

## TOOLBOX TALK: CARBON MONOXIDE

# Undetectable and Fatal

Carbon Monoxide poisoning can be almost impossible to detect because the gas is colorless, odorless and tasteless. Knowing the dangers of Carbon Monoxide, how to prevent exposure and what to do if you see someone showing symptoms of poisoning is important in keeping you and your coworkers safe.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CARBON MONOXIDE

#### WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

#### WHERE IS CO FOUND?

CO is produced when you burn fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, grills, lanterns, fireplaces, gas ranges, furnaces, or portable generators.

CO is often mixed with other gases that do have an odor. This creates a risk of inhaling the deadly gas along with other gases, not realizing CO is present.

When CO builds up in an enclosed space, those who breathe it can be poisoned.

#### HOW DOES CO HARM YOU?

CO is harmful when inhaled because it displaces oxygen in the blood, depriving the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen.

Within minutes, large amounts of CO can cause you to lose consciousness and can be fatal.

#### SYMPTOMS OF CO POISONING

Initial symptoms of CO poisoning may include tightness in the chest, headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness or nausea.

During prolonged or high exposure, symptoms may worsen to include vomiting, confusion, and collapse, leading to loss of consciousness and muscle weakness.

#### AVOIDING CO POISONING FROM A VEHICLE

- Have a mechanic check the exhaust system of your vehicle every year. A small leak in the exhaust system can lead to a build up of CO inside the vehicle.
- Never let a vehicle run or idle inside a garage.
- Check the vehicle's exhaust pipe to ensure it is not blocked, for example, by snow during the winter.
- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector.

# We Are Here

Do you have a question about safety and health? Contact us and we can assist you in making your workplace safer.

[safeatwork.mo.gov](http://safeatwork.mo.gov)

## REACTING TO POSSIBLE CO POISONING

- Immediately evacuate and go to an open area with fresh air.
- Call 911 for medical attention and assistance.
- If the victim is breathing, provide 100% oxygen using a tight fitting mask.
- If the victim is not breathing, administer CPR.
- Do not reenter the premises until it has been deemed safe.

I understand the information presented and the importance of knowing the dangers of CO poisoning. I will watch for possible CO exposure, identify symptoms, and assist any of my coworkers who may be suffering from CO poisoning.

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE NAME:

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:

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Learn more ways to keep your workplace safe.  
Visit [safeatwork.mo.gov](http://safeatwork.mo.gov).

