

TOOLBOX TALK #10

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless 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 inside buildings or semi-enclosed spaces without adequate ventilation.

Effects of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

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

Symptoms of CO exposure

- Headaches, dizziness and drowsiness.
- 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.
- Welding, gasoline powered pumps.

Preventing CO Exposure

- Never use a generator indoors or in 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 3 to 4 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 would allow CO to enter and build up in occupied spaces.
- When using space heaters and stoves ensure that they are in good working condition to reduce CO buildup, 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.

