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Chemical Suicide: A New EMS Threat

Suicide by hydrogen sulfide exposure is a very popular method overseas. Originated in Japan over 2000 cases since 2007 and has plagued the U.S. since 2008. These situations commonly occur in vehicles, residential bathrooms/dorm rooms, and other small spaces where a small amount of gas can quickly reach lethal concentrations. While not we are not near the number of exposures such as in Japan, chemical suicide events have happened in NYS.

Drew Fried, EMT- CC, CHEP, CHSP, has been an EMT since 1981 and a New York State EMT certified instructor coordinator since 1998. In 2003 he became a Sr. Program Instructor and Train the Trainer for the Westchester County WEVR –MRC and CERT programs He is an adjunct instructor at SUNY Westchester Community College in Westchester, New York, and was the EMS / Health Services Coordinator for CHD Meridian Healthcare based in New York City from 2000 – 2007. Drew is a Certified Healthcare Safety Professional; and Certified Healthcare Emergency Professional by the Board of Certified Healthcare Management He is also the Executive Director of Pre-Hospital Care Concepts an EMS Information and Training Service, was a member of the fireEMS Editorial Board from 2003 to 2006 and a Peace Officer with the Co-op City Department of Public Safety for 15 years, where held the rank of Sergeant, and was the commanding officer of the Emergency Service Unit. Drew is presently an emergency manager with a NYS government agency, and Director Training for Exchange Ambulance of the Islips.

After attending this session, the learner will be able to:

1. Define the hazardous nature of responding to a chemical suicide call.
2. List the steps in safely responding to a call involving chemical suicide.
3. Understand the process of chemical suicide by mixing cheap and easily available chemicals.

Outline:

- Define the hazardous nature of responding to a chemical suicide call.
- List the steps in safely responding to a call involving chemical suicide.
- Understand the process of chemical suicide by mixing cheap and easily available chemicals in an enclosed space
- Understand that this is a growing threat and an ever-more popular way of committing suicide
- Know reasons why first responders may be exposed to the lethal gases produced by the process
- Understand the warning signs that you may be approaching a chemical suicide