

Peak Season for Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

We are in the peak of the winter (hopefully) and it is a smart time to catch up on equipment maintenance and other shop projects to get out of the cold and the wind a bit. But some of those things don't mix together well and it's time to remind the entire crew of the need to think about ventilation.

We need to be on alert for various harmful emissions year-round. But in the warmer periods, there's a good chance the bay doors are open, or we are in an otherwise open-air environment. Carbon monoxide (CO) is one of those emissions that can be pretty sneaky, what with being colorless, odorless, and tasteless.



The good news is that we can combat CO exposure with some fairly simple practices. Ventilation and high air exchanges go a long way (and solve other ills as well). Minimizing the time equipment like trucks, loaders, skid steers, mowers, and weed eaters are allowed to run indoors and ensuring that exhaust connections to the outside of the shop are properly connected and sealed is a must. As we see more and more battery powered equipment, this element will diminish, but in the meantime, it is easy to overlook the buildup of a gas we can't see, taste, or smell.

This is a great time to call the crew together for a [tailgate safety talk](#) on this topic and we have one for you from the Cornell Local Roads Program and the NLTAPA Training Resources Workgroup. In addition, the [OSHA Fact Sheet](#) for carbon monoxide poisoning does a concise job of explaining how CO can harm you, what to do if someone is exposed, simple measures to prevent exposure, and of course, the standards for exposure.

This is one of those exposure areas that can really sneak up on our crews, particularly for those couple of months where the weather chases us indoors. That's what makes it a great topic for a tailgate safety talk with the crew. Why not do one this week?