

Precautions for emergency responders at the scene of suspected chemical suicide incidents

Survey surroundings of scene and vehicle

- Search the area or the vehicle's exterior for posted or visible warning signs.
- Look for open containers or a mixing container.
- Look for attempts to seal the vehicle, such as taping of doors, windows, and air vents.
- Do **NOT** rely on the presence of a chemical or unusual odor as a warning signal.

Secure the area

- If gas is emitting from the vehicle, first responders should stay upwind.
- Keep bystanders away from the scene.
- Hazardous materials (HAZMAT) team or other responders trained to handle hazardous chemicals can help prevent the spreading of the gas while wearing appropriate protective gear.

Communication

- Call the local HAZMAT team or other responders trained to handle hazardous materials.
- Ensure dispatch information is shared among all responders to enhance safety.

Decontamination

- Decontaminate the victim at the scene.
- Decontaminate all responders and victims involved in the incident.
- Evaporated gas from the wet clothes of patients can cause secondary poisoning or contamination.
- Warn hospital personnel to take appropriate measures to avoid contamination of incoming patients.

Transportation and treatment of victim

- Because hydrogen sulfide and cyanide gases are in patient's exhalations, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is unsafe.
- No antidote exists for **hydrogen sulfide** poisoning; treatment is supportive.
- Exposure to **hydrogen cyanide** requires supportive care and rapid administration of specific antidotes.
- Chemicals off-gassing from the victim might poison emergency medical services, morgue, or other response personnel; therefore, the transport vehicle should be well ventilated.

Sources: National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center. Chemical assisted suicide: responder information. Available at http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dfs/mfa/hazmat_training/chemical_assisted_suicide_responder_info.pdf.

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