

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**November 1, 2000**

*Re: Article in Vol. 10, No. 4 of the Journal*

I found the paper titled “An Investigation into the Migration of Propane in Confined Spaces” by P. Lagus and R. Grot to be very interesting. However, I do have a concern; in the sixth paragraph of the Introduction, the authors state in the third sentence that “CO<sub>2</sub> is non-toxic.” I believe this statement to be in error, my education has always pointed to CO<sub>2</sub> as being very toxic to humans. Has something changed?

*Robert M. Rogers, P.E.*  
Earthquake Loss Prevention Specialist  
San Francisco Operations

## AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

**December 29, 2000**

Quoting from the Matheson Gas Data Book, Sixth Edition: “Carbon dioxide is generally regarded as a simple asphyxiant. Symptoms result only when such high concentrations are reached that there is insufficient oxygen in the atmosphere to support life.”

An asphyxiant can be hazardous to human health and not be a toxic substance. For instance, nitrogen, argon and xenon are also simple asphyxiants. This does not make them toxic substances. I hope this clears up any misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Rogers.

*Peter L. Lagus, Ph.D., CIH*  
Lagus Applied Technology, Inc.  
11760 Sorrento Valley Rd., Suite M  
San Diego, CA 92121