

"Best and Brightest" to Investigate Redstone Arsenal Deaths

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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Major General James Myles, commanding general of Redstone Arsenal is assembling a team of experts to investigate the May 5 explosion that killed two civilian contractors. James R. Hawke of Hazel Green and Jerry A. Grimes of Hartselle were employees of Amtec Corp. in Huntsville. The investigation into the wrongful deaths will take some time.

"We're going to take our time," said Myles in an interview with The Huntsville Times. "We're going to go through every element of what occurred at Building 7352 and we're going to understand all of it."

The men were working on a process to separate ammonium perchlorate, an oxidizing agent used in missile fuel, from other elements. The process was intended to find out whether high-grade ammonium perchlorate could be recycled from old missiles to be used in new rocket systems. The explosion occurred at about 8:45 a.m. at the Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center (AMRDEC) at the arsenal.

The top priority for the arsenal is to help the two workers' families grieve, followed by seeing to the needs of those who lost their friends and colleagues in the industrial accident. Finding out what happened and preventing it from happening again is key.

"To the AMRDEC team and the family that cares so much about our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines down range, we want you to know we're going to get to the bottom of this, we're going to find out what occurred," Myles said in the Huntsville Times interview. "We owe it to the families, we owe it to the work force and we owe it to our country and the taxpayers."

Paul Turner, associate director for propulsion technology at AMRDEC, said that images from a video camera from the building may provide some information.

"We are getting the best and brightest minds in this country to participate in this accident investigation," said Major General Myles. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the men's families could have [wrongful death](#) claims through the workers' compensation system or against any negligent third parties.

A memorial fund has been established at Redstone Federal Credit Union for the families.

Related Resource:

["Commander says 'best and brightest' investigating Redstone Arsenal explosion that killed two men"](#) (The Huntsville Times, May 10, 2010)