

**TX-TF1 Assists Residents with Re-entry after West Fertilizer Explosion**



After the explosion at the West Fertilizer Plant in the city of West, Texas on April 17, 2013, search and rescue missions were coordinated and completed by local resources, Texas Task Force One (TX-TF1), and Texas Task Force Two (TX-TF2) and local residents were evacuated from their homes due to health and safety concerns as a result of hazardous materials from the plant fire and from the severe damage to homes and structures from the explosion.



With rescue operations concluded, the City of West moved into the recovery phase of the disaster, and allowed residents to have access to their homes to collect any personal effects from their homes, before they were demolished due to safety concerns.

With safety in mind, the City of West and the State of Texas ordered a small technical rescue team from TX-TF1. This small team of rescue, medical, and command personnel was mobilized at 2100 hours on April 26, and arrived early the following morning in West, TX.

TX-TF1 assisted residents entering their homes that were damaged in the explosion, by ensuring safe entry and exit. The TX-TF1 team helped residents gain entry into approximately 75 homes, allowing residents to retrieve valuables, family memories, and personal effects in a safe and secure manner.

Though this was not a typical mission that is accepted by Urban Search & Rescue teams, this humanitarian mission was extremely important in maintaining a safe environment for residents of the city that had suffered from such catastrophic loss and widespread damage. Additionally, it provided a unique closure for the team that had responded one week earlier to the explosion, as they were able to meet and help those families that had lost everything in a matter of seconds.

The team remained deployed for 3 days, and after the City of West closed the affected area for reentry they released TX-TF1 and the team demobilized at 1030 hours on April 29, 2013.



**Deployment Statistics:**

- Incident involved 16 people deployed for 4 days

