

Subject: Use of generators on site

Tool Box Talk No.: 079

KEY MESSAGE:

IF NOT PROPERLY INSTALLED AND OPERATED, A PORTABLE GENERATOR CAN BECOME A DEADLY DEVICE THAT KILLS VIA CARBON MONOXIDE FUMES. USING A GENERATOR INDOORS CAN KILL YOU IN MINUTES!!!

Carbon Monoxide Hazards

- Never use a generator in enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly. When you use a portable generator, remember that you cannot smell or see carbon monoxide. Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to it.
- Never operate your generator in an enclosed or partially enclosed space. The use of portable generators indoors is strictly prohibited and they can be a danger even in partially enclosed work areas. Where they are positioned is also important and care should be taken to ensure that exhaust fumes cannot drift into doors, windows, vents and crawl spaces
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator or working in the vicinity of a generator move away from the area immediately and get to an area with 'fresh air' right away. Do not delay. The carbon monoxide from generators can quickly lead to unconsciousness and death
- If you have experienced serious symptoms then seek get medical attention immediately. Inform medical staff that carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected
- If you see a generator in a position or location that you think might be dangerous DO NOT WALK BY. Check the immediate area to ensure people in the vicinity are safe then bring the situation to the attention of your supervisor or the site manager immediately. Ignoring the situation may lead to a workmate not getting home to see his family ever again.

Follow these safety tips to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Never use a generator indoors, including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially-enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will **not** prevent carbon monoxide build-up in enclosed or partially enclosed areas
- Follow the instructions that come with your generator. Locate the unit outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.

Fire Hazards

Never store fuel for a generator inside the immediate work area.

Fuel should be stored in a proper fuel container, the contents clearly labelled and in a location agreed with the site manager.

The lid or cap of the container should be firmly shut to avoid the potential for fume build up.

NEVER transfer fuel into another container such as a bottle or any other type of glass container.

Fuel must not be stored near the generator if the fuel is spilled or the container is not sealed properly, invisible vapours from the fuel can travel along the ground and can be ignited by any other source of naked flame or ignition – even by a light being switched on.

Before refuelling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite. And always use a funnel if the risk of spillage is high when re-fuelling a generator. If a funnel is not required then care should be taken when transferring fuel from the container into the generator

Discussion points:

Why should generators never be used indoors or positioned where fumes can enter in a room or building?

What would you do if you seen a generator in an unsafe location?

