

## TOOLBOX TALK #7

### CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

**Are you in danger?** You are if you are using ...

- A gas-powered generator indoors, in a semi-enclosed area, in a sheltered outdoor location, or outside near an air intake.
- Or any gas-powered tool, such as walk-behind or hand-held concrete cutting saws, power trowels, water pumps or pressure washers, indoors or in a sheltered outdoor location

Then the answer is YES! You could die from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.



#### **Know the basics:**

1. Use generators outside. Never run gas-powered generators or compressors inside a building or in a semi-enclosed outdoor space. Locate them as far as practical from any occupied building.
2. Use gas-powered tools outside. Don't use gas-powered tools indoors. These tools include gas-powered concrete saws, pressure washers, water pumps and power trowels.
3. Know other CO hazards and controls. Fuel-powered forklifts can cause CO poisoning indoors. Avoid letting engines idle. Consider using CO badges that alarm when levels get too high. Fuel-fired heaters (salamander or torpedo heaters) can produce CO. Make sure the unit is designed for indoor use and keep a CO monitor nearby. If you are MIG welding, use carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) shielding gas, make sure you have local exhaust ventilation with the hood positioned correctly. CO<sub>2</sub> can be changed into CO in the hot arc of welding.

If you find a co-worker down ...

- Shut off the engine, if you can
- Call 911
- Don't enter the area

Workers have died trying to save others. Any indoor use of gas-powered generators or tools should be approved by a competent person who must evaluate factors such as size of the space and whether ventilation can effectively reduce CO levels. The competent person should conduct air monitoring during the work to be sure the ventilation is doing the job.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer. It is odorless and colorless. You can only detect it with a carbon monoxide monitor. Know the warning signs of CO poisoning.

Headache   Dizziness   Nausea   Confusion   Loss of Consciousness

If you or a coworker experience any of these warning signs, turn off engines immediately, seek fresh air and call 911. CO can reach deadly concentrations in less than a minute, depending on the type of engine, and CO can linger for hours.