

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 5, 2021

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee

SUBJECT **Dallas Fire-Rescue Response to NTSB Report on Atmos Incident**

Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR) was a party participant in the National Transportation and Safety Board's (NTSB) investigations of three natural gas incidents that occurred on February 21, 22, and 23, 2018. Initially, DFR provided emergency fire-rescue and investigation services to all three incidents. Beginning on February 23, 2018, DFR established a longer-term fire-rescue command post in order to staff a hazardous material monitoring team, and to coordinate fire-rescue responses into the area, as well as to support efforts related to resident evacuations, medication, and other item retrievals, and eventually to support the return of residents to their homes.

Since demobilization, DFR has supported the NTSB's investigation by participating in interviews, providing departmental procedures and investigation documents as requested, and reviewing and commenting on the NTSB's documents related to these incidents. Importantly, as a result of these incidents, several improvements in communication, response procedures, equipment, and training have either already taken place or are planned. We are committed to examining and updating our procedures and working to improve our services and operations to best meet the needs of our community.

While DFR and Atmos Energy Corporation (Atmos) have long enjoyed a cooperative and collaborative relationship, since these incidents, communications have increased dramatically. Atmos has provided training sessions, allowing DFR to learn at their facilities and from their personnel about gas-related emergencies. Additionally, new atmospheric monitors are being prepared for distribution to all Battalion Chief assigned vehicles so that DFR's initial responders on the scene of a potential gas leak emergency can use the same monitors for gas detection as DFR's Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) and Atmos. DFR also has plans for additional hazardous materials training for all firefighters. Further, enhancement of department procedures will aid to strengthen DFR's collaboration and communication with Atmos and other utility companies.

The NTSB's findings related to these incidents also revealed the need for enhancements in training in the areas of technical review and explosion dynamics. Members of the Arson Division receive all required training and are proficient in recognizing the occurrence of explosions and are knowledgeable of the procedures in place to investigate their unique effects. The fire cause determination for these incidents (accidental and undetermined) are accurate and accepted by National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) NFPA 921, Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations, and the classifications do not trigger notifications or the discovery of a leak. NFPA 921 is the standard for all fire and arson investigations nationwide. Cause determinations of fire incidents involve collaboration of all entities during initial response without delay. However, DFR acknowledges that

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members can certainly benefit from additional training, especially since these kinds of incidents do not occur frequently. DFR plans for investigators to improve their understanding of explosions that originate from utility lines and residential/commercial appliances.

In addition to the above, DFR is committed to exploring additional ways to assist Atmos in identifying and mitigating gas-related emergencies.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.



Jon Fortune
Assistant City Manager

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