



TODAY'S SAFETY TALK – TRAINING SESSIONS TO PREVENT INJURIES AND INCIDENTS

# TAKE A MINUTE FOR YOUR SAFETY

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## CARBON MONOXIDE

### **Carbon Monoxide and Hazards**

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas. It is also known as CO. Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause health problems:

- From relatively mild flu-like symptoms of headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion;
- To serious tissue or brain damage, or death from high levels or prolonged exposure.

Risk of carbon monoxide exposure increases in winter because buildings are sealed against the cold, so carbon monoxide cannot escape through open windows and doors. Garages with idling or operating vehicles and fuel-burning furnaces or equipment offer the greatest risks of concentrated CO levels. Even burning propane releases carbon monoxide.

Carbon monoxide is slightly lighter than air and spreads normally throughout a room, so moving to a higher elevation does not reduce exposure.

Carbon monoxide exposure can be serious, but with proper preparation and controls, it can be minimized. Your health and safety is important to us, we don't want you to get hurt.

### **Prevention**

To keep us safe, we need to learn the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and the emergency procedures to follow when an alarm sounds. I'll go through best practices to help ensure that our systems are operating as they should and that we know how to react if carbon monoxide builds to hazardous levels. We should

- Maintain clearance around ventilation intakes. Items positioned close to intakes can affect air flow. If CO alarms activate, evacuate immediately and inform supervisors or management of the problem. [*Instructor Prompt: allow participants to hear a CO alarm to become familiar with the sound.*]
  - Prevent others from entering the affected area.
  - If we must evacuate the facility, the meeting point is \_\_\_\_\_. [*Instructor Prompt: have participants answer where the meeting point is.*]
- Opening windows or doors will not reduce carbon monoxide to safe levels immediately. If an alarm goes off, evacuate the building and wait until you are given approval to reenter.

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- Any vehicle or piece of equipment that produces CO should be operated outdoors or with proper ventilation.
- When servicing running vehicles, discharge exhaust outside using a duct or flexible hose connected to a mechanical exhaust system. [*Instructor Prompt:* Have participants explain where these items are or explain their locations yourself.]
- Maintain all vehicles and equipment regularly. Poorly maintained or damaged equipment may create more carbon monoxide.
- If the ventilation equipment stops working, report the situation to your supervisor or management. Stop operating fuel-burning equipment until the area is well-ventilated.
- Do not operate carbon monoxide-generating vehicles or equipment by a facility's fresh air intake vents.

## **If Exposed**

If you or your co-workers are exposed to elevated levels of carbon monoxide:

- Exit the area and seek immediate medical attention if you suspect you may have CO poisoning.
- Alert a supervisor.
- Warn others to avoid entering the affected area.

## **Discussion Questions**

- What are the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?
- How should we react if we suspect high CO levels in a workspace?
- How can we maintain adequate ventilation around air vents?

# TAKE A MINUTE FOR YOUR SAFETY SIGN-IN SHEET

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Signature

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