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ALERT
to
Owners/Operators of Refineries and Plants where Cokers are used

On November 25, 1998, a coker fire and explosion at a refinery in the State of Washington, US, resulted in six fatalities. A six-month investigation by the Department of Labour and Industries of the state concluded with "*an unprecedented US\$4.4 million compliance agreement*" designed to make the refinery safer and more healthful for workers.

While the tragedy was initiated "when a storm and high winds knocked out power, depriving the refinery of its ability to generate steam", it is significant to note that administrative violations were found and that they were essentially all related to inadequate procedures and inadequate employee training. We would like to draw the attention of our industry to the fact that irrespective of advances in pressure equipment technology and design, it is critical to remember the human elements involved. Thus, proper procedures must be put in place and operators properly trained and certified in all pressure equipment operations to ensure proper safety.

You are asked to review your plant operations to help prevent any similar occurrences and to ensure a high level of pressure equipment safety. Further details of this coker incident may be reviewed on the Internet web page <http://www.wa.gov/lni/news/pr52699.htm> maintained by the Department of Labor and Industries of the State of Washington.

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