

# CARBON MONOXIDE

About 400 people nationwide die and 4,000 are hospitalized for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning each year, and about 20,000 people are sickened enough to go to an emergency center, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

With the onset of winter, you may be running portable heaters and keeping more doors closed more often. Make sure you take appropriate precautions.

Thoroughly inspect all heaters, hoses, connections, burners, and storage tanks to make sure they're in good working order. It may have been nearly a year since you last took a good look at that piece of equipment.

Where feasible, install CO detectors. Communicate the potential hazard of mobile equipment exhaust in your warehouse and loading operations. With less air circulating, alert your workers who are loading and unloading trailers to take special care not to stay too long in a trailer with their equipment running. Keep an eye on these workers. Don't let them work alone where the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning is present.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses.

Be sure and report any of these symptoms to your supervisor immediately. Seek medical attention for any worker in this situation.

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