FIREGUARD

Suicide Bags AKA *“Exit Bags”*

Suicide Bags

- Also known as "**Exit Bags**", suicide bags are fast becoming one of the most prescribed forms of Euthanasia worldwide. They are said to provide a fast, peaceful, undetectable death to those wishing to commit suicide.

- Simple, inexpensive with readily available ingredients make this device much more accessible to a greater population of people.

- Units have begun to encounter these devices on EMS emergencies.

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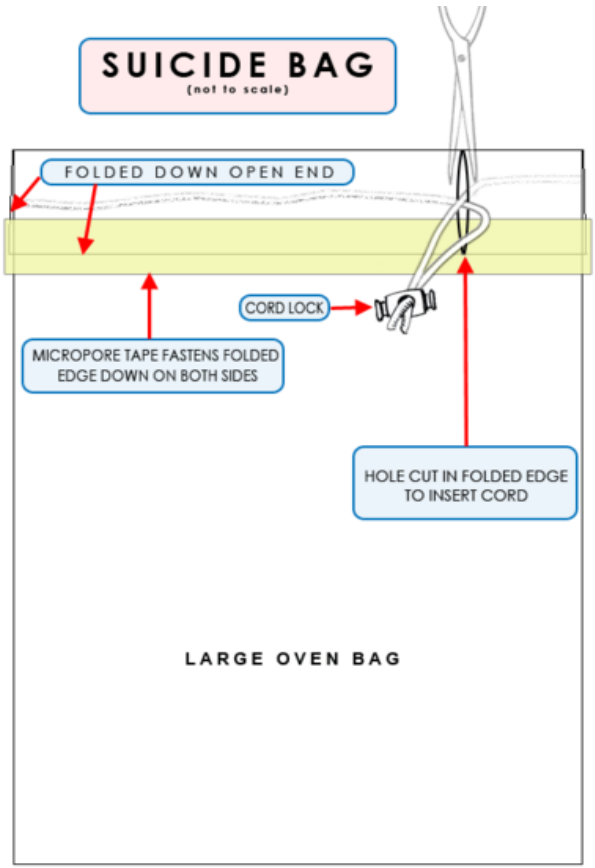
Construction

- Device consists of a large plastic bag, a drawstring that tightens around the neck, and a hose attached to a gas container.
- Inert gases such as *Helium* & *Nitrogen* are then pumped into the bag from a container through a small hose. <u>Death occurs by Oxygen displacement.</u>
  - When inhaled, Helium and Nitrogen offset the body's natural reaction to oxygen deprivation.
  - They do not trigger the panic, struggle and sense of suffocation that carbon dioxide does.



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Encounters

- First Responder Units
  - Most recently, FDNY CFR & EMS units came across a Suicide Bag on June 17, 2012
  - They were assigned to a “CARDIAC ARREST” emergency.
  - Upon arrival they found a 22 year old male who had tied a plastic bag over his head using a draw a string to cinch the bottom tight.
  - Attached to the bag units found a hose running into the bag from a nitrogen cylinder.

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Chemical Gases Used

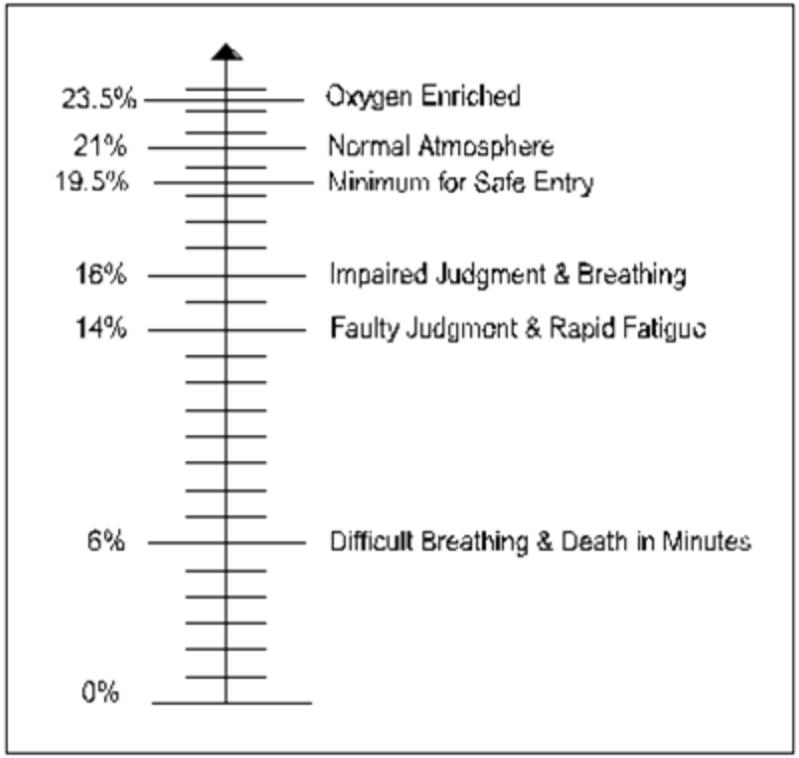
- Nitrogen
- Helium
  - Both Inert Gases; both classified as "Simple Asphyxiants"- they will displace Oxygen, and create an Oxygen deficient atmosphere.
  - *Safe* Atmospheric Conditions:
    - Oxygen Concentration between 19.5% and 23.5%.

Containers

- Gases can be held in several container types:
  - Helium can be found in pre-packaged disposable cylinders.
  - As an alternative to these Helium cylinders, individuals are recommended to fill empty *LPG cylinders* with compressed Nitrogen.

Hazards

- Oxygen displacement is our primary concern as first responders.
- Patients or DOA's using the suicide bag device may cause *oxygen levels* in room or apartment to become *dangerously low*, creating a hazardous atmosphere (asphyxiant type).
- A person entering such a space will replace the oxygen in the lungs within one or two breaths, and will be quickly overcome by simple asphyxiation.



Tactics

- Because of this asphyxiant hazard, units should consider donning SCBA and request units with a meter to determine if the atmosphere contains sufficient levels of O2.
- The only safe way to detect a lack of oxygen is through the use of an oxygen meter carried by Ladder, Rescue and Haz Mat Companies.

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Information as of June 20, 2012

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