West Fertilizer Emergency Response
United States
Environmental Protection Agency

West, McLennan County, Texas

9430172

Time Line

- April 17, 2013
  - At approximately 1950 on Wednesday April 17, 2013 a fire and subsequent explosion occurred at the West Fertilizer Plant in West, TX.
  - Authorities reported 15 deaths, approximately 170 injuries requiring hospitalization, and damage to dozens of homes, a nursing home, and an apartment complex.
  - EPA mobilized resources to the incident, along with Federal, State, and Local resources.

West Fertilizer Plant prior to 4/17/2013

West Fertilizer Plant post 4/17/2013

April 18, 2013

- Federal, State, and Local resources continue to be mobilized to West.
- Search and rescue, as well as fire fighting are the primary objectives of the resources.
- EPA deploys air monitoring instruments to determine if ongoing fires and the prior explosion released hazardous materials into the atmosphere. Initiate 24 hr. operations.
- EPA deploys the EPA ASPECT aircraft to conduct an overflight of the facility. Ammonia detected between 6-10 ppm at 650 feet downwind of the site.
- CST and Waco FD conduct an entry to the site and secure a leaking anhydrous ammonia bullet tank.

Explosion site smoldering.

Point of fertilizer detonation

Remaining fertilizer plant infrastructure.

ATF conducting assessments

Damage to railroad near explosion site.

Crater at explosion site.

Damage to homes near the explosion site.

Search and rescue personnel conducting house-to-house searches.

April 19, 2013

- EPA activities – 24 hr operations
  - Air monitoring in areas of ongoing search and rescue activities and ATF assessment activities.
    - VOCs
    - Ammonia
  - Results indicated no significant contaminants of concern
- Search and rescue operations completed

Site command post located at West High School.

Air monitor with Viper transmitter, located at park adjacent to site.

Damage to West Middle School.

Damage to homes within the surrounding neighborhood.

April 20, 2013

- EPA activities – 24 hr operations
  - Continued air monitoring at fixed locations within the work zones.
  - Continued mobile air monitoring within the evacuation zone.
  - No concentrations of contaminants of concern were detected above site action levels.
  - Prepare operational plans for conducting soil sampling activities within the affected area.
  - Coordinate sampling activities with TCEQ and ATF representatives
  - TCEQ contractors and Union Pacific offload remaining anhydrous ammonia from onsite tanks. EPA conducts air monitoring during the operations.

Anhydrous ammonia bullet tanks.

Damage to apartment complex.

Damage to homes within the surrounding neighborhood.

Damage to nursing home complex.

April 21, 2013

- EPA activities – 24 hr. operations
  - Collect 12 composite soil samples from City of West and West Independent School District properties proximate to the site. Samples submitted to contracted laboratory for analysis of contaminants of concern, including herbicides and pesticides.
  - Continued fixed and mobile air monitoring. No concentrations of contaminants of concern were detected above site action levels.

April 22, 2013

- EPA operations
  - Reduce operations to daylight hrs. (7 AM – 7 PM)
  - Continued fixed and mobile air monitoring. No concentrations of contaminants of concern were detected above site action levels.

April 23, 2013

- EPA operations
  - Continued fixed and mobile air monitoring. No concentrations of contaminants of concern were detected above site action levels.
  - EPA Region 6 Regional Administrator tours fertilizer facility to assess current site conditions.

Presentation of the Colors Site Memorial