

Oil and Gas Site Safety

When responding to an incident with oil and gas fields and/or coal seams, you must receive the appropriate training or a briefing before your operational assignment. Primary hazards include toxic gases as well as industry operations and facilities.

Situation Awareness

Methane (CH₄):

- Toxic, flammable, odorless, and colorless.
- Unlikely to cause physical problems in open environment but does pose a fire risk in high concentrations.
- Beware of enclosed buildings/vehicles if gas is suspected.

Hydrogen Sulfide Gas (H₂S):

- Highly toxic, flammable, and colorless gas.
- Odor of rotten eggs at low concentrations.
- Sense of smell rapidly deteriorates at higher concentrations.
- Exposure indicators include high heart rate, respiratory paralysis, seizures, and rapid incapacitation.

Hazard Control

- Ensure contact is made with the appropriate authorities before engaging in suppression activities.
- Ask for H₂S monitor/breathing apparatus and adequate briefing.
- Do not depend on sense of smell for warning.
- Avoid low-lying areas during stagnant air conditions.
- Anticipate industry traffic on narrow, unimproved roads.
- Be aware of exposed pipes and utility lines.
- Park at least 20 feet away from facilities and equipment. Avoid tampering with the oil and gas pumping equipment.
- Avoid open pits/dumps.
- Before starting dozer operations, ask your local dispatch to notify the appropriate utility representative. Don't assume pipelines are buried deeply or directly under their markers.
- **Seek immediate medical care at a hospital if H₂S exposure is suspected.**