

Holiday Operations

November 2013



What happens in a process plant over a holiday? Many plants shut down or reduce operations during a holiday period. Equipment may be in a non-standard condition while processes are on hold or shut down. Even though the plant is shut down, it is likely that hazardous materials are still present in storage tanks and process vessels. Equipment that is shut down may be opened for inspection or maintenance. Maintenance and contractor employees may outnumber operating personnel. After the holiday, processes are re-started, sometimes after having been modified during the shutdown.

Some plants continue to operate during a holiday but with reduced staff, delaying less critical activities to allow people to spend the holiday with their families. Fewer managers and technical staff may be present to provide oversight or answer questions.

What can you do?

- ➔ Recognize that process hazards do not take a holiday, and always pay attention to process safety.
- ➔ When celebrating holidays, remember your work schedule, make sure you get enough sleep, and be ready to work when you arrive at the plant.
- ➔ Be available when you are required to work a holiday or weekend. Don't make somebody else work overtime to cover for you. This could put a fatigued co-worker more at risk for an accident or injury.
- ➔ Do not forget the processes that are still operating even if they are on hold, such as a distillation column on total reflux. Record the required data and keep an eye on those operations in case a process deviation occurs.
- ➔ Remember that storage tanks and process vessels may contain hazardous material, even if the plant is shut down for the holiday. Routinely check these tanks and vessels.
- ➔ Don't hesitate to call managers or engineers as soon as you suspect a problem. Don't wait for the problem to become worse. Even on a holiday, it is their job to help you!
- ➔ If you have maintenance or inspection contractors working in your plant during a holiday shutdown, make sure they follow your plant's contractor safety procedures.
- ➔ Follow proper procedures when starting equipment up after a holiday. Make sure that equipment is ready and that pre-startup safety reviews are complete if there was maintenance or modification during the shutdown.

A holiday is a great time to celebrate, but, at work, celebrate safe operation!