

Copycat Suicide: Toxic Fumes in Car

By Pauline Repard, San Diego Union-Tribune
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SAN DIEGO — A man apparently killed himself with toxic fumes inside his car after posting warning signs in the windows Saturday in Carmel Mountain, in a copycat suicide of an incident last month, San Diego police said.

Officers found the 46-year-old Mira Mesa man's body in his car, which was parked in the back corner of a strip mall parking lot on Carmel Mountain Road, north of state Route 56, next to a skateboard park.

Police evacuated the skate park as a precaution, cordoned off the parking lot, and called the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and a hazardous materials crew.

The man's family called police about 3:30 p.m. to report that he had been missing since noon Friday, police Lt. David Rohowits said. The man reportedly was depressed and suicidal.

His cell phone signal led officers to the strip mall about 5 p.m., where they found the car with hand-written warning signs taped to the windows, Rohowits said.

Rohowitz said the man had used common household chemicals, which, combined, filled the car with toxic gas. Hazardous materials crews removed the items.

On Aug. 14, a man committed suicide by creating a lethal hydrogen sulfide gas from common chemicals in his car at Black Mountain Park in Rancho Penasquitos. The man put a sign in his dashboard that said, "Don't open, Call hazmat or 911."

"It's disturbing," Rohowits said. "It's dangerous stuff, but fortunately, these two decedents have left warnings. My concern is, someone is going to come across this situation and get into the car, and get a faceful of fumes."

Rohowits said he did some research after the first incident and learned this method of suicide had become prevalent in Japan, and now has spread to several cases across the United States.

Source: <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2010/sep/18/copycat-suicide-toxic-fumes-car/>