

KCA TOOL BOX TALK: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



TEAMWORK
IMPROVES SAFETY

Signatures

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All fuels, even “cleaner” fuels such as propane, create carbon monoxide. This gas is a common byproduct of any combustion process. Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas with no taste or smell. It is especially dangerous if it builds up indoors. It is just slightly lighter than air, so it can hang around in enclosed spaces.

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

1. How could this death have been avoided?

2. Do you know anyone who died from carbon monoxide poisoning? If so, what happened?

Remember This:

- Never use any equipment powered by an internal combustion engine (such as a generator or pressure washer) indoors or in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage, crawl space, or basement.
- Before you start working, identify all potential sources of carbon monoxide exposure.
- Use electric tools or tools with separate engines that can be kept outside, away from air intakes.
- Tune and maintain engines and other equipment regularly.
- Wear a carbon monoxide monitor, which employers must provide. This will sound an alarm if levels of the gas become unsafe.
- Never use equipment powered by an internal combustion engine indoors or in enclosed spaces.
- Know the warning signs of carbon monoxide exposure, such as headaches, faintness, dizziness, confusion, nausea, and irregular heartbeat.
- Never ignore these signs when working around fuel-burning equipment.
- If symptoms occur, turn off equipment, go outdoors, and call 911 for medical help.

For more information visit OSHA Standard: 1926.55

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