As Seasons Change, Beware the Invisible Killer

More than 400 Americans die from carbon monoxide poisoning every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Carbon monoxide is produced when fuel is burned in vehicles, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, furnaces and the like.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, and as the weather turns colder in many parts of the country, it is important to be aware of the risks. Carbon monoxide becomes deadly when it builds up in enclosed spaces - and anyone can be affected.

At Work
Workers in certain professions, including welders, mechanics, firefighters and toll booth attendants, are particularly at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning, according to OSHA.

To reduce the chances of carbon monoxide poisoning in the workplace:

- Install proper ventilation systems
- Keep equipment in good working order
- Consider switching from gas to electrical or battery operated equipment
- Prohibit use of gas-powered engines in poorly ventilated areas
- Provide personal, audible alarms
- Educate workers about carbon monoxide poisoning

At Home
About 170 people die each year from carbon monoxide exposure produced by room heaters and home generators, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. NSC recommends installing a battery-operated or battery back-up carbon monoxide detector.

The CDC offers these and other tips:

- Professionally service your furnace, water heater and any other fuel-burning devices every year
- Never use a generator indoors or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent
- Have your chimney checked and cleaned every year
- Make sure gas appliances are vented properly
- Never ignore a carbon monoxide alarm; immediately move outside, call 911 and make sure everyone is accounted for

Symptoms of CO Poisoning
The U.S. Fire Administration offers material to share regarding the dangers of carbon monoxide. If you see someone with the following symptoms who may have been poisoned, move the victim outside immediately and call 911. If he or she is not breathing, begin CPR.

Signs of Low to Moderate CO Poisoning: Headache, Fatigue, Shortness of Breath, Nausea, and Dizziness

Signs of High-Level CO Poisoning: Mental Confusion, Vomiting, Loss of Muscle Coordination, Loss of Consciousness, and Death

Be sure to make your home safe for your families while you are on the road working!
Questions for Discussion

When is the last time you had your gas burning appliances at home professionally serviced?
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Please list one or more near misses that has been addressed on your current project. What steps were set in place to prevent the potential near miss or incident from happening again?
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

In the past month have you authorized payment to a contractor for work performed? Please give an example. __________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

In the past month have you rejected any work performed by a contractor based on your judgment of the work quality? Please give an example. __________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Near Misses Reported in November

Proper use of PPE

Individual was wearing a harness but wasn’t tied to an approved tie off point with no guard rails in that area.

Individual was informed the handrail within reach wasn’t an approved tie off point.

Pinch Points

There was an employee walking between 2 pipes that were staged on skids while equipment was working in close proximity.

Discussed this finding with entire crew at the safety meeting to communicate hazard and severity.

Right Tool for the Job

An employee was standing on a 5 gal bucket to see through a man way.

When it was noticed he was immediately informed of the danger and a 4’ ladder was obtained for him to use.

Heavy Equipment Operation

Forklift operations left cab to help the ground personnel with suspended load and motor still running.

I stopped work and made him return to the cab. I explained the dangers and went over the safety policies and procedures with the operator.

Pinch Points

We had a new man reach to get an old gasket out from between two flanges.

I saw what was about to happen and I stopped him before he did. I explained to him why we never put our fingers between two points. The following morning this was the pain topic of the safety meeting.
Have a SAFE and BLESSED day.

Name: _______________________________  Signature: _______________________________
Job Title: _______________________________  Date: _______________________________