



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas that interferes with the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood. CO is non-irritating and can overcome persons without warning. People die from CO poisoning, usually while using gasoline-powered tools and generators in buildings or semi-enclosed spaces without adequate ventilation.

Carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and thus deprives the heart, brain, and other vital organs of oxygen. Large amounts of CO can overcome you in minutes without warning, causing you to lose consciousness and suffocate.

CO Poisoning can be reversed if caught in time. But even if you recover, acute poisoning may result in permanent damage to the parts of your body that require a lot of oxygen, such as the heart and brain. Significant reproduction risk is also linked to the effects of CO.

### Symptoms of CO Exposure:

- Headaches, dizziness, and drowsiness; and
- Nausea, vomiting, tightness across the chest.

### Some Sources of Exposure:

- Portable generators/generators in buildings;
- Concrete cutting saws, compressors;
- Power trowels, floor buffers, space heaters; and
- Welding, gasoline powered pumps;

In addition, working in confined spaces where the presence of CO is suspected, atmospheric monitoring must be completed to ensure that workers have sufficient oxygen before entering the confined space.

### Preventing CO Exposure:

- Never use a generator indoors or in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, and basements. Opening windows and doors in an enclosed space may prevent CO buildup.
- Make sure the generator has three to four feet of clear space on all side, and above it also, to ensure adequate ventilation.
- Do not use a generator outdoors near doors, windows, or vents where this would allow the CO to enter the area and build up in occupied spaces.

- When using space heaters and stoves, ensure that they are in good working order to reduce CO build up and never use in enclosed spaces or indoors.
- Consider using tools powered by electricity or compressed air, if available.
- If you experience symptoms of CO poisoning, get to fresh air right away and seek immediate medical attention.

### **If Someone Has Been Poisoned:**

When you suspect CO poisoning, promptly taking the following actions can save lives:

- Move the victim immediately to fresh air, in an open area.
- Call 911 or another local emergency number for medical attention or assistance.
- Administer 100% oxygen using a tight-fitting mask if the victim is breathing.
- Administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation if the victim has stopped breathing.

### **Warning:**

You may be exposed to fatal levels of CO poisoning in a rescue attempt.

Employers should make sure that rescuers are not exposed to dangerous CO levels when performing rescue operations.

### **Remember:**

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by reporting any situation to your employer that may lead to CO build up. Be alert to ventilation problems, especially where gases or burning fuels may be released.

***SAFETY RULES ARE YOUR BEST TOOLS!***

