

Hydrogen-Sulfide Suicide in Utah Prompts Notice to First Responders

By Marc Giauque, KSL Channel 5
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North Ogden – A suicide in North Ogden has the state putting first responders on notice about possible hazards.

North Ogden Police and North View firefighters responded to the report of a suicide on Nov. 20. The victim had used hydrogen sulfide to kill himself -- a method that has become somewhat of a trend in Japan -- but it's also a potential hazard for people called to the scene.

In the North Ogden case, fire officials tell KSL News the victim had posted a note warning them and others of the dangers. One police officer and several firefighters who were at the scene were tested for possible exposure, but they were unharmed.



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The Utah Department of Public Safety says this type of suicide certainly is not a trend in the state, but officials wanted to put out the word about potential hazards.

"It was sent out to all first responders as more of an informational thing, just so that they knew; something to think about as you go to your next scene," says Utah Highway Patrol Sgt. Jeff Nigbur. "Being a first responder, you never know what you're going to walk into, and you always have to be cautious about that regardless."

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's website, hydrogen sulfide is a colorless gas that can be extremely hazardous in higher concentrations. It gives off what many describe as a "rotten egg" or "swamp gas" odor. It can also be created by mixing some ordinary household chemicals.

Several suicides involving homemade hydrogen sulfide have been reported in the United States. But in Japan, hundreds of people have committed suicide using the gas. In some cases, people in neighboring areas have also become sickened.

Source: <http://www.ksl.com/?sid=8947952&nid=148>