

# Countywide HAZMAT exercise held in Richmond

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Area emergency response teams converged on the Fort Bend County Firefighters Association's fire training field in Richmond on Sept. 12 for a full-scale hazardous materials response exercise.

The exercise, funded under a state grant from the Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management, brought together emergency management teams from Champion Technologies, City of Missouri City, City of Richmond, City of Rosenberg, City of Stafford, City of Sugar Land, Fort Bend County Emergency Management, Fort Bend County Emergency Management System (EMS), Fort Bend County Health & Human Services, Lamar Consolidated ISD, Memorial Hermann - Sugar Land Hospital, Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, Oak Bend Medical Center, Pecan Grove Volunteer Fire Department, Union Pacific Railroad, and Local Emergency Planning Committee member organizations.

During the four-hour training exercise, area emergency management teams responded to a simulated tanker fire and rail car hazardous chemical leak.

The Missouri City emergency management team, initial responders to the scene, mitigated the tanker fire and contacted East and West Fort Bend Hazardous Materials Teams to respond to the

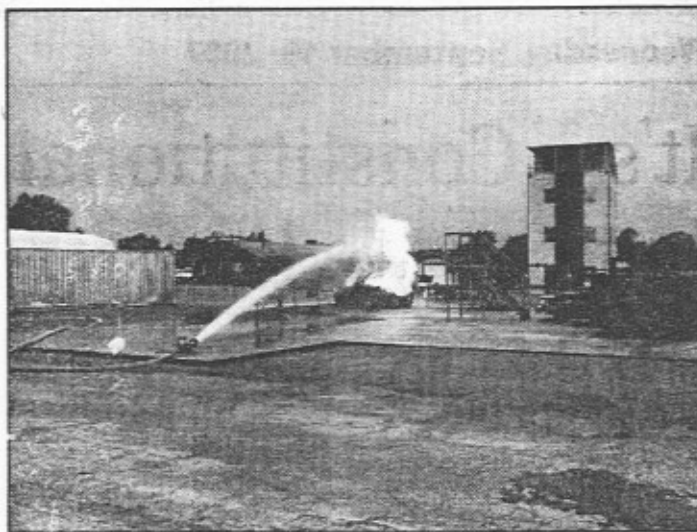


Photo by DIANE TEZENO/The Sun

**Unmanned water monitors were among the techniques used by emergency response crews at last week's HAZMAT drill in Richmond.**

chemical leak.

The multi-layered response simulation also activated a shelter in place by a couple of schools in Lamar Consolidated ISD, establishment of a joint information center by area public information officers, set up of the Fort Bend County emergency operations center (EOC) as well as participation of three area hospitals in transporting patients via EMS.

"The goal of the drill is to test our ability to provide a coordinated response to a large complex incident that involves a number of different agencies," said Doug Adolph, Sugar Land public information manager. "We are going to

implement the incident command system and test our ability to work together to mitigate the hazard."

The scenario began with a simulated HAZMAT incident at Champion Technologies in Fresno; however, all emergency response operations were conducted at the Fort Bend County Firefighters Association's fire training field, where an incident command post was established and response/rescue efforts were initiated.

The countywide emergency response simulation also tested community warnings and public information systems at the Fort Bend County EOC.