EOC Spot Report: Update 4
West Fertilizer Plant Explosion

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US Environmental Protection Agency **Report as of 1600 EDT April 21, 2013**

Overview: At approximately 1950 CDT on April 17, a fire and explosion at the West Fertilizer plant decimated the town of West, TX, north of Waco, causing multiple injuries and fatalities. The exact number is unknown at this time. A fire at the facility may have caused the explosion, resulting in a shock wave in the area, causing multiple fires in a six block radius. Investigations of the order of events and cause of the explosion are ongoing. Several homes and structures including an apartment building, nursing home and middle school were severely impacted.

The facility was destroyed in the initial explosion, with the exception of four "bullet" tanks. Initial information indicates that one hopper car filled with ammonium nitrate was on-site at the time of the explosion. This hopper car was blown off the rail siding and was damaged and is believed to have released the powdered fertilizer onto the ground.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: Multiple emergency response agencies are engaged in public safety activities. The Chemical Safety Board (CSB) has deployed to the accident.

Contractors for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) continue to conduct air monitoring around the facility perimeter.

ATF continues its investigation at the facility. TCEQ representatives will assist ATF agents and contractors during debris assessment and excavation activities.

TCEQ and contractors for Union Pacific successfully offloaded the remaining anhydrous ammonia and it was transported to Waco, TX.

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EPA Actions: The Region 6 EOC is activated to level 3. Region 6 currently has deployed at the site: 4 OSCs, 1 PIO, 6 contractors and the mobile command post.

EPA continues to perform mobile and stationary air monitoring in residential areas around the site. Monitoring was also conducted near the high school and an apartment building. Specific chemicals being monitored for are volatile organic compounds, hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas. No significant levels of contaminants have been detected.

EPA is coordinating with Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 6th Civil Support Team (CST), CSB, DOT, TCEQ, and the Office of the Texas State Chemist on current and future site operations.

EPA conducted soil sampling to assess the concentrations of potential site related contaminants. EPA completed nine pesticide/herbicide soil samples (including two background samples). EPA expects to receive preliminary sampling results later this week. Sampling is being coordinated with local officials, TCEQ, and ATF.

Media Interest: HIGH

The HQ EOC is closely monitoring this incident and will provide more updates as necessary.