

Man Kills Self in Bethlehem by Inhaling Chemicals

By Pamela Lehman, The Morning Call

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Bethlehem, PA – A man's body found Friday night in a car in Bethlehem prompted a hazardous materials response when officials said his death was linked to inhaling chemicals.

Brian Hillegass, 40, Hanover Township, Northampton County, committed suicide by inhaling toxic chemicals, said Northampton County Coroner Zachary Lysek.

While the inhalation of chemicals to commit suicide is not common, Lysek said he's seen several cases.

Police said Hillegass parked his car in a lot near 21 E. Elizabeth Ave. and posted signs stating he was committing suicide and what types of chemicals were mixed together.

While nearby homes did not need to be evacuated, police warned residents to stay inside and keep their windows shut. Police were alerted around 11:30 p.m. by a woman who knew Hillegass. She told police Hillegass warned he would blow up the car if police or fire officials tried to stop him.

Due to the dangerous chemicals used, the Bethlehem police hazardous materials unit and the state police clandestine laboratory response team were called to investigate, said Bethlehem police Lt. Mark DiLuzio.

He said it took crews about three hours to neutralize the chemicals inside the car.

Source: http://articles.mcall.com/2010-03-01/news/all-cnsuicide-03012010_1_bethlehem-police-chemicals-inhaling