FACT SHEET – Cyanide

CYANIDE IS A QUICK-ACTING POISON

• It is found in some minerals and plants and is used in manufacturing for
  – making paper and plastics
  – developing photographs
  – other uses

• It can be gas, crystal, or liquid. There are different forms such as
  – hydrogen cyanide
  – cyanogen chloride
  – sodium cyanide
  – potassium cyanide

• Cyanide has been used as a poison gas in
  – World War II
  – the Iran-Iraq War

CYANIDE PREVENTS THE BODY FROM GETTING OXYGEN

• People can be harmed if cyanide
  – is in the air they breathe
  – is in the water they drink
  – is in the food they eat
  – gets on their skin

• If a person gets small amounts, within minutes they may have
  – rapid breathing and heart rate
  – restlessness, dizziness, and weakness
  – headache, nausea, and vomiting

• If exposed to a large amount, a person can
  – have convulsions
  – pass out
  – have a slow heart beat and low blood pressure
  – stop breathing

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Frankfort, KY
http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/preparedness

Kentucky Regional Poison Center
Louisville, KY
EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222
Lake Cumberland District Health Dept.
(606) 678 – 4761
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA
Toll free: 1-800-311-3435
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/cyanide
FACT SHEET – Cyanide (continued)

PEOPLE CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

• If you are in a place where cyanide has been released indoor
  – go outdoors if possible
  – get near the floor if you cannot get outdoors

• If you are outdoors, move away from the area.

• If cyanide has been released, call 911 for medical help.

• If cyanide gets on someone
  – rinse eyes with water for 10–15 minutes
  – remove clothing and seal it in a plastic bag
  – wash skin with soap and water
  – call 911 for medical help

• If someone swallows cyanide
  – don’t make them vomit
  – don’t let them drink anything
  – call 911 for medical help