



INTEL BULLETIN



Independence Police Department

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OFFICER SAFETY! WARNING! **CHLOROACETALDEHYDE EXPOSURE!!**

From: Independence Police Department, Independence, MO

This is a warning to all police personnel who may come in contact with brick marijuana wrapped and sealed to hinder detection. A detective responded to the UPS warehouse located at 1600 N. M-291Hwy, Independence, MO. in reference a package that they had obtained that had no return address and the shipping address was incorrect. They opened the package and it contained brick marijuana, 52 pounds worth. The detective recovered the shipment and upon his initial check **found that the marijuana was concealed in what looked like large dryer sheets, wrapping and an unknown liquid or gel substance.** One of the detectives working with him actually touched the liquid substance and stated that it smelled like soap but added that it began to **burn** his finger.

Their inquiry stopped there and would not continue until the next day (03-24-09). At this point the marijuana shipment was transported to Fire Station #5 after contacting their *Hazmat Unit*. The detective was wearing a respirator, protective clothing and rubber gloves. The Hazmat Unit initially tested the liquid substance with a machine that identifies substances through vapors. With this machine they were unable to obtain a reading that would indicate what the substance was. The detective was advised that if their machine could not determine what the substance was then it probably would not be harmful. At this point the respirators were removed and the evidence inventory continued. While the inventory was taking place a sample of the liquid substance was recovered and placed in a different detector which identified the substance as being **CHLOROACETALDEHYDE.**

Both detectives were working around this substance for approximately 30 to 45 minutes without their respirators on before being informed that **CHLOROACETALDEHYDE is a toxic substance.** Both detectives complained of a burning in the throat and chest pains. They were checked (blood taken, lung treatments, X-rays, etc.) and observed for three hours prior to being released.

If this substance comes in contact with acids or oxidizers it may cause fire, release toxic gases and vapors such as Chlorine, Carbon Monoxide, Carbon Dioxide during thermal decomposition. Exposure can be by inhalation, ingestion, eye or skin contact and absorption. It's a severe irritant of eyes, mucous membranes, skin, and respiratory tract at 40% solution present. An in depth safety and health guideline for handling Chloroacetaldehyde can be found under www.OHSA.gov.

Serious hazard to eyes and direct contact could result in tissue damage and permanent impairment of vision. Skin contact at a 40% solution can result in burn like injuries. Acute exposure: the above listed systems, eye damage, sensitization of skin and respiratory tract and severe cases may develop into pulmonary edema (swelling from excessive accumulation of watery fluid in the lungs).This substance is extremely Toxic in animals at smaller amounts than necessary to cause problems in humans.

It appears that this chemicals intent was to divert a canine's detection by incapacitating the animal. So we should not only be looking to protect ourselves but also our canine officers.