



METHYL BROMIDE

I. Protocol Overview

Methyl bromide, also called bromomethane, is classified as a choking/pulmonary agent, and can be a liquid or gas at room temperature. Methyl bromide is irritating and corrosive to the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract. Exposure to methyl bromide may cause burning of the eyes, nose, and throat, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, and nausea. Higher concentrations are narcotic and toxic to the central nervous system, resulting in blurred vision, mental confusion, numbness, tremors, and speech defects. Severe exposure can result in cardiac arrhythmia, pulmonary edema, circulatory failure, toxicity to the blood, liver, and kidneys; and death.

For all suspected chemical exposures, consult the Poison Control Center (800-222-1222) located at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Information and treatment advice is available to the public and healthcare professionals at no charge.

Historically, Methyl bromide has been used as an industrial fire extinguishing agent. Currently, it is used for the fumigation of homes and other structures for termites and other pests. Methyl bromide is also used for fumigating soil after harvest before planting vegetables and fruits. The EPA is directing the phase-out of Methyl bromide use for pesticide and fumigation, as it depletes the stratospheric ozone layer.

Environmental and food samples are analyzed using gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS) post extraction and concentration. Clinical analysis is limited to detection of bromide levels in serum by ion chromatography (IC), GC or GC/MS.

The Delaware Public Health Laboratory does not perform this testing. Contact the CDC or the Poison Control Center.

II. Contact Information

24/7 CDC Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Poison Control Center: 215-386-2100

III. CDC Website

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/methylbromide/casedef.asp>