

Carbon Monoxide in the Workplace

What Workers in Manufacturing Need to Know

In June, 2014, twelve North Carolina manufacturing workers reported experiencing headaches, dizziness, blurred vision and nausea while on the job. They were being poisoned by a dangerous gas called carbon monoxide after a gas-powered tool was used indoors in a poorly ventilated area. Don't let this happen at your workplace!



Photo courtesy of The Center for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

CO is a lethal poison that can quickly build up when combustible materials, such as gasoline, propane, diesel or wood are burned indoors.

Know Your CO Sources

- Processing-related: production furnace
- Building-related: heating system or hot water heater
- Tool-related: tile cutters, fork-lifts, generators, floor buffers, and power washers

You Can Help Prevent CO Poisoning!

- Learn to recognize the warning signs of CO poisoning.
- Immediately turn off equipment if possible. Go outdoors or to a place with clean air if you feel you may have signs of CO poisoning.
- Call 911 immediately. Do NOT drive a motor vehicle.
- Stay away from the work area until it is determined to be safe.
- Use less hazardous tools (electric or battery-powered) whenever possible.

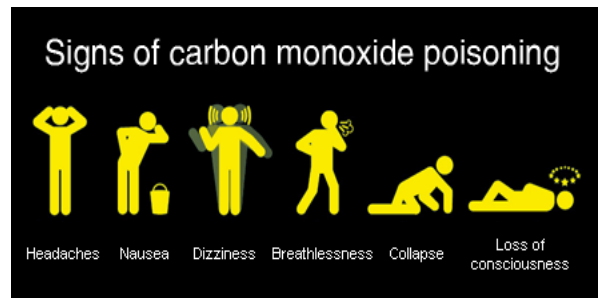


Photo courtesy of Gas Safe Register (UK): GasSafeRegister.co.uk





BEWARE!

CO is known as the silent killer!

WARNING!

- Do not use equipment and tools that produce CO inside buildings or other partially enclosed spaces unless properly ventilated.
- Always monitor the level of CO in the air if you need to use CO sources indoors.
- Install a CO monitor or CO alarm in all workspaces with CO sources, and check the battery every six months.
- Be sure to seek the advice of a professional if you have questions about CO monitoring and/or ventilation.

CO Exposure Limit Standards

- In North Carolina, the permissible exposure limit for CO in general industry and construction is 50 parts per million (ppm) averaged over eight hours.
- The Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) level for CO is 1,200 ppm at any given time, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).
- Best practice is to never allow CO levels to go above 150 ppm within any area at any given time.

Need More Information?

919-707-5900

Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch

N.C. Department of Health and Human Services - Division of Public Health
www.ncdhhs.gov - www.publichealth.nc.gov



Adapted from:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2015) "Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, General Information, Frequently Asked Questions." Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2015) "Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning from Small Gasoline-Powered Engines and Tools." Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/96-118/default.html>

North Carolina Department of Labor (NCDOL) (2014). "Hazard Alert, Carbon Monoxide Can Reach Deadly Levels Without Warning." Retrieved from: http://www.nclabor.com/osha/etta/hazard_alerts/CarbMonox.pdf