



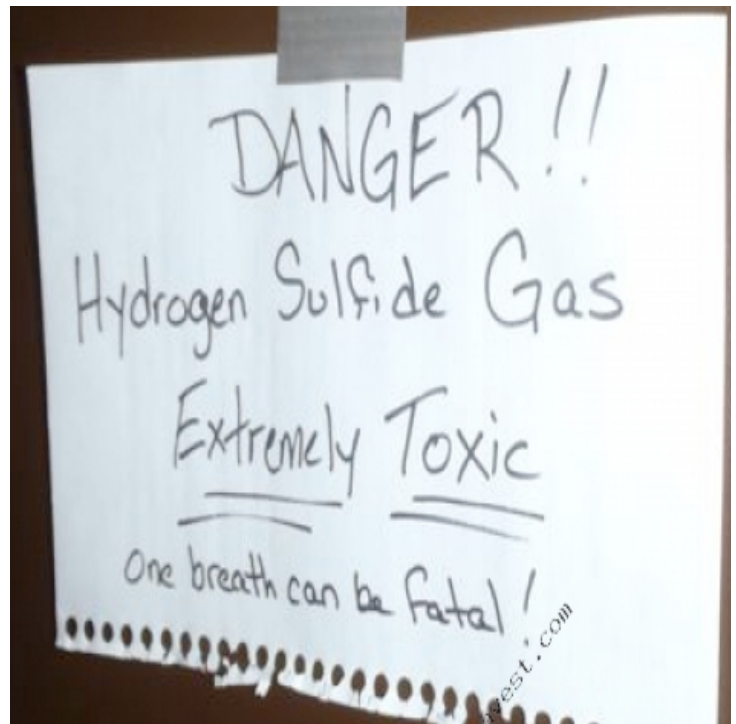
DETERGENT SUICIDE

COURTESY OF CENTRALPABRAVEST.COM

On 05/03/12 around 1000 am, Swatara Township Police and Fire (49, 41, 40) along with Lifeteam were dispatched to the Super 8 Hotel off of Eisenhower Boulevard for a barricaded person involving hazardous materials. When police and fire arrived we found a 2 story hotel with all guests evacuated except a suicidal person on the second floor of the hotel. There was distinct “spoiled egg” odor in the hotel and just outside the hotel.

The scene was immediately secured and Dauphin County Haz Mat Team (77) were requested to assist. A unified command was established along with an evacuation zone. The command consisted of Swatara Fire, Police, Dauphin Co Haz Mat, and Life Team.

A plan was organized and put into action. Two Police Officers with Firefighting Experience and Two firefighters made entry in full PPE to the room to discover the person deceased in the bathroom by way of “Detergent Suicide”. The hazard and deceased were removed from hotel after approx. 3 hours on scene. Following will describe the chemicals used and how the person used them. I will also describe lessons learned good and bad so other firefighters will better prepared for this increasing event.





DETERGENT SUICIDE can be found easily on internet and is a common method of suicide in Asian Countries but growing in America. All chemicals are legal and can be obtained easily.

Chemicals mixed

The Works Toilet Bowl Cleaner - *Hydrochloric Acid*

Hi-Yield Improved Lime Sulfur Spray- *Calcium Polysulfide*

The person locked his hotel room, then constructed a enclosed “bubble type” area in the bathroom tub and sealed the bathroom with expansion foam. He then enclosed himself in the bathtub and mixed the chemicals. He was in the bathtub for extended period of time prior to a 911 call from the hotel.



LESSON LEARNED:

Do not rush the incident.
Insure everyone is evacuated to a safe distance including emergency personnel. Insure scene security.

Gather as much information as possible. We were able to identify the person, his background, and that his

vehicle was parked in the lot. His vehicle was searched prior to entering hotel. Our intell developed that person was suicidal. We also discovered he had received a package at the hotel the day before the incident was reported.

Gather all resources needed, develop a plan, and execute plan with safety. Keep the amount of exposed personnel to just enough to complete the task. Have a RIT Team established and ready to act. Control citizens and other firefighters trying to enter the hazard area out of curiosity. A good accountability is important.

The first entry team observed a common action. The suicidal person wrote a warning on the bathroom door warning emergency personnel of chemicals used. This is often recommended on the internet sites describing "Detergent Suicide". The crew also found a will and notes to family.

All firefighters who entered the scene wore SCBA and PPE. They all participated in decon after operating on scene.

We did not have decon in place prior to executing plan and we learned to make that operation happen earlier. We learned that de-con suggested was just to shower but we stepped it up to the next level with a full wash down as crews exited the scene.