

6. Keep it in the Pipes!

OSHA's Process Safety Management Standard applies to most meat packing, cold storage, poultry and food processing plants. This standard is intended to keep ammonia refrigeration systems safe by keeping the ammonia where it belongs - in the pipes!

Some of the important provisions of the PSM standard are:

The PSM standard gives workers and their union the right to all of the information the company has about how they operate and maintain their ammonia refrigeration system, and requires employers to consult with workers about some aspects of the PSM program.

PSM requires the company to keep detailed information about all of the components of their ammonia refrigeration system and to document that the system was built and is operated in a safe way.

Employers have to go through a formal process of trying to think of all the possible ways the system could fail and cause an ammonia release. The employer has to take steps to prevent the failures from happening.

Employees must be properly trained, and must receive refresher training at least every 3 years.

The company even has responsibility for contractors who work on or around the ammonia refrigeration system.

Equipment must be inspected and maintained properly BEFORE it breaks.

EVERYTHING gets documented.

Question for discussion:

When Marcus asked his supervisor about the safety of the ammonia refrigeration system, his supervisor responded. "This company really cares about safety. Don't worry. We have a great alarm system and emergency evacuation plan."

What do you think of this response?