



## **PHOSGENE (COCl<sub>2</sub>)**

### **What is PHOSGENE?**

Phosgene is an industrial chemical and can be considered a chemical warfare agent. Phosgene is a colorless and nonflammable gas with a suffocating odor of newly cut hay. Phosgene is also known as carbonic acid dichloride, carbon oxychloride, carbonyl chloride and chloroformyl chloride. In the presence of water, sweat, saliva or tears, the liquid or gas becomes hydrochloric acid and can burn and damage the body.

### **Signs and Symptoms:**

Symptoms depend on the route and amount of exposure. They include lung and heart damage, difficulty breathing, chest tightness, wheezing, irritation and redness of the eyes, nose, mouth and airways. Onset of symptoms after exposure is 1-24 hours, up to 72 hours. Delayed onset is not common.

### **Route of Exposure:**

Primary route is by either inhalation or absorption through the skin or eyes.

### **Treatment:**

There is no specific treatment. Remove contaminated clothing immediately and wash exposed skin/eyes. Supportive hospital care may be necessary. Victims should be kept warm and still. Activity can make symptoms worse and lead to death.

### **What can you do?**

Emergency response leaders may direct people to evacuate or "shelter in place."

### **Whom do you call?**

Delaware Division of Public Health: 1-888-295-5156.

### **Contact Information:**

Visit the CDC website for Emergency Preparedness and Response: [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov).