

Carbon Monoxide Safety Bulletin for Firefighters



Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, weakness, confusion, chest pain, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing. Severe carbon monoxide poisoning may cause loss of consciousness, long-term adverse neurological symptoms, and possibly even death.

Safety Reminders:

- All responders should wear personal protective equipment when entering a potentially hazardous atmosphere, including appropriate respiratory protection.
- All responders potentially exposed to carbon monoxide who have symptoms should receive medical evaluation.
- Access to and use of a carbon monoxide monitor may be a key factor in recognizing exposure hazards before becoming incapacitated or overcome.

Recent Carbon Monoxide Incidents in North Carolina:

- Two **farm** employees were overcome by carbon monoxide while using a propane powered forklift inside a trailer with no ventilation. One employee died, the other was seriously injured, and 16 responders (including eight firefighters) were exposed to carbon monoxide and taken to the hospital for treatment.
- Eighteen construction workers renovating a **grocery store** experienced carbon monoxide poisoning while using a propane powered tile cutter indoors without adequate ventilation. Eleven workers required hyperbaric oxygen treatment.
- Sixteen **restaurant** employees experienced carbon monoxide poisoning due to a problem with the HVAC system in the restaurant's kitchen.