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Description of document: Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB)
Agency Reorganization Plan submitted to OMB 2025

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Chief FOIA Officer—FOIA Request
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[CSB FOIA Public Access Portal](#)
[FOIA.gov](#)

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04/29/2025

This letter is an initial and final response from the United States Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The CSB FOIA office received your request on 03/17/2025 and assigned it control number CSB-2025-0080. Please cite this number in any future communications with our office regarding your request.

Requested Records

You requested the following:

I request the following records: a copy of the Agency Reorganization Plan submitted to OMB by the Chemical Safety Board in February or March 2025 as required by Executive Order 14210 of February 11, 2025, Implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency Workforce Optimization Initiative.

Disposition of Request

Your request has been granted. In accordance with the OMB-OPM memorandum dated February 26, 2025, entitled "Guidance on Agency RIF and Reorganization Plans Requested by Implementing The President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Workforce Optimization Initiative", attached please find CSB's Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plan.

The CSB

The CSB is an independent federal agency whose statutory mandate is to investigate incidents/accidents at stationary sources (fixed facilities) that result in both a chemical release into the atmosphere, and a fatality, serious injury, or substantial property damages. You may wish to visit our website (www.csb.gov) to view our videos or read our investigation reports or other documents available to the public. Additional information regarding the federal government's administration of the FOIA, including a listing of FOIA contact information, is available at www.foia.gov.

Appeals

You may appeal this response to the CSB's FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. Such an appeal must be made in writing and must be postmarked, or electronically transmitted, within 90

days of the date of this response letter. An appeal should include: a copy of your initial request; a copy of this letter; and a statement of the circumstances, reasons, or arguments supporting your position. The appeal should also clearly identify the adverse determination/s that is/are being appealed and the assigned request number. To ensure proper handling, you should mark an appeal letter and its envelope as a "FOIA Appeal." FOIA appeals should be submitted electronically, e-mailed to foiaappeals@csb.gov, or mailed to: ATTN: Office of the General Counsel/FOIA Appeals, Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, 1750 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 910, Washington, DC 20006.

Office of Government Information Services

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation (in other words, using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation). You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road - OGIS College Park, MD, 20740-6001. E-mail: ogis@nara.gov. Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>. Telephone: 202-741-5770. Fax: 202-741-5769. Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448. Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the CSB's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer.

This response completes the CSB's processing of your request, which is now closed. Steven Messer, FOIA Officer, is responsible for this response. If you have any questions about this response, feel free to contact me by telephone at: (202) 815-8019, or by e-mail at Steven.Messer@csb.gov. Additionally, if you have any questions about our response to your request, you may contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Hillary Cohen, by phone at (202) 446-8094 or email at Hillary.Cohen@csb.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

Steven Messer
FOIA Officer
Acting General Counsel
Office of General Counsel



U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

March 13, 2025

This document is provided by the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) in accordance with the OMB-OPM memorandum dated February 26, 2025, entitled "Guidance on Agency RIF and Reorganization Plans Requested by *Implementing The President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Workforce Optimization Initiative*".

The CSB is an independent, non-regulatory agency created by Congress, led by a multi-member board. 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(6)(A) & (B). The CSB's public safety mission as mandated by Congress is to investigate incidents involving the accidental release of hazardous chemicals that result in fatalities, serious injuries, and substantial property damage; determine their cause or probable cause; and make recommendations to prevent such incidents from occurring again and minimize their consequences. 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(6)(C).

The CSB's enabling statute mandates that the CSB *shall* investigate *any* accidental release in the United States that results in a fatality, serious injury or substantial property damage. The CSB's enabling statute further states: "In no event shall the Board forego an investigation where an accidental release causes a fatality or serious injury among the general public or had the potential to cause substantial property damage or a number of deaths or injuries among the general public". 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(6)(E).

Before the current CSB board members were appointed, the CSB had an unacceptable backlog of 17 open investigations, some dating as far back as 2016, that had accumulated under prior agency leadership. The enormous backlog was a major concern for Congress.

Under the CSB's current leadership, the CSB has been operating efficiently and productively. Between late July 2022 and December 2023, the CSB issued final reports for all 17 investigations and completely eliminated the long-standing backlog. The 17 final investigation reports issued by the CSB during this time are the most reports that the agency has ever issued in such a short period, and they represent the CSB's highest level of efficiency and productivity in its history.

In June 2024, the CSB issued an additional final investigation report, which was not part of the backlog. Including this report, the CSB issued 18 reports in less than two years between July 2022 and June 2024. This also represents the most reports that the CSB has ever issued in a two-year period, again reflecting the agency's high level of efficiency and productivity under the agency's current leadership.

The 18 investigations for which the CSB has issued final reports since July 2022 involved 26 deaths, 106 serious injuries, and over \$3 billion in damage to chemical facilities and nearby homes and businesses.

The CSB will issue another report soon for one of the agency's ongoing investigations that is nearing conclusion. This will be the 19th report issued by the CSB since July 2022, further underscoring the CSB's current efficiency and productivity.

The CSB currently has 9 new investigations underway, 7 of which were initiated during fiscal year (FY) 2024. The 7 investigations initiated during FY 2024 were the most initiated by the CSB in a single fiscal year in many years. Moreover, the CSB has not had 9 current investigations underway in well over a decade.

The CSB's current investigations involve catastrophic chemical incidents in 7 states: California, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The incidents resulted in 6 deaths, injuries to nearly 100 people, and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to facilities and nearby homes and businesses. The incidents also forced over 90,000 people to shelter in place and 17,000 people to evacuate.

The CSB is a very small agency with a very limited budget and only 44 total professional staff on payroll at present. Two of the CSB's professional staff accepted the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), however, and now are on paid administrative leave as provided under the DRP. The loss of these 2 employees already is adversely affecting the agency's efforts, as the CSB actually now has only 42 professional staff to do the agency's work. All of these 42 professional staff have mission-critical duties relating to the CSB's core investigative function and are necessary to enable the CSB to protect public safety and fulfill the agency's statutory mandate.

The CSB's professional staff are assigned to four general offices within the agency: (i) Investigations and Recommendations, (ii) Administration, (iii) Communications, and (iv) General Counsel. The vast majority of the CSB's professional staff are in the Office of Investigations and Recommendations. Because of the CSB's very small number of staff, many of the other very important duties at the agency that directly support the work done by the CSB's investigations and recommendations team -- including contracting, human resources, communications, records management, and legal assistance -- are performed by only one or two employees in each area.

Each week, serious chemical incidents happen in this country that result in fatalities, serious injuries, and substantial property damage and threaten the safety and well-being of surrounding communities. Over the last few years, the CSB has received reports of nearly 500 serious chemical incidents in 43 states. Because of the CSB's very low number of staff and limited resources, the CSB already does not have the ability to deploy to -- and conduct full investigations of -- most of these serious incidents. Even a minor reduction in force would have a significant negative impact on the CSB's ability to perform its statutorily mandated public safety mission. A reduction in the CSB's current staff level would further decrease the agency's ability to deploy to serious chemical incidents, delay the completion of current ongoing investigations, potentially result in a new backlog in investigation reports or even cause some investigations to be suspended, reduce the CSB's efficiency and productivity, and jeopardize public safety.

The February 26 OMB-OPM memo states: "Nothing in this memorandum shall have any application to...[p]ositions that are necessary to meet...public safety responsibilities." Because all positions at the CSB are necessary to meet the agency's statutorily mandated public safety responsibilities, the CSB does not anticipate implementing a reduction in force at this time.