

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



SAFETY ALERT

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SAFETY ALERT 12-2

Suicide Bags Issued August, 2012

The Division of Fire Safety has received word that so-called "Suicide Bags" also known as "Exit Bags" have been discovered by responding emergency personnel. The use of a suicide bag is a method of committing suicide that is gaining in popularity due to the peaceful death that results, as described by the various advocacy groups that support legalized suicide. The device itself consists of a large plastic bag with a draw string. It is usually used in conjunction with an inert gas such as helium or nitrogen, and in rare cases the flammable and explosive gases propane and butane. The use of one of these gases prevents the panic, sense of suffocation and autonomic struggling during unconsciousness usually caused by the deprivation of oxygen and high concentrations of carbon dioxide. This is known as the hypercapnic alarm response. Breathing in other gases in place of oxygen does not result in carbon dioxide being exhaled, thus suppressing the hypercapnic alarm response.

The typical suicide scenario involves the person obtaining a large plastic bag with a drawstring, a disposable tank of gas, most often helium; typically that found in commercially available party balloon kits, and some type of tubing or a hose. The person places the bag over the head, connects the tubing to the gas valve and places the discharge end into the bag allowing the flow of helium to displace the air in the bag. The person then tightens the drawstring around the neck to ensure a good seal. Typically within seconds, the person becomes unconscious due to oxygen deprivation (hypoxia) and as long as the gas keeps flowing and continues to exclude oxygen, death follows shortly thereafter. Two variations of this method are use of the bag alone without the gas that is usually preceded by the person taking a large quantity of sleeping pills or tranquilizers to suppress the hypercapnic alarm response; or use of the gas with a CPAP mask instead of the bag.

The NJ Division of Fire Safety recommends that:

- When responding to incidents such as this, responders are advised to utilize SCBA at least until a determination is made as to what type of gas was used and the premises is thoroughly ventilated. Oxygen (O₂) deficient atmospheres may exist so a multi-meter that measures O₂ should be used.
- Responders should be aware that there is a chance that propane or butane may have been used due to the easy availability of these gases in hardware and home improvement stores. Precautions should be taken to prevent ignition sources from coming into contact with any gas.
- Responders should be aware that variants of the suicide bag method may have been used that may include the mixing of household chemicals to create a poisonous gas such as hydrogen sulfide and take appropriate precautions to prevent exposure. (See Safety Alert 2010-1 at: <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dfs/alerts/>).



PAINLESS, FAST SUICIDE

WARNING: This site is going to tell you. Don't use this if you're not intending to kill yourself. It's a permanent solution to whatever very well be a temporary problem. This should only be used as a last resort. **DISCLAIMER:** I don't turn this site on or off. I'm not responsible for any and all actions taken by anyone who uses this site. The person coming out of the tank should be comparable to the pressure of your entire.

SUPPLIES:

 CPAP tubing \$6 - amazon.com	 Helium tank \$45 - amazon.com	 CPAP MASK \$50 - amazon.com
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PLAIN FACT: Helium is not poisonous, that's why it's the favorite of balloons in the hospital. That means that if you're stuck in the tank, it's going to be there, making you suffocate. After it exits the tank, it's going to be there, making it completely harmless to anyone who would discover your body. **PLAIN FACT:** Helium "exit bags" are becoming a very common method of suicide.

YOUR BODY DOES NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HELIUM AND OXYGEN. THIS METHOD IS COMPLETELY PAINLESS.

DIRECTIONS:

Attach the tubing to the mask. Place the mask over your face and tighten the straps. Make sure no air enters from anywhere other than the tubing. Remove mask. Expose helium tank to the vent. Attach the other end of the tubing to the tank and make sure it is an air tight seal. Make sure it is secure and will be pulled out. Place the tank close to where you will connect suction, on a flat surface so it does not get knocked over or fall away.

Turn the tank on. The helium should be coming out in a gentle flow. Blow out slowly with your mouth and compare it to the helium inflow. Get it as close as possible. Repeat the warning if you have not already.

Lean down next to the tank and place the mask over your head, tightening straps as before.

You will pass out within a minute and be dead shortly afterward.

Photos showing examples of a balloon party kit with helium tank (left), a demonstration of a suicide bag with drawstring (center), and detailed instructions from the internet on how to use a variant method using a CPAP mask (right).

PLEASE POST IMMEDIATELY