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Hydrogen Sulphide – Training Personnel to Work Safely

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Hydrogen sulphide (H_2S) is one of the few chemicals that has few warning properties at dangerous concentrations and can lead to immediate incapacitation. One must be particularly aware of the hazards associated with H_2S whenever working where hydrogen sulphide is present or presumed present. After engineering controls, a well-executed training program is arguably the most effective way of protecting personnel against Hydrogen Sulphide exposure. For several years, The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has maintained a training standard titled Accepted Practices for Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S) Training Programs or ANSI Z-390. The latest revision of Z390 emphasizes the importance of providing instruction specifically applicable to the job site and work activities. The Standard makes clear that a single annual, generic training session may satisfy some of the knowledge requirements, but training is not complete until job site and work activity component is provided. This presentation will provide an overview of some of those work activities including prerequisite actions necessary before commencing training such medical examinations and fitting and testing for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Both medical evaluation and face fit testing must be performed recurrently, according to highly prescriptive protocols under separate ANSI. Drawing on personal experience of having been exposed to hydrogen sulphide poisoning, Mr. Simpson uses the components of the Z390 and other ANSI standards to underpin the critical components to effective training of personnel working in an environment where H_2S may be present.

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