



The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY

Alfred P. Murrah
Federal Building Bombing
April 19, 1995

Final Report


Cover photo courtesy of Danny Atchley
Oklahoma City Fire Department



RECYCLABLE



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Acknowledgement

This Final Report to the Mayor and Council was prepared at the direction of the City Manager to provide an overview and documentation of the united efforts of the governmental and volunteer offices and agencies whose work was critical to the success of the Murrah rescue and recovery operation.

The Document Management Team worked to identify and document the contributions of all who participated. However, from 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995, onward, the outpouring of support and the efforts of so many individuals were so great that they exceed the limits of this overview. There are countless stories of heroism, dedication, and caring that cannot be told

within the limits of this Report. The Team and the City of Oklahoma City salute all those who gave so much of themselves to support the rescue operation, the survivors, and the families of the victims.

The Final Report narrative was written to tell an inclusive story of the Rescue and Recovery effort from the City's perspective. Many local, state, and national offices and agencies provided support and assistance, which are documented in this report but merit a more lengthy study. The Oklahoma City Document Management Team gratefully acknowledges the information provided by many governmental and volunteer offices and agencies, and their assistance with this report.





Foreword

On April 19, 1995, at 9:02 a.m., on a morning filled with the promise of *Spring*, a bomb blast destroyed the nine-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. This, the largest act of domestic terrorism in our nation's history, claimed 168 lives, including 19 children, and wounded 674 people. Twenty-five buildings were severely damaged or destroyed and another 300 damaged. Cars near the building were set on fire. Glass, shattered from windows in a ten-block radius, filled the streets and sidewalks.

The community's response was as instantaneous and as overwhelming as the act which precipitated it. The wounded and severely shaken survivors came out of the buildings in the core of the blast area to be met by citizens rushing to offer support, first-aid, and rides to hospitals. Men and women of all callings went into the rubble of the Murrah Building to search for the living and comfort the dying. Fire, Police, and Emergency Medical Services units self-dispatched, responding to the sound of the blast. They were guided to the site by the column of smoke that towered over the city.

The first responding units were on the scene within minutes. In the incredible terror and confusion of those first moments, as dense black smoke filled the air and paper rained from the sky, discipline and training became evident. Initial commands were established, units were assigned to search each of the buildings, fire lines were laid to extinguish the car fires, and triage centers were set up. Ladders were extended to reach people trapped on the upper floors. Rescuers on the ground formed human chains to bring the wounded out of the rubble.

When the car fires were extinguished and the smoke had cleared, those at the site saw that the north face of the Murrah Building was gone. This beautiful building, which had crowned the north side of the central business district, was a gaping ruin. Large portions of the nine floors had collapsed, pancaking one upon

the other, creating a three-story pile of rubble where the north entrance had stood. The remainder of the unstable mass was a maze of twisted rebar and jagged concrete festooned with hanging electrical, telephone, and plumbing lines. Set incongruously among this were the remains of offices and of lives — desks, pictures, flags, mementoes — some left as they were at the moment of the blast, and the rest tossed and pitched by the force of the explosion. Toys and stuffed animals lay among the rubble in what remained of the day care center.

The Murrah Building became the focus of a rescue and recovery effort that began on April 19 and ended on May 4. The chaos of the first hours gave way to a determined, disciplined effort. The Oklahoma City Fire Department, utilizing its Incident Command System, maintained control of the rescue and recovery effort. The Federal Bureau of Investigation took charge of the criminal investigation of the bombing. The Oklahoma City Police Department controlled the perimeters, keeping traffic lanes open for rescue vehicles.

The resources of the City, the County, the State and the Nation were directed to the Murrah Building and the victims. Metropolitan area fire and police departments, State agencies, the Oklahoma National Guard, and Tinker Air Force Base assisted in all aspects of the rescue and security work. A Declaration of Disaster from President Clinton brought Federal resources to the site, including 11 Urban Search and Rescue teams. Service organizations, churches, corporations and citizens responded with every possible form of assistance. Nothing was asked for which was not provided, often in overwhelming numbers. The local, national, and international media established a "Satellite City" and told the story of each moment to the world. During the 16 days of the rescue and recovery, the broken, gaping Murrah Building was the backdrop to the drama of humanity giving the best of itself in response to a senseless act of violence.



A name has been given to the selfless devotion and untiring commitment of those working at the site and the community's response to and support of the workers, the survivors, and the families of the victims. That name is the "Oklahoma Standard." It is a unique combination of training, dedication, and professional excellence rooted in and nourished by the caring and compassion of the community. For those at the site, it

meant doing whatever was needed to find the living and recover the dead. For those in the community, it meant doing and giving every possible kind of support. This report documents the City of Oklahoma City's control and coordination of the Murrah rescue and recovery effort that became the core of the "Oklahoma Standard."



Introduction

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Murrah bombing occurred in a city trained, prepared, and equipped to respond to a disaster. The public safety departments routinely planned for possible urban emergencies such as plane crashes, natural gas explosions, and chemical spills. Heavy equipment and trained personnel from the line departments were available to support the public safety departments. Because Oklahoma City is in the nation's tornado belt, plans and procedures were in place to deal with natural disasters.

In July 1994, senior administrators from the City Manager's Office and all City departments, joined County, State, and utility company officials at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Emergency Management Course at Emmitsburg, Maryland. For five days, they planned and coordinated responses for every possible emergency. During the training, the administrators, public safety officers, and utility representatives came to know each other better and to have a clearer understanding of each other's abilities and resources. Officials left the course with a clear concept of what their responsibilities would be and what resources they would provide in case of an emergency.

The Murrah bombing occurred downtown, within blocks of City offices and emergency units, enabling the fastest of responses. While Oklahoma City never anticipated a disaster of this magnitude, every official and unit responded quickly and with the highest degree of professionalism. Metropolitan area units and County, State, and Federal agencies responded, making their resources available to the incident command. Cooperation, determination, and a "can-do" attitude were in place throughout the rescue and recovery operation.

Oklahoma City, the state's capital city and the seat of Oklahoma County, is located in the center of the state and at the crossroads of two major interstate high-

ways. The city has an incorporated area of 621 square miles and abuts or surrounds more than 20 smaller cities. The population is slightly over 450,000. The metropolitan area population is almost 1,000,000.

Oklahoma City has a Council-Manager form of government. The Mayor is elected at large and presides over the City Council. Eight council members are elected from wards. The Mayor and Council govern the City and appoint the City Manager, Municipal Counselor, City Auditor, and Municipal Judges. All day-to-day operations are under the direction of the City Manager. The City Manager appoints the department heads, prepares the annual budget for Council adoption, and administers the City's funds. The City has a workforce of more than 4,000 employees. The 1994-95 budget for City operations was just under \$385.5 million.

Major City functions include operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment and distribution systems; maintenance of an extensive network of streets, bridges, and traffic-control devices; maintenance of the storm drainage systems; provision of solid waste collection; operation of parks and recreation facilities and two performing arts and convention centers. The City operates Will Rogers World Airport, a regional hub, and two general aviation airports. The public school systems are under their own separate jurisdictions. All utilities except water and sanitary sewage are operated by private companies under franchise agreements with the City.

The City's Fire and Police Departments are under the command of a Fire Chief and a Police Chief, appointed by the City Manager. In 1986, citizens voted general obligation bond funds for Fire and Police improvements including construction of fire stations, construction of two police briefing stations, improved public safety communications, and implementation of the 9-1-1 Emergency System. In 1989, citizens voted an additional three-fourths cent sales tax dedicated to

public safety. Since 1989, the tax has produced more than \$205 million. The funds have been used to increase the number of police officers and firefighters and to provide improved training, facilities, and equipment.

Between 1989 and 1995, Oklahoma City's Fire Department added over 200 new firefighters, nine new frontline companies, and three additional stations. Almost all frontline fire apparatus was replaced. Two new trucks with 135-foot aerial ladders were purchased for downtown area fire stations. New equipment included trauma kits for all apparatus, hydraulic rescue tools or "jaws-of-life" for all rescue squads, and 20 fire engines. Additional emergency medical training was provided so that 65 percent of all personnel were EMT-D certified in 1995.

The Police Department added 200 new officers and two more briefing stations. The four briefing stations allowed the Department to disperse its day-to-day operations to the quadrants of the city for more efficient operation. The Department added an eight-member equine mounted patrol unit used downtown and in the stockyards, additional trained dogs and handlers, a forensic laboratory, a DNA laboratory, and full implementation of the Department's take-home car program.

In 1995, Oklahoma City's Fire Department had a total force of 1,010 well-trained men and women. The Department's frontline apparatus included 32 engines, 13 trucks, 6 rescue squads, 11 brush pumpers, 6 tank pumpers, 6 heavy tankers, a Haz-Mat (hazardous materials) Company, and an air unit. The Police Department had a total of 995 sworn personnel, 302 civilian personnel, and 43 recruits in training.

The Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) provides ambulance and emergency medical services for Oklahoma City and many of the surrounding cities. There are two other ambulance services. Mercy Hospital EMS provides services for some of the cities in the far north and far west metropolitan area. Midwest City Ambulance Service provides services for some of the cities in the south and far east parts of the metropolitan area.

EMSA, which also provides services to the City of Tulsa, is organized as a public trust. The trustees, or governing board, are appointed by the Mayors of the two cities and include city officials and medical personnel from both communities. In Oklahoma City, EMSA operates from two locations. An Administration and Communication Center is located at NW 10th and

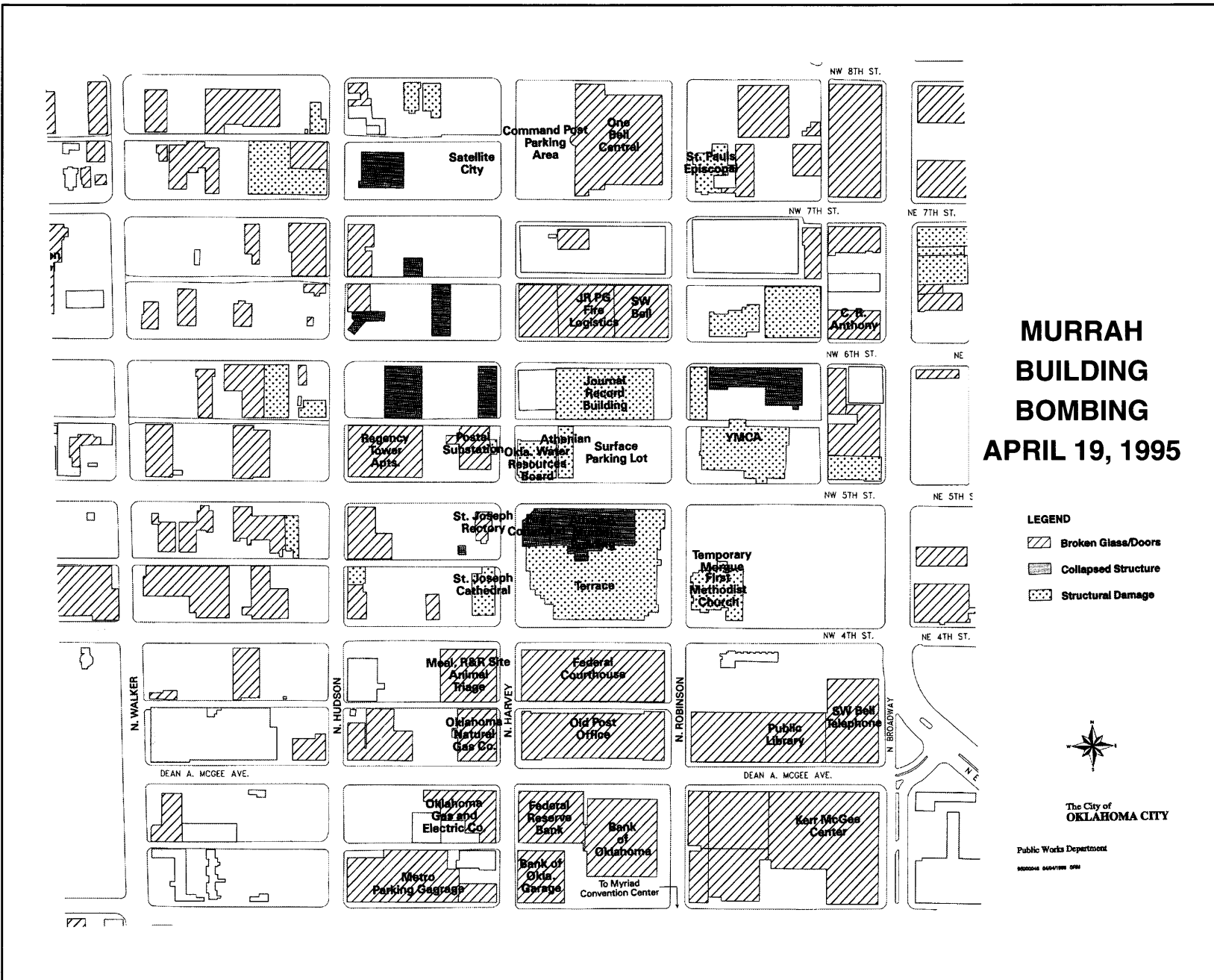
Walker. A Maintenance Facility is located at SW 23rd and Walker. Ambulances are placed on standby at key points throughout the city. EMSA operates 35 fully equipped ambulances and has 100 trained field personnel plus an administrative staff. Each ambulance carries a paramedic and an emergency medical technician (EMT). Most of EMSA's administrative staff are trained paramedics who can support field operations as needed.

Oklahoma City and the other metropolitan area cities have mutual aid agreements. These agreements provide for fire, police, and emergency medical forces to support each other as needed to protect the lives and safety of the citizens. The mutual aid agreements are the basis of long standing cooperation among area public safety forces. Private and municipal utility companies and departments are trained to act in concert with area fire departments in responding to emergencies.

Oklahoma City's central business district is a compact area of medium- and high-rise banks and office buildings. It is set in a grid pattern of north-south and east-west streets. The north-south streets have names. Starting with NW 4th Street, the east-west streets are numbered in ascending order to the north. City Hall, the Police Station and the Central Fire Station are at the west edge of the downtown area. The Central Fire Station, located on NW 5th Street, is five blocks north of City Hall and the Police Station.




The nine-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was the epicenter of the bomb that destroyed that building and severely damaged the surrounding buildings. The building was on a slight rise at the north of the business district. The building and its parking structure occupied the city block between NW 4th and 5th and Harvey and Robinson Streets. The building was on the north half of the site.

The Murrah Building was completed in 1977, at a cost of just under \$13.3 million. In 1983, the American Institute of Architects listed it as one of Oklahoma's 10 Best Buildings. The building was constructed of rebar-reinforced concrete and was highly energy efficient. Tan brick was used to finish much of the exterior. On the north, floors three through nine were finished in a wall of glass. Slabs of polished granite were used to finish the east and west ends. The rectangular building's dimensions were 200 feet from east to west and 70 feet from north to south. On the north side, the first and second floors were recessed. The



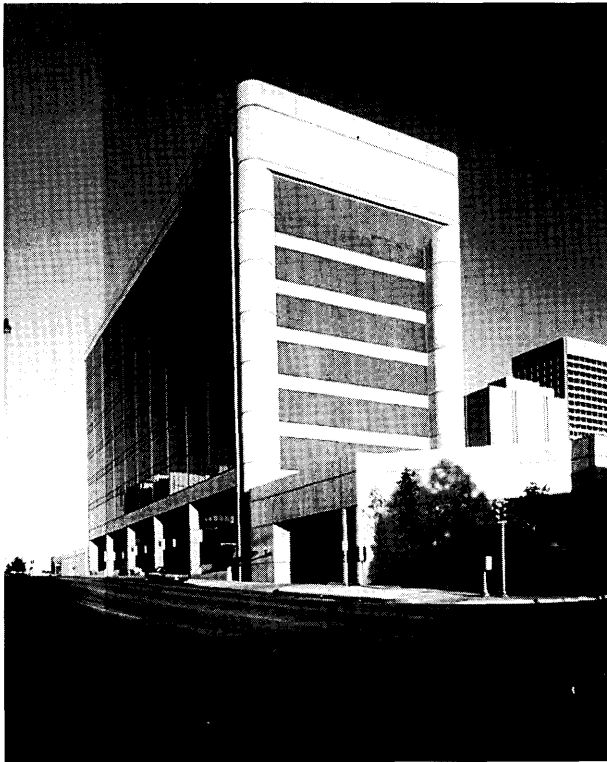
MURRAH BUILDING BOMBING

APRIL 19, 1995

- LEGEND**
-  Broken Glass/Doors
 -  Collapsed Structure
 -  Structural Damage



The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY
Public Works Department
MURRAH BUILDING BOMBING



This photograph, taken shortly after the completion of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, shows the north side of this award-winning structure.

remaining stories reached to the north property line on NW 5th Street. At the west end of the building was a one-story enclosed loading dock. A one-story windowless extension on the east end provided additional office space for the Social Security Administration. Exterior access to this area was from a door on Robinson. The Murrah Building's main entrance was on the south or plaza side and gave entry to the second floor. The rear entrance was on NW 5th Street and opened to the first floor.

The building site sloped downward from east to west. The west end of the first floor was a half story above ground, while the east end was a half story below ground. The ground level of the building was even with the top floor of an adjoining four-story below-ground parking structure, which occupied the south half of the site. Because part of the first floor was below ground and those entering from the south came down a flight of stairs, many people referred to the first floor of the building as the "basement." A semicircular vertical circulation core extended from the south side of the building. It contained elevators and stairs, which served the building and the parking garage.

The parking structure served the Murrah Building and the Federal Courthouse across NW 4th Street. The bottom three stories of the parking structure were underground; the top story was at ground level. The sides of the aboveground portion were finished in brick. The roof of the parking structure was an attractive, parklike plaza with fountains and plants. A playground for the day care center and benches for workers were on the plaza. The five-story Federal Courthouse Building was located on the block south of the Murrah Building and faced the Murrah parking structure. A tunnel under NW 4th Street connected the courthouse and the Murrah Parking Garage.

Three of the city's oldest churches are located near the site of the Murrah Building. The First Methodist Church is on NW 4th Street, directly east of the building. St. Joseph's Old Cathedral Catholic Church is on NW 4th Street, directly west of the building, with its rectory on Harvey opposite the Murrah parking structure. St. Paul's Episcopal Church is located on NW 7th Street and Robinson. These turn-of-the-century buildings were constructed of brick with unique craftsmanship and beautiful stained-glass windows. Several other large churches are located around NW 10th and Robinson.

On NW 5th Street, in the block directly north of the Murrah Building, the three-story building which housed the Oklahoma Water Resources Board stood on the northeast corner. The narrow, three-story Athenian Building, which housed the Athenian Bar and Grill, abutted the Water Resources Board Building. A surface parking lot occupied the west end of the block. A small, one-story building used as a U.S. Post Office Substation occupied the northwest corner of Harvey and NW 5th Street. To the west of that building is the high-rise Regency Tower Apartments. The seven-story building that housed the YMCA was located on the northeast corner of NW 5th and Robinson.

The four-story building that housed the Journal Record Publishing Company is on NW 6th Street, north of the surface parking lot. This historic building was built by the Masonic Order and later used as an office building. A building behind the Water Resources Board Building held the Journal Record's printing press. The six-story Journal Record Parking Garage is located on the north side of NW 6th Street. A ten-story building owned by Southwestern Bell Telephone is located on the northwest corner of NW 6th and Robinson. One Bell Central, the corporate headquarters of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, occupies the next block

north, between NW 7th and NW 8th Streets. This four-story building fronts Robinson Avenue with covered and surface parking on the Harvey Avenue side.

St. Anthony Hospital is located at NW 10th and Dewey, about six blocks from the Murrah Building. Presbyterian, University, and Children's Hospitals and the Veteran's Administration Medical Center are lo-

cated on NE 13th Street, about a mile east of the Murrah site. The Oklahoma County Courthouse and Office Building are located about three blocks southwest of the Murrah site. The State Capitol Building and most State Offices are about two miles northeast of downtown.

