

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible gas with no taste or smell. It can become especially dangerous if it builds up in tightly confined areas. It is just slightly lighter than air so it can hang around in enclosed spaces. All fuels including “cleaner” fuels like propane create CO.

Here is an Example

A worker at a large, enclosed construction site died of carbon monoxide poisoning after he and six other workers were exposed to high levels of the gas. The site did not have enough ventilation and three machines were giving off carbon monoxide: a portable mixer and a trowel powered by gasoline, and a forklift powered by propane.

What does carbon monoxide do to the human body?

Carbon Monoxide inhibits the blood's ability to carry oxygen to body tissues including vital organs such as the heart and brain. When CO is inhaled, it combines with the oxygen carrying hemoglobin of the blood to form carboxyhemoglobin (COHb).

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Ventilate areas where fuel-burning equipment is used by mechanical means to the outside.
- Never use a generator on enclosed or partially enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, and basements.
- Know the warning signs of exposure such as headache, faintness, dizziness, confusion, nausea, and irregular heartbeat.

- Never ignore those signs when working close to fuel burning equipment
- Give immediate medical attention to employees that are showing symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure.

