

---

## Making Matches: A

**January, 1854:** Match factory fire at Shad Island, Brunswick, ME

**October, 1871:** There was a match factory involved in the great Chicago fire (but I couldn't find out which company).

**January, 1876:** Bristol, Australia: "Mr. C. King, proprietor of the Westover Match Factory, near Bristol, and a Mr. Napp, of Weston-super-Mare, were killed on January 29 through an explosion. While they were in conversation in the factory one of them trod on some explosive substance with the terrible result stated."

**July, 1894:** "Three persons were injured by an explosion at the Trenton Match Factory, Trenton, NJ, at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon. The damage to the building will amount to several thousand dollars due more to the force of the explosion than to the fire which followed, and which was quickly controlled by the Fire Department, aided by the employees [sic], who put the company's apparatus into service. The explosion was due to the overheating of about five gallons of the composition which is used in making the heads of matches, and which is composed principally of chlorate of potash and phosphorus."

**December, 1896:** "A disastrous explosion has taken place in a match factory in Bavaria (Australia). Seventeen persons were killed."

**May, 1913:** "The fire at the wax vesta factory at Caversham [Australia?] was confined to the large manufacturing room...The loss is estimated at \$500 over insurance."

**June, 1922:** O.C. Barber match plant, Barberton, OH: "A series of three blasts broke every window in the plant and blew the roof off a nearby Babcock & Wilcox building. Though the first explosion caused minimal damage, it served as a warning for workers to evacuate the building. At least 8 people were injured, one of whom was a local fireman who later died of his injuries. The explosion served as a reminder of the dangers associated with the match-making industry."

**March, 1924:** "A terrible disaster occurred at Corio, Italy, 19 miles north-west of Turin. An explosion occurred in a match factory, and 1,617 persons were killed or injured. The victims were buried in the blazing ruins of the building, in which 20 tons of inflammable material, including a large quantity of chlorate of potassium, were stored."

**June, 1925:** "MATCH FACTORY FIRE TRAPS 20; BURNS 12; Men and Women in Panic, Rush to the Street With Their Clothing Ablaze. FLAMES SPREAD RAPIDLY. Twenty employees of the King Book Match Company were trapped in a one-story building at 257 Driggs Avenue, Brooklyn, yesterday afternoon when fire started and swept rapidly through the place, fed by the paper, wood and sulphur used in the manufacture of the matches."

**November, 1926:** Fire at Bryant & May match factory at Richmond, Australia. About twelve gross of wax matches were destroyed, but no damage was done to the building.

**December, 1929:** "A spectacular fire at the match factory of Matches, Australia, Ltd., at Zetland, Australia, caused an estimated \$10,000."

**March, 1933:** "Six Girls Killed In Match Factory Explosion HULL (Quebec). March 15. Six girls

---

## Dangerous Endeavor!

were burned to death when the Canada Match factory was burnt following an explosion today. Several are missing. Roaring up from a mixing tank the explosion caught 151 girls, and in a few minutes the building..."

**January, 1939:** "SYDNEY, AUST.— A fierce fire fed by many millions of matches severely damaged four premises, and the explosion of 25 tons of chlorate of potash smashed windows and in other ways damaged ten homes and other buildings in the vicinity at Waterloo, at 5 a.m. to-day. The total damage is estimated at £60,000. It is believed that the fire started among the paper stocks and machinery of George B. Philip and Son, printers and bookbinders, at 298 Elizabeth Street, Waterloo, which is adjoined at the sides and rear by the works of Matches, Australia, Ltd., whose head office is next door."

**May, 1947:** "Explosion Deaths CAIRO— Five Egyptian workers were killed and 14 injured in a match factory explosion in Galiub industrial district, north of Cairo, the police said yesterday. Investigation into the cause of the explosion was being carried out."

**July, 1953:** "As a result of an explosion in the local Ganesh Match Factory situated in Niranjan Gardens, Krishnaraj Mohalla, India, four workers died of serious burns in KR Hospital today evening. Two others were also admitted to the hospital for burns."

**?, 1954:** Big match Factory fire in Hartlepool, England

**December, 2001:** "Six people died and four were injured in fire that broke out today as a result of an explosion in a partly German-owned safety-match factory, Kometa, in the Latvian capital Riga."

**September, 2002:** "Chief Minister Jayalalithaa ordered a probe into the fire accident at a match factory in Tuticorin district [India], in which eight women were charred to death and 48 persons injured."

**February, 2003:** "Three girls employed in one of the biggest match units in Gudiyatham town died of suffocation on Monday evening, when they locked themselves inside a bathroom to escape from a fire. According to the police, raw materials and unfinished match sticks caught fire during the process of grinding of sulphur inside the unit located in Goodanagaram area. Twelve workers sustained burn injuries while trying to run away."

**July, 2003:** "A female employee of a match factory was burnt to death and another injured in a fire at the factory premises at Karimullahbagh in Shyampur (India?) yesterday. The fire originated from a first floor spark of gunpowder blowing up the factory rooms at around 3:00am, fire brigade sources said."

**February, 2007:** Gudiyattam, India: Five workers died in a match factory fire.

**October, 2009:** "FIRE of unknown origin destroyed a section of the abandoned match factory at Plantain Walk, West Bank Demerara, Guyana"

**September, 2010:** Munshiganj, Bangladesh: An explosion in a Munshiganj match factory left two workers dead and five others wounded on Monday, police said. The Akiz Match Factory's 'cast iron roller' exploded just after midday, the police officer said. The factory, located near Mukterpur Ghat on the Shitalakhya river, manufactures the 'Dolphin' brand of matches, he added."