

Carbon Monoxide

Many deaths occur every year at work and at home associated with carbon monoxide exposure. Carbon monoxide is defined as a poisonous, odorless, colorless and toxic gas. It is non-irritant and can overcome a person within minutes and without notice.

Carbon monoxide is typically an industry hazard resulting from the insufficient burning of natural gas and other materials containing carbon (gasoline, oil, kerosene, etc.). Breweries, warehouses, petroleum, refineries and steel production are a few industries at risk of producing carbon monoxide. However, it is also a hazard found in the home, mostly as a result of fuel burning appliances.

Carbon monoxide displaces oxygen in the blood and bankrupts the brain and other critical organs of oxygen. Initial and common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning consist of headache, drowsiness, dizziness and nausea. Prolonged or large amounts of carbon monoxide exposure can cause vomiting, confusion, collapse, loss of consciousness and muscle lapse. Severe exposure can cause permanent neurological damage, coma and death.

Many people are unaware when/where there is a possible carbon monoxide hazard. Any internal combustion engine such as a generator, compressor, welder, gasoline powered machinery and natural gas heater are potential carbon monoxide disasters, to name a few. Natural gas heat and boilers are common hazards in homes and in hotels, usually due to a leak in a heating unit.

Prevention is the key to any potential hazard. Carbon monoxide monitoring is used repeatedly in numerous industries. Ventilation is a common abatement of a carbon monoxide hazard in the workplace. Regularly Inspecting the machinery/equipment posing the carbon monoxide risk is the key to preventing leaks. If you have fuel burning appliances in the home, a carbon monoxide detector should be placed throughout. In the case of carbon monoxide poisoning, move the victim to fresh air, call 911 and administer CPR if breathing has stopped.

Carbon monoxide is a deadly, but silent killer. Take preventative measures and use carbon monoxide detectors to ensure your safety.

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