

TOOLBOX TALK #8

AVOID CO POISONING WITH TOOLS



Because it is both colorless and odorless, carbon monoxide can be one of the most dangerous gases present on the construction site. Victims of CO poisoning may not even be aware that they are being overcome by CO fumes.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), gasoline-powered engines and tools present a potentially serious CO hazard. When working with such tools, workers should:

- Conduct a jobsite survey to identify and evaluate all potential sources of CO.
- Be sure all potentially hazardous equipment is marked with a warning label.
- Limit the use of gas-powered engines indoors. Do not use them in partially enclosed areas unless the gas engines can be placed outside and away from air intakes.
- Consider using electric tools, or those powered by compressed air, as an alternative, if available.
- When using compressed air, place the gas-powered compressor outdoors and away from air intakes.
- Use personal CO monitors equipped with audible alarms to warn workers when levels are dangerously high.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of CO poisoning, such as headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness and visual disturbances. These symptoms can occur minutes after equipment is turned on.
- If you recognize any symptoms of CO poisoning, immediately shut off equipment. Go outdoors or to a place with uncontaminated air.
- If medical attention is required, call 911. Do not drive yourself to a medical facility.