

Safety TOOLBOX TALKS

A ready-to-use training lesson to drive home the essentials of safety.

August 2011

Carbon-monoxide poisoning

▶ Introductory Comments

Everyone knows the dangers of running internal combustion engines indoors. But your employees must also know the other sources of carbon monoxide (CO), the early symptoms of CO poisoning and exactly what they should do if poisoning occurs.

▶ Meeting Starter Questions

What are the potential sources of CO in your department, and when could they become dangerous? What precautions can you take?

▶ Critical Safety Points

CO is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of materials containing carbon, such as gasoline, diesel oil, natural gas, propane, coal or wood. It may occur in dangerous levels in boiler rooms, warehouses, steel and paper production facilities and around welding operations – to name just a few locations. Dangerous concentrations often occur when CO from outside areas, such as loading docks, enter poorly ventilated interior spaces. Employee must:

Learn to recognize symptoms of CO poisoning. CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Without oxygen the body cannot work properly. The lack of oxygen especially affects the heart and brain. The first symptom is usually a throbbing headache.

Continued exposure, or exposure to higher levels, may cause dizziness, confusion, nausea, fainting and weakness. Poison victims may not recognize the symptoms but just have a general sense of not feeling well. Very high exposure can cause increased and irregular heartbeats, unconsciousness and death.

Know what to do if poisoning occurs. You should:

1. Immediately move the victim to fresh air, call 911, warn everyone in the area that CO is present, and evacuate if necessary.
2. Administer 100% oxygen using a tight fitting mask if the victim is breathing.
3. Administer CPR if the victim has stopped breathing.

Any equipment or processes that may be generating CO should be shut down and the area ventilated. Remember, you could be exposed to fatal levels of CO in a rescue attempt. Rescuers should be trained and skilled in performing recovery operations and using recovery equipment.

▶ Quiz Time

Find out how much participants learned during this meeting. Distribute copies of the quiz on the other side of this page. Grade the quizzes using the answers to the right.

Instructions:

Use Toolbox Talks to spark safety discussions. On the flip side is a quiz to make sure participants retain the valuable information.

Session Date

Supervisor/Instructor

Attendee List:

QUIZ ANSWER KEY (Quiz on other side)

1. False. CO has no smell or taste.
2. True.
3. True.
4. False. The first symptom is typically a violent headache.
5. True.
6. E. All of the above.
7. True.

SAFETY MEETING QUIZ

Employee Name:	Signature:
Department:	Date:
Score: _____ / 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail
Trainer:	Signature:

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Question 1: You can't see CO, but you can smell it.

True False

Question 2: CO can be produced by burning any material containing carbon.

True False

Question 3: CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen.

True False

Question 4: The first symptom of CO poisoning is usually vomiting.

True False

Question 5: Moving the victim to fresh air is the first step in a recovery operation.

True False

Question 6: Symptoms of CO poisoning include:

- A. Nausea.
- B. Dizziness.
- C. Confusion.
- D. Fainting.
- E. All of the above.

Question 7: If the victim of CO poisoning is still breathing, 100% oxygen should be administered immediately.

True False

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