

**EMERGENCY EXERCISE (EMEX) 97-1**  
**Pantex Plant - Amarillo, Texas**  
**June 11, 1997**

**SECTION VII**

**NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF**  
**SCENARIO EVENTS**

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**Narrative Summary of Scenario Events**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The scenario involves a tornado strike at Pantex during what begins as a routine work day. The tornado (upper limit F-3) causes a significant number of casualties among plant employees. Substantial damage is also caused to selected un-hardened structures, and a portion of the plant's communication, utility, and security infrastructure.

**2. NARRATIVE SUMMARY**

June 11, 1997 is a typical mid-year day in the Texas panhandle. The normal complement of workers are at the Pantex Plant.

Operations at the plant begin that morning with the potential for a severe weather warning for later in the day based on a National Weather Service (NWS), Texas and Oklahoma Thunderstorm Outlook bulletin issued at 0630.

At 1100, thunderstorms begin firing up between Hereford and Umbarger heading NNE at 25 mph. The NWS issues a Tornado Watch for south-central and central Panhandle region from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

At 1105, the NWS issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning for eastern Deaf Smith, and western Randall counties as the thunderstorms begin to build strength.

At 1155, as the thunderstorm continues to build strength and move to the NE, NWS contacts Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and recommends that the Weather Watch be activated.

At 1200, DEM activates Weather Watch. Spotters are moved into the field (*simulated*) and begin to track the storm.

At 1230, a spotter reports a tornado has formed at the intersection of Loop 335 and Osage Street moving NE at an estimated speed of 35 mph. NWS confirms the tornado on radar and issues a Tornado Warning for north Randall County at 1232. Spotters, NWS, and DEM continue to track the tornado as it approaches the eastern part of the city.

At 1235, the tornado takes out 2 primary electrical transmission lines that run along Eastern St. and 58th Ave. As the tornado continues towards eastern Amarillo, at 1240 the NWS issues a Tornado Warning for southern Potter County, western Carson County, and Armstrong County. The Sheriff's offices in Carson and Armstrong counties are notified by the NWS.

At 1250, the tornado hits the area of I-40 and Loop 335 (Lakeside Rd.) The Petro truck stop is decimated destroying a number of trucks. Several trucks were carrying hazardous materials. The fuel tank on the SW corner of the Truck Stop is also destroyed. As the tornado crosses I-40 it causes several wrecks among vehicles who tried to outrun the twister. The Radisson, Econo Lodge, Waffle House, and Country Barn suffer significant damage. The tornado continues its track NE at 35 mph.

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At 1259, the Control Tower reports the tornado striking the Amarillo International Airport terminal building, causing extensive damage to the facility. Several hangers and aircraft are also damaged as the AMA NWS staff move to shelter.

At 1300, DEM activates the EOC for Emergency Operations.

At 1303, the tornado continues to move to the NE striking the central area of the Amarillo Technical college (ATC), causing damage to structures in the area. The tornado crosses just south of the Potter County Jail and strikes the Highland Park subdivision causing damage throughout.

As the tornado continues on a consistent track towards Pantex, the PSS orders all employees at Pantex to seek refuge within assigned storm shelters.

At 1306, the tornado crosses through the intersection of Hwy 60 and FM1912. Highland Park school is severely damaged (school is out and the buildings are empty). IBP suffers light damage as the tornado passes just south of the facility. The tornado continues on a NE track towards the Pantex Plant

The St. Francis area is hit at 1311 suffering severe damage.

At 1313, the tornado, with winds approaching F-4 strength, crosses Hwy60 and strikes the Killgore Building causing extensive damage. The rubble traps the occupants within their storm shelter. The tornado continues NE towards the heart of the plant.

As the tornado reaches the built-up area of the plant, a number of temporary and unhardened structures yield to its tremendous force. CONEX boxes within Zone 10 are uprooted and contents are carried by the storm towards Zone 11.

A fire erupts at Bldg. XXX as a contractor refueling vehicle is thrown against the side of the structure.

As the storm continues its northeast trek, power is lost from the North Substation as airborne debris punctures the sulfuric acid tank at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (Bld.XXXX).

At 1320 p.m., the tornado exits the NE corner of the plant.

At approximately 1325 p.m., the "All Clear!" is given to plant personnel. Simultaneously, a declaration of an "Operational Emergency" is issued by the PSS concurrent with full activation of the ERO. This action is taken in response to the anticipated casualties, damage, and hazards present at the plant.

At 1335, the Tornado Warning is adjusted to north Carson County.

At 1500, the scenario terminates for the City of Amarillo EOC.

At 1530, the scenario and exercise "free-play" terminate.

**3. RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS**

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As severe weather threatens the Texas panhandle, Pantex executes a systematic response to the potential threat:

- nuclear operations cease,
- building managers and Facilities take precautionary actions,
- the plant population is warned and are ultimately directed to seek shelter,
- the Operations Center duty staff is augmented with additional EMD support,
- the “all clear” is sounded as the ERO is activated,

The ERO responds to their duty station avoiding hazards and debris encountered en route. Gradually, reports of damage and casualties begin to filter in along with the reported movement of some plant employees who want to get to their vehicles and go home to check on members of their families.

As information continues to arrive within the EOC, the ERO becomes focused on the tremendous emergency response which is required to deal with the casualties, the fire, the loss of essential utilities, the physical destruction of security fencing and intrusion detection systems, and the possible loss or compromise of classified material.

An “Operational Emergency” is declared. Upon discovery of hazardous materials potentially with offsite ramifications, categorization of a “General Emergency” may be made. Coordination of mutual aid requests (approval or reluctant denial based on a paucity of assets) will be an underlying theme to the emergency response decisionmaking process until assets can be requisitioned through Disaster District 5-B.

Almost immediately, the Emergency Manager and Incident Commander are expected to appoint a Recovery Manager to assess the damage ramifications and begin the initial restoration of essential services and operations. The return to normal operations remains initially beyond the immediate focus.

Field response units, such as Security, Fire Department, Spill Response Team, and Facilities, respond under the Incident Command System (ICS) and are directed by the Incident Commander. Simultaneously, the Emergency Manager and his staff begin essential coordination with higher headquarters, local, and state officials. Public information releases are coordinated with the JIC which fortunately was already established based on previously scheduled External Affairs training at the Boatmens bank building.

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