

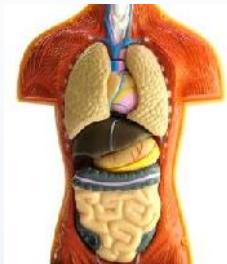
Carbon Monoxide

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, colorless, tasteless, odorless gas. CO gas is generated as a waste product of the incomplete combustion of coal, wood, oil, and other petroleum based fuels (e.g. gasoline, propane, etc). CO gas, although odorless, usually occurs in a combination of combustion by-products that have distinctive odors. The primary source of CO gas is the internal combustion engine. CO gas is also generated in industrial operations such as auto repair, oil refining, steel and chemical manufacturing.

Health Hazards of Carbon Monoxide:

CO is a chemical asphyxiant which means that it reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Asphyxiation, or suffocation, occurs when the blood does not deliver enough oxygen to the body.



CO gas is absorbed through the lungs into the bloodstream. Inhalation of CO gas may cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, weakness, rapid breathing, unconsciousness and death. High concentrations of CO may be rapidly fatal without producing significant warning symptoms.

Exposure to this gas may aggravate preexisting heart and artery disease. As CO gas is odorless, there may be no odor warning if toxic concentrations are present.

If you suspect CO poisoning, move the person immediately to the fresh air away from the source of the CO. Call 911 or your emergency number for medical assistance. CO poisoning can be reversed if caught in time.

Safety Hazards:

CO gas mixes very well with air. CO gas penetrates easily through walls and ceilings. It is an extremely flammable gas. CO gas may react very strongly with oxygen, acetylene, chlorine, fluorine or nitrous oxide.

This fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

For additional information on this topic please contact ACWA JPIA Risk Control Department, Terry Lofing, Administrative Assistant
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