

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF HYDROGEN SULFIDE POISONING

The Principal hazard is death by inhalation:

When the amount of gas absorbed into the bloodstream exceeds that which is readily oxidized, systemic poisoning results, with a general action on the nervous system. Labored respiration occurs shortly and respiratory paralysis may follow immediately at concentrations of 700 ppm and above. This condition may be reached almost without warning as the originally detected odor of H₂S may have disappeared due to olfactory paralysis. Death then occurs from asphyxiation unless the exposed person is removed immediately to fresh air and breathing is stimulated by artificial respiration. Other levels of exposure may cause the following symptoms individually or in combination:

1. Headache
2. Dizziness
3. Excitement
4. Nausea or gastro-intestinal disturbances
5. Dryness and sensation of pain in nose, throat and chest
6. Coughing
7. Drowsiness

All personnel should be alerted to the fact that detection of H₂S solely by sense of smell is highly dangerous as the gas rapidly paralyzes the sense of smell. Ten (10) ppm of H₂S detected should be treated as if it were 700 ppm.