

OHBA Safety Pages: Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep.

More than 400 people in the U.S. die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). More than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 others are hospitalized.

This "invisible killer" is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, portable generators or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.



How Can I Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?

Winter can be a prime time for carbon monoxide poisoning as people turn on their heating systems and mistakenly warm their cars in garages. So, as the weather turns colder, it's important to take extra precautions. In construction, carbon monoxide hazards can be present all year long.

The National Safety Council recommends you install a battery-operated or battery backup carbon monoxide detector in areas where carbon monoxide poisoning can occur. Check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall and replace the detector every five years.

The CDC offers these additional tips:

- Have your gas-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors
- Never use a generator inside a home, basement, or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent; fatal levels of carbon monoxide can be produced in just minutes, even with open doors/windows
- Never run a gas-burning appliance or engine in a garage that is attached to a house, even with the garage door open; always open the door to a detached garage to let in fresh air

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

The U.S. Fire Administration has put together materials on the dangers of carbon monoxide, including a list of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.

Symptom severity varies depending on the level of carbon monoxide and duration of exposure. Mild symptoms sometimes are mistaken for flu.

Low to moderate carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

High-level carbon monoxide poisoning results in:

- Mental confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

If you think you are experiencing any of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, go outside and get fresh air immediately. You could lose consciousness and die if you stay in the location.

Source Material: NSC



regulations or standards. The Members remain responsible for their own operations, safety practices and procedures and should consult with legal counsel as they deem appropriate.

The information we provide is not intended to include all possible safety measures and controls. In addition, the safety information we provide does not relieve the Members of its own duties and obligations with regard to safety concerns, nor does Oregon Home Builders Association guarantee to the Members or others that the Member's property, job sites and/or operations are safe, healthful, or in compliance with applicable laws,

regulations or standards. The Members remain responsible for their own operations, safety practices and procedures and should consult with legal counsel as they deem appropriate.

SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

Topic: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

Number in crew: _____ Number attending: _____

Safety or Health issues discussed. Include recent accident investigations and hazards involving tools, equipment, the work environment, work practices and any Safety or Health recommendations:

Follow up on recommendations from last safety meeting:

Record of those attending:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

Supervisor's remarks: _____

Supervisor: _____ (Print) _____ (Signature)