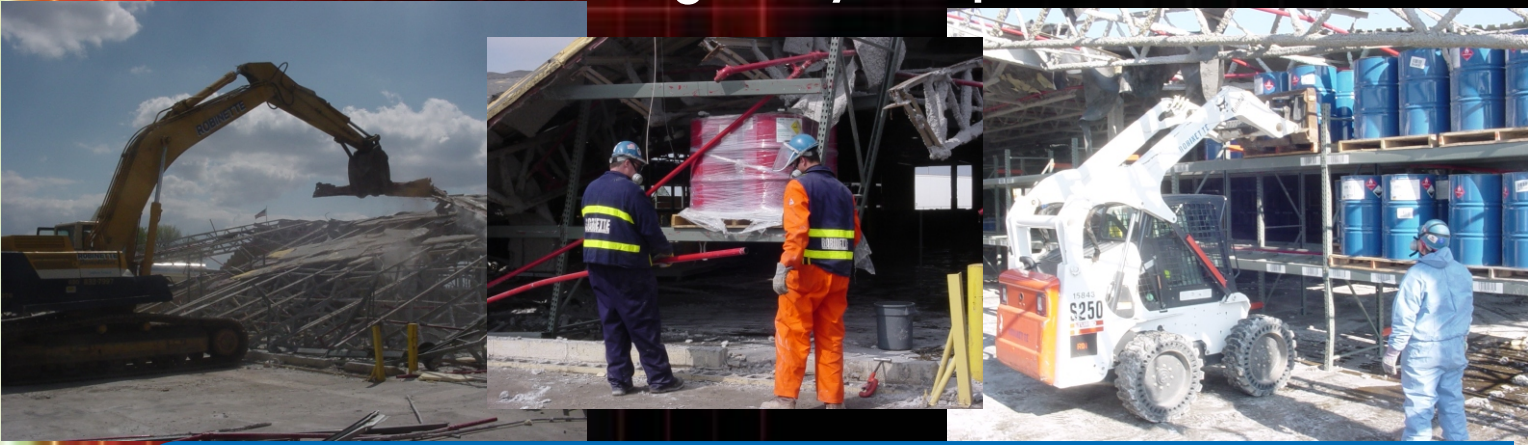


Robinette Emergency Response



Tornado Recovery

On an early evening in April, a small cluster of five thunderstorms produced 13 tornadoes across portions of North Central and North East Illinois. One of the tornadoes developed 7 miles southwest of the city of Kankakee and ended 1 ½ miles south of the city's downtown. It measured 6 miles long, 30 yards wide, and rated an F1 on the Fujita scale.

One of the nations leading chemical production plants lay within the F1's path and sustained severe damage to one of its buildings creating an environmentally sensitive scenario. The 150 foot by 200 foot building contained a surplus of flammable finished goods and potentially explosive raw materials. The tornado had blown out portions of two walls, and brought the roof down to rest on top of heavy duty racks full of hundreds of 55 gallon drums of flammable chemicals.

Robinette was contacted by the plant procurement manager in conjunction with engineers and insurance representatives. The team assessed the situation, developed specific safety guidelines, and began what would be a very meticulous demolition process.

The chemical plant had strict requirements for all contractors working onsite, including 10 hour OSHA certification for all employees. In addition, because of the chemical hazards, OSHA 30 hour HAZWOPPER training was required for the cleanup. This training is standard for Robinette's Emergency Response employees, therefore work could begin immediately.

A team of 12 began the site work with shoring towers, one backhoe, two skid-steers, a tele-handler, two forklifts, and a 60 foot man-lift. All of the mechanized equipment utilized spark arrestors, and spark-less hand tools were used to prevent fire or explosion of the flammable material.

Stabilization of the structure and removal of the hazardous chemical drums was essential before putting the demolition work into motion. Portions of the plant's roof had to be removed carefully, and chemical drums hoisted from within using specialized equipment. The local fire department remained onsite with lines charged during the removal of the drums. Actual demolition and debris cleanup started on the third day after the emergency site was cleared of all dangerous chemicals and materials.

Our Emergency Division focuses on safety and competence while working in emergency situations and every precaution was taken during the seven days it took for Robinette's team of experts to complete this unusually dangerous job.

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