

Carbon Monoxide

With colder weather coming we'll be keeping doors shut more often and perhaps spending more time inside. It's a good time to remind everyone working inside of the potential hazards associated with carbon monoxide.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. It results from the incomplete burning of carbon fuels. One of the most common sources of CO in our facilities is exhaust from internal combustion engines found on forklifts and skid steers.

Carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces the 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.

Initial symptoms of CO poisoning may be little more than headache, dizziness, or nausea.

If you suspect CO poisoning, move to fresh air immediately and call 9-1-1.

To reduce your risk of CO poisoning:

1. Install and maintain effective ventilation systems.
2. Properly maintain equipment that could produce CO.
3. Consider switching from gas-powered equipment to electricity or compressed air.
4. Prohibit the use of gas powered equipment in poorly ventilated areas.
5. Test air regularly in areas where CO may be present.
6. Install CO monitors with audible alarms.
7. Educate workers about the sources, conditions, and symptoms of CO poisoning.
8. Instruct employees to report any situation that might result in CO exposure.

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For comments or suggestions about *For Your Safety*, e-mail joebateman@isri.org

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