



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Los Angeles Field Division

Contact: Susan K. Raichel, ATF PIO
Office: (213) 534-2411
Pager: (888) 512-9448

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ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO INVESTIGATE CALIFORNIA CONDOMINIUM FIRE

ESCONDIDO, Calif. – The National Response Team (NRT) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) along with ATF special agents from the San Diego field office have entered the investigation of a large commercial fire that occurred Jan. 18 at D.R. Horton Paramount Condominiums in Escondido.

John A. Torres, Special Agent in Charge of ATF'S Los Angeles Field Division, said "damage to the D.R. Horton Paramount Condominiums is estimated at approximately \$4 million to \$7 million. ATF is assisting the Escondido Fire Department in this joint investigation."

ATF's National Response Team (NRT), which arrives on the scene tomorrow, has brought definitive expertise and an array of state-of-the-art equipment to the investigation of major fire and explosives incidents since 1978. Four regional components, organized geographically to cover the United States, comprise the NRT. The team can respond within 24 hours to assist state and local law enforcement or fire service personnel in onsite investigations.

The responding NRT component normally has 13-18 members, including veteran special agents who have post-blast and fire origin-and-cause expertise; forensic chemists; explosives enforcement officers; fire protection engineers; accelerant detection canines; explosives detection canines; and intelligence, computer forensic and audit support. A fleet of fully equipped response vehicles strategically located throughout the United States provides logistical support.

ATF's partnership with federal, state and local officers is vital to the most effective processing efforts at an explosives or fire scene. The NRT capitalizes on that by working alongside its partners in reconstructing the scene, identifying the seat of the blast or the origin of the fire, conducting interviews and sifting through debris to obtain evidence related to the explosion or fire.

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In addition to investigating hundreds of large fire and explosives scenes, the NRT trucks were deployed for the 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the Olympics and other major sporting events in the United States, presidential inaugurations and the national political conventions, and major international conferences.

This is the sixth NRT activation in fiscal year 2007 and the 624th since the program began in 1978.

ATF is the federal agency with jurisdiction for investigating fires and crimes of arson. More information on ATF can be found at www.atf.gov

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