

>> TOOLBOX TALK - Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a harmful gas that is sometimes referred to as the silent killer because it has no colour, smell or taste. It is formed when burning fuels such as propane, natural gas, gasoline, oil, coal, or even wood. Vehicle exhaust, blocked chimney flues, charcoal grills, lanterns, fireplaces, furnaces, and other fuel-burning heating and/or cooking appliances are some of the common sources of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide can be deadly when present in unventilated areas.

Why is Carbon Monoxide so dangerous*?

- CO blocks the absorption of oxygen into the bloodstream and poisons the red blood cells so they cannot carry oxygen. If tissues/organs do not receive oxygen, they stop functioning.
- Our brains are extremely vulnerable to oxygen deprivation. Most early symptoms of CO poisoning are the result of the brain malfunctioning due to a lack of oxygen.
- Workers in confined spaces can be at risk of CO poisoning.

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*:

- Low Concentrations – shortage of breath on moderate exertion; slight headache; nausea; dizziness
- Higher Concentrations – severe headache; mental confusion; dizziness; impairment of vision and hearing; collapse or fainting on exertion
- Extreme Concentrations – unconsciousness, coma; death
- CO is classed as a potential hazard to reproductive health (higher rate of miscarriage, stillbirth, and low birth weight when exposed during pregnancy. In men, genetic damage to reproductive cells, loss of potency, and abnormal sperm count)

If You Suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*:

- Seek medical attention immediately
- Take exposed person to fresh air as quickly as possible
- Give artificial respiration if breathing has stopped
- If you must rescue a person from a contaminated area, wear a breathing apparatus

Safety tips:

- Do not use vehicles or other gas-powered equipment (including heaters, generators, etc) in enclosed areas.
- Have CO detectors properly installed and tested regularly.
- Ensure equipment is maintained according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Always test confined spaces prior to entering.

*Source: Canada Safety Council For more information visit <https://canadasafetycouncil.org/workplace-safety/carbon-monoxide>

Discuss other safety issues specific to your site and record them here:

Complete and attach Toolbox Talk Meeting Form and process as per company policy.



TOOLBOX MEETING FORM

Date: _____ Project: _____

Supervisor: _____ No. in Crew: _____ No. Attending: _____

Review Last Meeting:

	Names of Attendees (Signature Required)
Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):	
Suggestions Offered:	
Action(s) to be Taken:	
Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:	

Supervisor's Remarks: _____

Signature: _____