West Fertilizer Plant Explosion

Regional Update

April 20, 2013

- 24-hour operations included mobile air monitoring for volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas. No air monitoring readings above background were detected.
- During the inspection of the stationary Air Monitor Equipment on Jerry Mashek Drive and West Spring DPS Officers reported that a fire near the grain silo flared up around 0400 and fire response was observed mobilizing to the Site. The fire was extinguished by fire department personnel.
- One START contractor conducted air monitoring for volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas with a team of investigators from multiple agencies including ATF, CSB, OSHA, and EPA CID. The team assessed the property inside the primary perimeter (surrounding and including the blast site) for safety and evidence collection in anticipation of property owners returning to assess their properties. No air monitoring readings above background were detected.
- At 1155, ASPECT conducted an over flight of the explosion site and potentially affected areas. The mission was to acquire aerial photography of the explosion site.
- EPA OSCS attended site briefings and law enforcement/operational briefings, conducted a meeting with CSB, TCEQ, and OSHA, and coordinated with ATF, CSB, TCEQ, OSHA, the 6th CST, the Office of the Texas State Chemist, and EPA CID on current and future site operations.
- EPA OSCs, Region 6 Risk Assessors, and START are drafting a draft QASP for assessment of the areas potentially affected by pesticides involved in the West Fertilizer, Inc. explosion.
- 4-EPA OSCs, 1 EPA PIO, and 8 START contractors conducted 24-hour site operations, spaced over two shifts. The Regional MCP is on-site.
- At the 0800 ATF law enforcement briefing, ATF indicated that the County planned to begin resident re-entry activities for residents located in the secondary exclusion zone approximately outside the ½ mile radius of the facility.
- EPA personnel reconnoitered potential soil sampling locations near the facility locations. City of West and McClennan County officials provided verbal access to the EPA OSCs to conduct soil sampling within the City and County right-of-ways and West Independent School District property. EPA will document verbal agreement via email and will follow up with signed access agreements.