



# Central Ontario NETWORK BULLETIN

Please copy this bulletin and distribute as widely as possible.

## Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Carbon monoxide (chemical abbreviation: CO) is a clear, colourless gas you can't smell or taste. It's the product of incomplete combustion of materials containing carbon, such as fossil fuels.

### Sources of CO in construction are

- engine exhaust (this is the most common source)
- fuel-fired heating devices used in enclosed spaces.

*Engines on  
trowellers  
and  
generators  
produce CO*



### The first signs of CO poisoning are

- headache
- fatigue.

More exposure can rapidly lead to

- loss of consciousness
- arrested breathing
- heart failure
- death.

*An indirect-  
fired heater  
prevents CO  
poisoning*



### Controls

- ✓ Never work alone in an area where carbon monoxide can accumulate.
- ✓ Make sure the area is well-ventilated. Keep doors and windows open. If necessary, use fans to bring in fresh air.
- ✓ Monitor carbon monoxide levels. You need a gas detector to do this.
- ✓ When necessary use exhaust hoses or fans to draw engine exhaust out of the work area.
- ✓ Choose an indirect-fired heater instead of a direct-fired heater when you want to heat an enclosed space. An indirect-fired heater vents combustion by-products outdoors while ducting heated air indoors (see image above). A direct-fired heater (such as an open-flame or closed-flame heater) releases combustion by-products into the heated area.
- ✓ Have a written policy for controlling and monitoring CO in your health and safety program.

December 2006



A publication of the Central Ontario Regional Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee  
with the support of the Construction Safety Association of Ontario.

info@csao.org www.csao.org