential involved, we do not consider it safe under any circumstances to restart an agitator with the reactor running.

When we receive additional details from BASF concerning this matter, we will relay them to you.


Harold M. Lacy

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