



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO INVESTIGATE BASQUE NIGHT CLUB FIRE

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – The National Response Team (NRT) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) along with ATF special agents from the Los Angeles Field Division have entered the investigation of a large commercial structural fire that occurred April 30 at Basque Night Club, located in the heart of Hollywood.

Special Agent in Charge John A. Torres, of ATF's Los Angeles Field Division, said that, "due to the size and complexity of the fire scene, plus the historical significance of the structure, ATF is assisting the Los Angeles City Fire Department in this joint investigation."

ATF's National Response Team (NRT), which arrived on scene today, brings 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.

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 13th NRT activation in fiscal 2008 and the 652nd 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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