



RISKCONTROL360<sup>o</sup>

## Carbon Monoxide

**What is Carbon Monoxide:** Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas created when any fuel such as gasoline, kerosene, propane, acetylene or wood is burned. Dangerous situations can develop when combustion by-products such as carbon monoxide are not properly vented to the outside atmosphere, where they quickly dissipate.

Carbon Monoxide is the number one cause of poisoning deaths in the United States. Anyone is susceptible, but experts agree that people with anemia, heart disease, emphysema, chronic bronchitis or other respiratory problems are especially vulnerable to even minimal exposure to carbon monoxide and are at greatest risk for serious injury.

**Inhalation of Carbon Monoxide:** CO enters the bloodstream through the lungs and attaches to red blood cells. Hemoglobin, a protein molecule in red blood cells, carries oxygen throughout your body. Carbon Monoxide molecules attach to red blood cells 200 times faster than oxygen, thereby blocking and preventing the flow of oxygen to the heart, brain, and other vital organs. As CO accumulates in the bloodstream, the body becomes starved for oxygen. **INHALATION OF HIGH LEVELS OF CO CAN BECOME LETHAL IN MINUTES.** Over time, breathing low levels is also dangerous. Long term exposure to CO can cause permanent heart and brain damage.

**OSHA SAYS:** 50 parts per million is the maximum allowable concentration of CO for continuous exposure for healthy adults in any 8 hour period.

**Remove a person from where they are if you suspect CO Poisoning. Put them in an area with fresh air.**

Understand the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning - They are often mistaken for the flu:

**Mild Exposure Symptoms:** Slight headache, dizziness, weakness, fatigue, nausea, sleepiness, and confusion (flu like symptoms).

**Medium Exposure Symptoms:** Throbbing, frontal headache, drowsiness, confusion and fast heart rate.

**Extreme Exposure Symptoms:** Convulsions, unconsciousness, and heart and lung failure, which can result in brain damage or death.

**If Signs of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are present:** Remove the person from where they are immediately and bring them to an area of fresh air where available. CO poisoning is life threatening and the person should be taken to the hospital immediately. A simple blood test can confirm the presence of CO poisoning, but must be administered shortly after exposure to be accurate.

For additional assistance, contact RiskControl360<sup>o</sup> by email at [info@riskcontrol360.com](mailto:info@riskcontrol360.com) or by phone at 1-877-360-3608.