

Fire Marshal's Office: Panel Had Blast Site Access

The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The State Fire Marshal's Office says a federal safety panel's investigators had access to the site of a Texas fertilizer plant blast that killed 15 people and injured about 200 others.

The chairman of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board had asked for congressional help in obtaining evidence under the control of the state agency and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

However, in a statement issued Wednesday, the state agency said the CSB was given access to the scene, worked with other agencies during excavations and neighborhood surveys, and collected its own chemical samples with ATF assistance.

The statement says no evidence was destroyed or compromised.

In a statement Wednesday, CSB spokeswoman Hillary Cohen said the board has been denied access to the site since May 13.

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