

Developments in North America

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The North American Pulp & Paper Industry has made remarkable progress over the past 65 years in improving recovery boiler safety. This presentation covers the safety trends in North America and the current focus for making further improvements. Progress was slow initially, but the coordinated efforts among many organizations including Recovery Boiler Manufacturers, BLRBAC, Canadian BLRBAC, American Forest & Paper Association, TAPPI, Research Universities, and others in the recovery boiler community yielded very impressive results. While the safety results are much improved, the industry is still encountering occasional problems with recovery boiler and dissolving tank explosions. Efforts by these organizations are aimed at further reducing these occurrences and the negative impact on personnel and equipment.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, the North American Pulp & Paper Industry was experiencing 4 to 6 recovery boiler explosions per year. To address this serious problem, the Black Liquor Recovery Boiler Advisory Committee (BLRBAC) was formed in late 1961 by several groups of concerned professionals that had become alarmed by the number of Black Liquor Recovery Boiler explosions that resulted in many injuries and death to personnel operating these boilers. These groups consisted of Insurance Companies, Boiler Manufacturers, and Paper Company professionals that were involved in operating, insuring, or manufacturing Black Liquor Recovery Boilers.

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) Recovery Boiler Program was established in 1974 to develop programs and assist companies operating recovery boilers to improve the safety, integrity, and reliability of the recovery boiler operations. The Program is under the direction of a Steering Committee to provide a forum for the members to develop information, reference manuals, audit guidelines, checklists, and training aids useful in evaluating: Safe Operating Procedures; Specifications and Construction; Maintenance Programs; Organization and Training; and Research & Development Programs. Program Membership is open to all companies operating recovery boilers. The AF&PA Recovery Boiler Program and BLRBAC work closely together to continuously improve the safety of recovery boiler operations.