

Tailgate talk

Today's Subject:

Carbon monoxide

Date: _____

Of all the hazards you might face, those that sneak up on you can be the most dangerous and insidious.

Such is the case with carbon monoxide (CO), which is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that displaces oxygen in the blood, causing the victim to suffocate. In large quantities, CO can overcome a person in minutes without warning.

What to focus on

Here are two things to keep in mind in order to avoid CO poisoning.

1. Ensure adequate ventilation. Because CO is caused by the incomplete burning of substances such as gasoline, kerosene, oil, propane, coal and wood, make sure there's adequate ventilation when equipment such as portable generators, power tools, space heaters and gasoline-powered pumps are used.

Bonus: There should be at least three or four feet of clear space on all sides of tools or equipment.

2. Recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning. If you begin to suffer from the symptoms of CO poisoning – tightness across the chest, headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea – move to an area with fresh air and seek medical attention as soon as possible.