



# ACC Threat Information Fusion Cell



## Homeland Defense Information Summary - 10 November, 2009

Headquarters Air Combat Command  
Langley AFB, VA. 23665

### General Awareness/Safety Information

#### (U//FOUO//LES) Hydrogen Sulfide Gas: Suicide Tactic and Potential Threat Implications

Source: Cayuga County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division

**ACC TIFC BLUF: Using hydrogen sulfide gas to commit suicide appears to be gaining popularity in the United States, and the risk to first responders cannot be over-emphasized. As with most threats, situational awareness is crucial and the following articles highlight some of the indicators to watch for. Additionally, the FBI article discusses the potential of using hydrogen sulfide gas in a terror attack.**

- (U//FOUO//LES) 10/28/09 at 10:30am The Cayuga County Sheriff's Office investigated a "**Hydrogen Sulfide Gas**" suicide. This method is also known as "Detergent Suicide" and poses a high risk of injury or death to first responders. A gray 1990 Toyota 4DSD with California license plates was found parked in front of a cemetery along NYS Rt. 90 in the Village of Cayuga, N.Y. The vehicle was placarded with handwritten warning signs warning responders of Hydrogen Sulfide gas and to call Haz-mat teams. The vehicles doors were locked. The vehicle was occupied by a deceased 22 year old white male from Berkeley California, who was slumped over in the driver's seat. Inside the vehicle, on the front passenger side, was a plastic five gallon pail containing what is believed to be a mixture of Muriatic Acid and Lime Sulfur, (containers found in vehicle) both of which can be purchased at any hardware store. The investigation revealed that the vehicle had been parked there overnight. The scene investigation took approximately six hours to complete with the many precautions that had to be taken. Air quality testing inside the vehicle, prior to the doors being opened but after it had been parked there for more than 15 hours, indicated gas levels that were still extremely dangerous. The Sheriff's Office utilized HAZMAT teams from the Auburn City Fire Department and the New York State Police. The entire vehicle including all of the contaminated contents were secured and removed by a private company dealing with Hazardous materials. This process was arranged through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The body of the victim also had to be decontaminated prior to being transported to the Onondaga County Medical Examiner's Office. Our investigation has determined that this method of suicide is rare in the United States and more popular in Japan. References to it can be found on the internet. Any agency requesting further information may contact Lieutenant Joseph Weeks or Detective Timothy Axton at the Cayuga County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division (315) 253-1610.



**WMD Threat Credibility Evaluation: Hydrogen Sulfide Gas Threat.** The Federal Bureau of Investigation WMD Directorate WMD Operations Unit (WMDOU) assesses with a high degree of confidence that hydrogen sulfide gas mixtures are easily constructed from readily available materials and can have lethal effects in confined areas. However, if first responders follow procedures and remain vigilant, the threat can be significantly minimized. Furthermore, WMDOU has no indication that terrorist or other extremist groups are currently producing hydrogen sulfide gas or planning attacks using this method, although several training materials exist encouraging this activity.

- In 2008, two cases in California and Georgia surfaced involving young men committing suicide by locking themselves in their vehicles and mixing the chemicals bonide (a sulfur spray used as an insecticide) and hydrochloric acid to produce lethal hydrogen sulfide gas. No first responders or civilians were injured due to chemical exposure.
- Investigations revealed that one of the victims visited one or more Japanese websites that provide information on how to commit suicide using hydrogen sulfide. In the first six months of 2008 alone, Japan suffered more than 500 suicides

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using this method, leading the National Police to request Internet providers to delete posts on how to produce the deadly gas.

- Hydrogen sulfide is a colorless, toxic, and flammable gas found naturally in crude oil and natural gas deposits, from bacterial decomposition of plant and animal matter, and as a byproduct of chemical processes involving sulfur compounds. Hydrogen sulfide is typically characterized as having a “rotten egg” odor, sometimes referred to as “sewer gas”, and can be detected by smell at very low (non-toxic) levels. The gas is generated by combining commercially available acid and sulfide-containing products. Strong acids can be obtained from many types of cleaning products, and sulfide compounds can be obtained from fungicides, paints, and some hair shampoos.
- Although the amounts of hydrogen sulfide generated by various products vary, individuals may use environmental controls, such as an enclosed space, to maximize the dose received. These individuals sometimes post warnings to inform responders of the hazard associated with their suicide attempt; however the entry by unprotected rescuers into a hazardous environment due to the absence of a warning or through a lack of recognition of the odor of hydrogen sulfide is of concern to the first responder community.
- Hydrogen sulfide targets the eyes, respiratory system, and central nervous system. Its IDLH value (i.e., concentration at which it is Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health) is 100 ppm, and at higher concentrations incapacitation is rapid. Prolonged low-level exposure or acute exposure to high concentrations de-sensitizes the sense of smell rendering individuals unaware of continued exposure.
- The employment of the aforementioned binary reaction to produce casualties in a terror attack depends on several factors. Conditions that increase the potential dose of hydrogen sulfide include limited egress, rapid generation rate, and limited ventilation. The effectiveness of this method would be reduced in a scenario where hydrogen sulfide was produced slowly, in smaller amounts, or in the open, allowing individuals the opportunity to identify and retreat from the source.
- Several terrorist training manuals, such as the “Mujahideen Poisons Handbook” and materials posted to jihadist websites, have discussed using hydrogen sulfide gas as an attack method, however, no information indicates terrorists are actively planning attacks using this chemical. *Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation WMD Directorate WMD Operations Unit March 18, 2009*

## Suspicious Activity/Tests of Security

### (U//FOUO//LES) Suspicious Activity Involving HAZMAT Transportation Vehicle Operators

*Source: TSOC SPOTREP 5 Nov 09, First Observer Highway Information Sharing and Analysis Center*

**ACC TIFC BLUF: Silicon tetrafluoride is a liquefied gas that is toxic by inhalation and very corrosive to eyes, respiratory system and skin. While the following story may represent nothing more than a “poison pen” situation where one employee is attempting to get another into trouble, the potential danger if the allegations prove true are concerning.**



- (U//FOUO//LES) Highway ISAC received the following report from First Observer Call Center: USPERS1 called at approximately 9:45am (EST). She is employed by USBUS (hauls hazmat materials; such as silicon tetrafluoride). USPERS1, mentioned another truck driver (her partner), USPER2, 46 yr old, black male who is Muslim. She advised that he has become very agitated, depressed and hostile. He often speaks of suicide and makes disparaging remarks about the USA, war activity and the government. He has also stated that the materials they haul could be "weapons of mass destruction". USPERS1 stated that she feels very uncomfortable driving with USPERS2, and has met with her immediate supervisors; she advised that she has refused to drive with him. USPERS1 advised that they haul empty barrels from Aurora, North Carolina where they are filled with silicon tetrafluoride and then transported to Pasadena, Texas; there are two (2) placards on the truck indicating corrosive/1859 inhalant. **\*\*Analyst Note\*\* - Highway ISAC spoke with USPERS1 concerning the incident. She claims to have known USPERS2 well for the past 8 years. They have been friends and co-workers the entire time and there have never been any signs or incidents leading to USPERS2's behavior. She claims they were at odds after recent runs approx. 3 weeks ago. USPERS2 did not care for the way she drove and would consistently try to get her to change her driving tactics, often growing agitated. On multiple occasions he spoke of the dreary weather and mentioned suicide. She also claims that USPERS2 has made remarks towards overthrowing the government, depression, and how their trucks can be used as weapons of mass destruction. She doesn't think there are any issues with his home life or other factors that may be contributing to his behavior. She reported the activity to her terminal supervisor, USPERS3, and requested a new driving partner. I spoke to USPERS3, who claims he has seen no change in behavior or warning signs that USPERS2 is unstable. He feels the comments made were simply conversational in nature. USPERS2 has been a reliable driver for years.**

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USPERS3 states that the route they drive is very time intensive and requires long hours by the team members. He stated that USPERS2 is extremely punctual with his runs and could be upset with USPERS1 for not adhering to his normal driving patterns. USPERS3 granted USPERS1's request and has now placed USPERS2 with another driver. I requested USPERS3 to maintain contact with USPERS2's new driving partner and to ensure there are no further reports of threatening remarks or unstable behaviors. If he receives any further information, he will be sure to call. While there is no nexus to terrorism at this time, these types of remarks and behavior cannot be discounted if they continue to occur. The individual in question has access to hazardous materials and expansive shipping equipment. This could possibly be a coworkers' squabble, or more deeply rooted issues of concern with USPERS2. Updated information will be provided as it becomes available.

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