

Safety Manager Arrested in Fatal Explosion in Auto Parts Factory in China



After two fairly recent and tragic explosions at sawmills in BC, Canadian safety professionals should be well aware that wood dust is combustible and so poses a serious safety hazard in workplaces where it's present.

But wood dust isn't the only dust that can explode. And if safety professionals aren't aware of the other types of combustible dust and fail to take appropriate safety measures, they could face liability and even arrest like a safety manager in China.

On Aug. 2, a room filled with metal dust exploded at the Kunshan Zhongrong factory that produces and polishes aluminum alloy tire rims for car makers, killing 75 workers and injuring 185 (some with serious burns).

On Aug. 20, Chinese police arrested three members of senior management in connection with this incident:

- The chairman of Kunshan Zhongrong Metal Products Co. Ltd, the company that owned the factory
- The company's general manager
- A manager in charge of workplace safety.

The initial allegations are that the factory's safety facilities were insufficient, the working environment was bad and production methods were illegal. The direct cause of the explosion was the ignition of excessive dust from the production process.

To avoid incidents like this one in your workplace and the same fate as this safety manager do the following:

- Watch this video to learn more about the hazards of combustible dust
- Assess your workplace for any risks associated with dust accumulations
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the safety measures in place to control such dust
- Implement proper housekeeping practices for cleaning up dust in the workplace
- Make sure you have safe work procedures for the use of any equipment that could ignite combustible dust, such as portable heaters. For example, bar

the use of such heaters in areas containing combustible dust.