

Gas Leak Emergencies 1

Discussion

Responding to gas leak emergencies often carries the stigma of a routine service level call. The contrary is true however in that each of these incidents can easily escalate into a major emergency that could involve fire, explosion, collapse, evacuation and any number of serious outcomes. Each of these responses must be treated as true emergencies and be handled with appropriate levels of risk management. **Using your department SOG's, discuss your response to reports of gas leaks.** There are many types of responses in this category and they all require special attention. Consult your local gas supplier for additional training and resources as well as guidance in operations. The types of responses and suggested actions should be used to discuss your department operations in these areas.

Review these basic response guidelines with your SOG's

Inside Gas Leaks

1. Approach from upwind/uphill if possible
2. Position apparatus at least 150' from scene
3. Investigate source of odor after with appropriate gas detection equipment.
4. **Atmospheres with 10% LEL should be evacuated immediately**
5. Notify local gas authority
6. Ventilate the building by opening windows and doors
7. **Do not operate electrical switches**
8. Use only intrinsically safe lights and radios
9. **Shut-off gas supply if possible at valve with spark resistant equipment**

Outside Gas Leaks

1. Approach from upwind/uphill if possible
2. Position apparatus at least 150' from scene
3. Establish a safe area around the incident scene
4. Extinguish all open flames and identify any potential ignition sources
5. Investigate & locate source of odor after with appropriate gas detection equipment.
6. Check surrounding buildings & basements for presence of gas.
7. Restrict traffic flow in area
8. Contact local gas authority
9. Prepare water supply and vapor reducing streams.

Gas Fires

1. Notify local gas authority immediately
2. IC should determine if gas can be shut off at meter or building
3. In some cases it may be appropriate to protect exposures and allow venting gas that is burning to continue to burn. This will control the gas product. **BURNING GAS WILL NOT EXPLODE**
4. Best method of controlling this problem is to control the flow of gas.
5. Protect your people and beware of pockets of unburning gas that could find ignition sources.

