

TOOL BOX TALKS

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Hand and Power Tools

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

Toolbox Tips

Effects of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Severe carbon monoxide poisoning causes neurological damage, illness, coma and death.

Symptoms and Sources of CO Exposure

- Headaches, dizziness and drowsiness
- Nausea, vomiting, tightness across the chest
- Portable generators/generators in buildings.
- Concrete cutting saws, compressors.
- Power trowels, floor buffers, space heaters.
- Welding, gasoline powered pumps.

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 sides and above it to ensure adequate ventilation.
- Do not use a generator outdoors if placed near doors, windows or vents which could allow CO to enter and build up in occupied spaces.
- When using space heaters and stoves ensure that they are in good working order to reduce CO buildup and never use in enclosed spaces or indoors.
- Use tools powered by electricity or compressed air if they are available.
- If you experience symptoms of CO poisoning get to fresh air right away and seek immediate medical attention.

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These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a safety professional.

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