

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. CO can be found in construction areas where workers may be burning common materials such as wood, coal, or oil and using fuels such as gasoline or kerosene.

OSHA Standard 1926.57(a) *Whenever hazardous substances such as dusts, fumes, mists, vapors, or gases exist or are produced in the course of construction work, their concentrations shall not exceed [hazardous] limits...*

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic gas because it damages the blood's ability to carry oxygen throughout the body. CO is non-irritating and can overcome a worker without warning.
- Workers may not realize they are being exposed to a high level of CO in the air they are breathing.
- Leave the area and tell your supervisor immediately if you feel dizzy, drowsy, or are experiencing nausea!

According to OSHA, “Many people die from CO poisoning, usually while using **gasoline powered tools and generators in buildings or semi-enclosed spaces without adequate ventilation.**”

- Follow all instructions and warning for gasoline, diesel, and kerosene powered equipment and tools. Maintain equipment and tools that can produce CO in good working condition to reduce CO formation.
- Use tools powered by electricity or compressed air in enclosed areas whenever possible.
- Open windows and doors in enclosed spaces to avoid CO buildup.
- Report any situation where there may be a chance of CO accumulation.
- Equipment such as gasoline powered forklifts or even propane radiant heaters used indoors can also be a source of CO.
- Even working outdoors with gas powered equipment such as leaf-blowers, powered trowels, and similar tools could expose you to CO dangers after a prolonged use.