

## **Austin Powder Public Meeting Address**

**September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Venue: Vinton County Community Building  
31935 State Route 93, McArthur, OH 45651**

Good afternoon. My name is Mike Abele. I have worked for Austin Powder for 35 years and as many of you know, am a local resident with many friends and colleagues here in the area. Austin is holding this public meeting today in compliance with EPA rules and guidance relating to accidental releases from processes that are subject to the Clean Air Act Risk Management Program. Those rules require a public meeting following any such accidental release that results in a shelter-in-place order or evacuation, even if there are no other impacts.

This meeting relates to the shelter-in-place and evacuation orders resulting from a release of nitrogen oxide gas from our PETN plant here at our Red Diamond facility. The NAICS code most closely corresponding with the process is 325920, which is related to the manufacturing of explosives.

The release occurred on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 7:03 a.m. and lasted for approximately five and a half hours.

The release of gas occurred as a result of a safety valve operating properly and as designed to avoid the possibility of a more serious event. The safety valve released gas from vents on a partially filled nitric acid tank in a controlled manner. At no point did nitric acid leak or escape into the water or soil. The investigation is still in progress, but preliminary information suggests that an increased temperature in the nitric acid tank caused a chemical reaction to occur leading to the build-up of the nitrogen oxide gas that was vented into the atmosphere through the safety system. The release occurred during a time when plant systems were offline for maintenance.

Nitrogen oxide gases are primarily formed during combustion processes when nitrogen and oxygen react at high temperatures. Nitrogen oxide gases are commonly found in the emissions of vehicles, power plants and following lightning strikes.

Upon observation of the release, the emergency plan was implemented and the site alarm was activated. Relevant agencies were notified, including the local emergency management agency for Vinton County, the Ohio EPA, and the National Response Center. Austin Powder evacuated employees to a safe location while monitoring of the facilities was established. Out of an abundance of caution, local agencies also evacuated the immediate neighbors to the plant and those in the Town of Zaleski.

A third-party company that specializes in environmental consulting estimated that no more than 3,945 pounds of nitrogen oxide gas was released into the environment.

The weather at the time was dry with 50% cloud cover, a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and a windspeed of 5 mph coming from the southwest.

There are no known adverse impacts on or off-site to vegetation, groundwater, or animals. There was no damage to equipment. Most importantly, no individuals reported requiring medical attention. Air monitoring by local fire and hazmat teams showed nitrogen oxide levels at the property boundary were below health-hazard thresholds. Testing by Ohio EPA confirmed that there were no adverse effects on surface water. Field screenings in the community found no detectable levels of nitrogen oxide, or impacts to surface water.

Actions implemented to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence include engineering controls, administrative controls and training.

We sincerely regret the disruption and concern the shelter-in-place and evacuation orders caused our neighbors and the surrounding community. Our safety systems worked as designed, and our team—many of whom are your friends, family members, and neighbors—responded swiftly to protect the community.

Austin Powder is proud to have been a part of the Vinton County community for over 90 years and we deeply appreciate the cooperation of local emergency personnel and the understanding of our neighbors. We remain committed to safety and earning your continued trust.

This is the information that the EPA's regulations and guidance direct us to share. We are not able to respond to any questions or provide additional information today due to ongoing litigation, but we encourage you to submit any follow up questions or comments via email to: [enquiries@austinpowder.com](mailto:enquiries@austinpowder.com)

**End of Statement**

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