



NEWS

JB Pritzker, Governor

Michael D. Kleinik, Director

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IDOL Warns of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning on the Job *Highest Risks Posed During Fall and Winter Months*

SPRINGFIELD – While winter brings plenty of challenges outdoors – including cold, ice and snow – there’s also an increased risk for carbon monoxide (CO) in the workplace. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the highest number of cases involving CO poisoning are in the fall and winter seasons.

CO is a poisonous, odorless, colorless and tasteless gas. It’s produced by incomplete combustion of carbon-containing material, like natural gas, gasoline, propane, coal or wood. Prolonged exposure can be deadly.

“Working around running engines, blast furnaces or industrial ovens puts workers at risk of exposure to carbon monoxide. Those workers need to be aware of the early signs of carbon monoxide poisoning,” said **Illinois Department of Labor Director Michael Kleinik**.

There’s a higher risk for those who work in boiler rooms, warehouses, refineries, pulp and paper production, steel production, around docks, blast furnaces or coke ovens. Several occupations are at higher risk for exposure, including:

- Welder
- Garage mechanic
- Firefighter
- Carbon-black maker
- Organic chemical synthesizer
- Metal oxide reducer
- Longshore worker
- Diesel engine operator
- Forklift operator
- Marine terminal worker
- Toll booth or tunnel attendant
- Customs inspector
- Police officer
- Taxi driver

In addition to regular maintenance of equipment, OSHA recommends the following to reduce the risk of CO poisoning on the job:

- Proper ventilation
- Immediately report dizziness, drowsiness and/or nausea
- Leave the contaminated area
- Don't use gas-powered engines without proper ventilation
- Have CO monitors present

If you believe CO poisoning has occurred, immediately move the victim to an open area with fresh air. Call for medical assistance and, if available, administer 100 percent oxygen if the victim is breathing. Carbon monoxide poisoning can be reversed if caught in time but avoiding or eliminating the threat is the best solution.

For small and medium-sized businesses interested, Illinois OSHA has a free, on-site safety and health consultation program: [IL OSHA On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Program](#)

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