Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning at Work

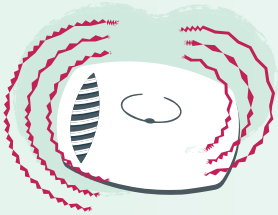
Working with or around fuel-burning tools and equipment, including vehicles, increases risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. All fuel-burning devices release **CO, a poisonous gas you cannot see, taste or smell**. **CO can be deadly when you breathe it in.** CO can build up in enclosed and partially enclosed spaces, like garages, construction sites, tented areas and warehouses. Take steps to prevent CO poisoning at work.

Certain workplaces may have more CO sources than others.

Fuels that produce CO when burned include diesel, gasoline, oil, propane, wood, etc. Workplace CO sources may include:

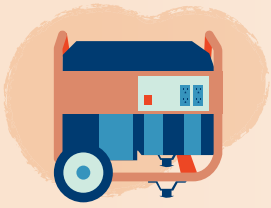
- Vehicles.
- Space heaters.
- Forklifts.
- Boilers.
- Portable generators.
- Blast furnaces.
- Coke ovens.
- Pressure washers.
- Small gasoline engines and tools.

Be Aware — Simple steps to keep you and your co-workers safe at work.



Employers can:

- Make sure your workplace complies with the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) safety standards and CO Hazards.
- Install and maintain CO detectors in your workplace to alert your staff of CO.
- Have fuel-burning vehicles and equipment inspected and maintained by a professional every year to reduce CO emissions.
- Provide adequate ventilation in work areas.
- Conduct air monitoring in the work place. Request assistance from MIOSHA.
- Consider using electric or compressed air-powered tools, if available and safely usable.
- Educate workers about the sources and conditions that may result in CO poisoning, CO symptoms and ways to reduce CO exposure.



Workers can:

- Read and follow all instructions and warning labels on fuel-powered equipment, including portable generators and power washers.
- Ask your employer to provide you with a small portable CO detector that can clip on your clothing or a gear bag.
- Never use fuel-burning items designed for outside use, like portable generators and power washers, inside.
- Ensure there is proper ventilation when using forklifts inside.
- Run portable generators **at least 20 feet** from people and enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. If needed, use an extra-long extension cord with your generator.
- Place pump and power units from high-pressure washers, gasoline-powered air compressors or portable generators outside and away from air intakes, so that engine exhaust is not drawn indoors.
- Report any ventilation issues or CO exposure symptoms to your employer.

Stay Prepared.

Know CO poisoning symptoms.

CO poisoning has flu-like symptoms, including:

- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Fatigue.
- Weakness.
- Chest tightness.
- Confusion.
- Unconsciousness.
- Coma

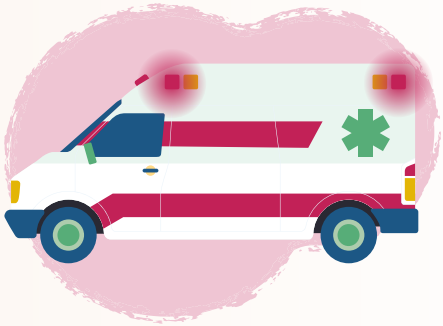
Remember: People who are sleeping or intoxicated might not notice CO poisoning symptoms before it's too late.

Symptoms should not be ignored.
You could DIE within minutes if you do nothing.

Get to Fresh Air.

If you suspect CO poisoning, have symptoms or if your CO detector goes off:

1. Turn off the equipment and leave the enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, and move to fresh air right away.
2. Call 911.
3. Stay away from the enclosed or partially enclosed space, even if you aren't experiencing symptoms. Air monitoring will let you know when it is safe to return.



CO poisoning is preventable.

Be Aware | Stay Prepared | Get to Fresh Air

MDHHS-PUB-1950 (9-26)

Learn more about CO poisoning.

Go to Michigan.gov/CarbonMonoxide
or scan the QR code.

MDHHS
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