

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning While Working with Portable Generators

Working with portable generators can expose workers to carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless, and toxic gas. Follow these work practices to stay safe when using a portable generator:

- Inspect the generator for damage or loose fuel lines.
- Keep the generator dry, and maintain and operate it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never use a [portable generator](#) indoors, or in enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, and basements.
- Generators should be used outdoors, but never place a generator near doors, windows, or ventilation shafts where CO can enter and build up.
- Make sure the generator has 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides and above it to ensure adequate ventilation.
- If you or others show symptoms of CO poisoning—dizziness, headaches, nausea/vomiting, tiredness, confusion, unconsciousness—get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention. Do not re-enter the area until it is determined to be safe by trained and properly equipped personnel.

OSHA's [On-Site Consultation Program](#) provides no-cost and confidential occupational safety and health compliance assistance to small- and medium-sized businesses. Consultation services are separate from enforcement and do not result in penalties or citations. The [OSHA Training Institute Education Centers](#) offer courses for workers, employers, and managers on hazard recognition and abatement at convenient locations nationwide.

OSHA issues alerts to draw attention to worker safety and health issues and solutions.

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