

Safety Meetings are important!

They: get your employees actively involved
encourage safety awareness
help identify problems before they become accidents
motivate employees to follow proper safety procedures

We are happy to provide you with a monthly topic for your agenda.

**ROUTE TO:**

- General Manager
- Safety Coordinator
- Supervisor Dept. _____
- Other _____
- Date of Meeting _____

Carbon Monoxide

Cold weather will soon be upon us and we need to remember to take necessary precautions to protect our employees from the serious effects of Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless flammable gas that is slightly less dense than air. It is toxic to animals that use hemoglobin as an oxygen carrier when encountered in concentrations above about 35 ppm.

Every year, workers die from carbon monoxide poisoning, usually while using fuel-burning equipment, like forklifts. However small gasoline-powered engines and tools also present a serious health hazard. They produce high concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) which is a poisonous gas that can cause illness, permanent neurological damage, and death. Because it is colorless, odorless, and non irritating, CO can overcome exposed persons without warning.

This can be especially true during the winter months when employees use equipment in indoor spaces that have been sealed to block out cold temperatures and wind. Symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure can include everything from headaches, dizziness and drowsiness to nausea, vomiting or tightness across the chest. Severe carbon monoxide poisoning can cause neurological damage, coma and death.

Employers can reduce the chances of CO poisoning in the workplace by doing the following:

- Install an effective ventilation system that will remove CO from work areas.
- Maintain equipment and appliances, such as water heaters, space heaters, and cooking ranges that can produce CO in good working order to reduce CO formation.
- Consider switching from gasoline-powered equipment to equipment powered by electricity, batteries, or compressed air if it can be done 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.
- Educate workers about the sources and conditions that may result in CO poisoning as well as the symptoms and control of CO exposure.



In addition, 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.

Here are some guidelines you can train your workers to use to prevent CO poisoning:

- As a rule, gasoline-powered engines or tools should not be used inside buildings or in partially closed areas unless gasoline engines can be located outside and away from air intakes.
- Report any situations that might cause CO to accumulate.
- Be alert to ventilation problems-especially in enclosed areas where gases of burning fuels may be released.
- Always substitute less hazardous equipment if possible.
- Use equipment that allows for the placement of gasoline-powered engines outdoors at a safe distance from air entering the building.
- Avoid overexertion if you suspect CO poisoning and leave the contaminated area.
- Report any complaints of dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea promptly.
- Tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to CO if you get sick.

For more information, see OSHA Fact Sheet [Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#).

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the hazards of Carbon Monoxide or any other DHS, EPA or OSHA issue.

Marilyn Dempsey
Marilyn@SafetyDragons.com
940-999-8466

