



CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. Although it has no detectable odor, CO is often mixed with other gases that do have an odor. So, you can inhale carbon monoxide right along with gases that you can smell and not even know that CO is present.

CO is a common industrial hazard resulting from the incomplete burning of natural gas and any other material containing carbon such as gasoline, kerosene, oil, propane, coal, or wood. Forges, blast furnaces and coke ovens produce CO, but one of the most common sources of exposure in the workplace is the internal combustion engine.

HOW DOES CO HARM YOU

Carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain, and other vital organs of oxygen.

Large amounts of CO can overcome you in minutes without warning, causing you to lose consciousness and suffocate.

Besides tightness across the chest, initial symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea. Sudden chest pain may occur in people with angina. During prolonged or high exposures, symptoms may worsen and include vomiting, confusion, and collapse in addition to loss of consciousness and muscle weakness. Symptoms vary widely from person to person.

CO poisoning may occur sooner in those most susceptible: young children, elderly people, people with lung or heart disease, people at high altitudes, or those who already have elevated CO blood levels, such as smokers. Also, CO poisoning poses a special risk to fetuses. CO poisoning can be reversed if caught in time. But even if you recover, acute poisoning may result in permanent damage to the parts of your body that require a lot of oxygen such as the heart and brain.



FOR ENQUIRIES:

YOUR SAFETY DEPARTMENT, LLC

P + 1 888 859 5653
info@yoursafetydept.com
www.yoursafetydept.com

© 2014-2016 **Your Safety Department, LLC**. All rights reserved. The information contained herein is provided "as is" and **Your Safety Department, LLC** does not warrant that it will be error-free or will meet any particular criteria of performance or quality. Do not quote or refer any information herein without **Your Safety Department, LLC**' prior consent. Any unauthorized alteration, forgery or falsification of the content or appearance of this document is unlawful and offenders may be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.



YOUR SAFETY Department

— SAFETY Solutions —

WHO IS AT RISK?

You may be exposed to harmful levels of CO in boiler rooms, breweries, warehouses, petroleum refineries, pulp and paper production, and steel production; around docks, blast furnaces, or coke ovens. Occupations at risk include:

- Welder
- Garage mechanic
- Organic chemical synthesizer
- Metal oxide reducer
- Diesel engine operator
- Forklift operator
- Marine terminal worker

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE HAS BEEN POISONED?

When you suspect CO poisoning, promptly taking the following actions can save lives:

- Move the victim immediately to fresh air in an open area.
- Call 911 or another local emergency number for medical attention or assistance.
- Administer 100-percent oxygen using a tight-fitting mask if the victim is breathing.
- Administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation if the victim has stopped breathing and you are trained to do so.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS HELP PREVENT CO POISONING?

To reduce the chances of CO poisoning in your workplace, you should take the following actions:

- Install an effective ventilation system that will remove CO from work areas.
- Maintain equipment and appliances that can produce CO in good working order to promote their safe operation and to reduce CO formation.
- Consider switching from gasoline powered equipment to equipment powered by electricity, batteries, or compressed air if it can be used safely.
- Prohibit the use of gasoline powered engines or tools in poorly ventilated areas. Provide personal CO

monitors with audible alarms if potential exposure to CO exists.

- Test air regularly in areas where CO may be present, including confined spaces.
- Install CO monitors with audible alarms.
- Use a certified full-face piece pressure-demand self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) or a combination full-face piece pressure demand supplied-air respirator with auxiliary self-contained air supply in areas with high CO concentrations.
- Educate workers about the sources and conditions that may result in CO poisoning as well as the symptoms and control of CO exposure.
- If your employees are working in confined spaces where the presence of CO is suspected, you must ensure that workers test for oxygen sufficiency before entering.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYEES DO TO HELP PREVENT CO POISONING?

Employees should do the following to reduce the chances of CO poisoning in the workplace:

- Report any situation to your employer that might cause CO to accumulate.
- Be alert to ventilation problems, especially in enclosed areas where gases of burning fuels may be released.
- Report promptly complaints of dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea.
- Avoid overexertion if you suspect CO poisoning and leave the contaminated area.
- Tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to CO if you get sick.
- Avoid the use of gas-powered engines, such as those in power washers as well as heaters and forklifts, while working in enclosed spaces.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH:

YOU DON'T WANT CARBON AS YOUR ENEMY!

