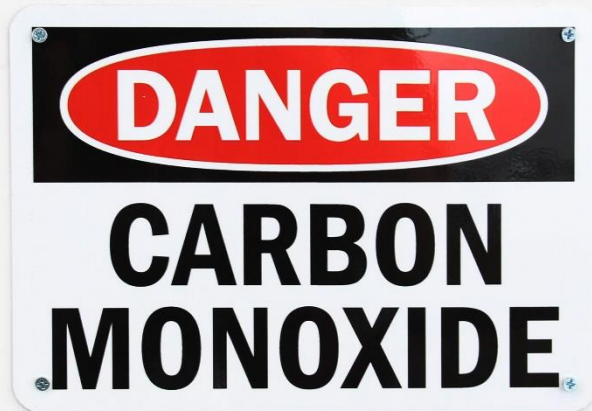


Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. CO can be found in construction areas where workers may be burning common materials such as wood, coal, or oil and using fuels such as gasoline or kerosene.

The information in this topic may help workers recognize and avoid creating situations where a hazardous accumulation of carbon monoxide could be harmful or even deadly.



(*1)

OSHA Standard 1926.57(a) *Whenever hazardous substances such as dusts, fumes, mists, vapors, or gases exist or are produced in the course of construction work, their concentrations shall not exceed [hazardous] limits...*



*Image of smoke coming from a generator. High amounts of deadly CO gas could be found in this smoke. (*2)*

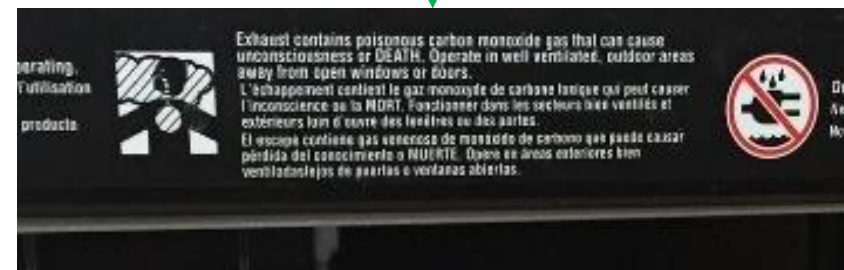


*Working in a pit or confined area such the one in this photo could be dangerous if a generator or other smoke producing tools are used. (*3)*

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic gas because it damages the blood's ability to carry oxygen throughout the body.
- CO is non-irritating and can overcome a worker without warning.
- Workers may not realize they are being exposed to a high level of CO in the air they are breathing.
- According to OSHA's [Quick Card on Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#):

"Many people die from CO poisoning, usually while using gasoline powered tools and generators in buildings or semi-enclosed spaces without adequate ventilation."

- Follow all instructions and warnings for gasoline, diesel, and kerosene powered equipment and tools.
- Maintain equipment and tools that can produce CO in good working condition to reduce CO formation.
- Use tools powered by electricity or compressed air in enclosed areas whenever possible.
- Report any situation where there may be a chance of accumulation of CO.



*Gasoline generator warning sign reads: Exhaust contains poisonous carbon monoxide gas that can cause unconsciousness or DEATH. Operate in well ventilated outdoor areas... (*4)*



- Workers using tools such as concrete cutting saws, compressors, power trowels, or floor buffers should always pay close attention to possible smoke accumulation.
- Equipment such as gasoline powered forklifts or even propane radiant heaters used indoors can also be a source of carbon monoxide (CO).
- Open windows and doors in enclosed spaces to avoid CO buildup.
- Leave the area and tell your supervisor immediately if you feel dizzy, drowsy, or are experiencing nausea!



*Gasoline powered forklift used indoors. (*5)*



Indoor CO monitor.



*Propane gas-fired radiant space heater. (*6)*



Remember these tips to avoid dangerous exposure to carbon monoxide:

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas.
- Workers may not realize they are being exposed to a high level of CO in the air they are breathing.
- Follow all instructions and warnings for gasoline, diesel, and kerosene powered equipment and tools.
- Use tools powered by electricity or compressed air in enclosed areas whenever possible.
- Equipment such as gasoline powered forklifts or even propane radiant heaters used indoors can also be a source of carbon monoxide (CO).
- Open windows and doors in enclosed spaces to avoid CO buildup.
- Even working outdoors with gas powered equipment such as leaf-blowers, powered trowels, and similar tools could expose you to CO dangers after a prolonged use.
- Leave the area and tell your supervisor immediately if you feel dizzy, drowsy, or are experiencing nausea!



*Worker using a gas powered leaf blower. (*7)*

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