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May 14, 2009

HEALTH AND SAFETY BULLETIN

TO: All Operations Staff

FROM: John Lock
Deputy EMS Chief/Director, EMS Operations

SUBJECT: **DETERGENT SUICIDE – CAUTION FOR EMS STAFF**

You will recall that a safety bulletin in regarding a new way to commit suicide was sent out to Toronto EMS staff on March 26, 2009 (Advisory 2009-12). At that time Toronto EMS had not responded to a suicide case of this type. On Sunday May 10th, 2009, Toronto EMS paramedics did respond to Toronto's first case. We are resending the information to ensure that all staff are well aware of this potential risk.

Recently, there has been some information posted on the internet referencing a new way of committing suicide that appears to be originating in Japan. The method consists of mixing two chemicals that can be bought over the counter at local stores.

They are: Bonide, a sulfur spray used as an insecticide for fruit trees and Hydrochloric (muriatic) acid. When mixed, the chemicals produce heat and a flammable, noxious gas that causes the subject to pass out and the heart to stop within minutes. The process appears to be quick and painless. Two known cases have been documented in the United States. The suicides occurred in personal vehicles. Each party left a note warning first responders of the dangers. If a first responder opens the vehicle and inhales, they too will be exposed to a noxious possible fatal gas.

Warning signs:

- Subject appears unconscious or asleep in a contained area (usually vehicle).
- Subject wearing safety glasses and medical gloves (required to handle chemicals).
- Windows are taped (prevents gas from escaping).
- A posted note to warn of the dangers present.

How to respond to this type of incident:

- Survey the scene.
- Do you see anything unusual? (ie. Note on the window, chemical containers, taped windows)
- Secure the scene.
- Do not open the vehicle (contained area).
- Call for additional resources (CBRN, hazmat) who are properly trained and equipped to deal with this type of call.
- Establish a perimeter.
- Wait for CBRN, hazmat arrival.

On Sunday, May 10th, Toronto EMS, Fire and Police did receive advanced warning that this chemical was involved in the call. As with any call, approach every scene with care and caution. To date, there have only been two incidents of this type reported in the US and now one, to our knowledge, in Canada.



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c: B.K Farr, Deputy EMS Chiefs, Ops Mgrs, Ops Supvr, S.K. Orr, J. Shield, B. Chawla, R. Shamji, M. Amyotte, S. Firman, J. Aquilino

