

Feds Fined Fertilizer Plant for Past Safety Violations

JACK GILLUM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal regulators fined the company that operates the Texas fertilizer plant that exploded overnight \$10,000 last summer for safety violations. But the government accepted \$5,250 after the company took what it described as corrective actions.

Records reviewed by The Associated Press show that the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration determined that the West Fertilizer Co. planned to transport anhydrous ammonia without making or following a security plan. An inspector also found that the plant's ammonia tanks weren't properly labeled.

The same plant just outside Waco, Texas, exploded Wednesday night, killing as many as 15 and injuring over 160. The blast had the impact of a small earthquake and was heard from more than 40 miles away.

It is not unusual for companies to negotiate lower fines with regulators.

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