



AmTrust North America
An AmTrust Financial Company

Safety Zone

Carbon Monoxide Safety - Grocery

Carbon-containing fuels such as wood, gasoline, coal, methane, natural gas, propane, and oil generate carbon monoxide, also known as CO. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and deadly gas that human beings cannot see or smell. Workers should be familiar with the sources and the symptoms of CO exposure.

Here are some common sources of burning fuel that create CO.

- vehicle exhausts
- charcoal grills
- fuel burning furnaces
- small gasoline engines
- gasoline-powered generators
- gas water heaters
- power washers
- marine engines
- forklifts
- propane-powered heaters
- kerosene heaters

If you breathe CO, it quickly replaces the oxygen in your bloodstream, depriving you of oxygen. Because people cannot see or smell CO, it's a good idea to know the initial symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure, listed below.

- headache
- nausea
- rapid breathing
- shortness of breath
- weakness
- exhaustion
- dizziness
- pain or tightness across the chest
- confusion
- hypoxia (a severe oxygen deficiency that results in a loss of consciousness)

If CO exposure continues, a person becomes confused, may vomit, convulses, weakens, and eventually collapses.

If you discover someone near a source of CO who is experiencing symptoms of CO exposure, you should first check that person's neck for injury. If you find no neck injury, then you should suspect CO exposure. Immediately move the person to fresh air and call 911. Trained medical personnel can administer oxygen and CPR. Always be aware of CO sources so you can limit your exposure.

If you are at home and realize you (or someone else in your household) are experiencing CO exposure, take the steps listed below.

- open windows and doors
- turn off fuel-burning appliances if possible
- leave the premises
- seek medical attention or call 911 for assistance

Equipment breakdown of CO sources can cause exposure. Preventive maintenance of equipment will prevent breakdowns. Report any hazards to management.

In Grocery, some areas where potential hazards occur include the following.

- Compressors or boiler rooms – Since these rooms tend to be isolated, check for inadequate or defective ventilation. Check for blocked vents.
- Kitchens and bakeries – These areas contain various gas appliances. Keep all gas appliances in good working condition. All employees should know how to turn off gas appliances and know the location of the gas shut-off valve, both inside and outside the building. If a part breaks or comes off, report it right away.
- Gas water heaters – The flame on a gas water heater stays lit. Make sure you protect the flame from strong air flows or drafts that extinguish it, which can then result in the release of CO.
- Underground parking garages – Monitor for an increased accumulation of exhaust fumes and little or no fresh air supply.
- Loading Docks – The exhaust from trucks left running may send gases into a building. If the air intake location is on a loading dock, direct all idling vehicles away from intake vents.
- Warehouses and backrooms – Never leave propane forklifts running.
- Manufacturing – Provide maintenance for gas appliances in manufacturing areas.

Here are a few tips to help keep you safe from CO.

- Maintain equipment and appliances and conduct periodic checks.
- Encourage safe operation to reduce CO formation.
- Prevent vehicles or other fueled engines from running near buildings, even if roll-up doors are open.
- Your fire department may have a special contact number for CO alarms and a non-emergency number for exposures. Post emergency numbers before a CO alarm sounds. If you cannot immediately find emergency numbers call 911.
- Eliminate the use of gasoline-powered engines or tools in poorly ventilated areas.
- Identify dangerous conditions and implement preventive controls.

Be observant and report hazards to management. Any exposure to CO can result in permanent injury or death.

Are You In The Zone?

1. What fuels can create Carbon Monoxide (CO)?
2. Why is CO not detectable by humans?
3. List some common sources of burning fuel that can create CO.
4. What are some symptoms of CO exposure?
5. List some areas in grocery where you could find potential CO hazards.

I have received information on carbon monoxide awareness.

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

For additional information and resources on this topic and other safety and risk management subjects be sure to visit the Loss Control section on our website:

<https://www.amtrustgroup.com/small-business-insurance/claims/prevention>

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