

Spot The Safety Violation: Ventilation Issues



Is this the proper place to use this kind of equipment' Why not'



Gasoline-powered equipment, such as the mixer the painter in the photo is using, shouldn't be used indoors. Operating such

equipment in an enclosed or poorly ventilated area can cause a build up of carbon monoxide, which can be fatal. And the painter doesn't even have the windows open that would help but not completely eliminate the danger.

Solution: Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas, which is what makes it so deadly. Workers may not even realize they've been exposed to this deadly gas until it's too late.

Example: A farm worker in Qu bec died of carbon monoxide poisoning after using a gas-powered pressure washer to clean a non-ventilated pigsty. The CSST concluded that the farm's training and supervision on the safe use of such devices and the dangers of exposure to carbon monoxide were deficient [*Farm R. J. Mercier Inc.*, Govt. News Release, June 30, 2009].

Portable heaters are another possible source of this deadly gas. (The OHS laws have requirements for the [use of portable heaters](#) for this reason.)

Depending on the level of exposure to carbon monoxide, workers can suffer from:

- Mild to severe headaches
- Weakness, dizziness, nausea and fainting
- An increased or irregular heart beat
- Loss of consciousness
- Death.

Exposure to carbon monoxide is especially hazardous for older workers, pregnant workers, workers with certain health conditions, such as anaemia and lung disease, and workers who work in high altitudes and high temperatures.

Here are some [tips](#) for protecting workers from the carbon monoxide exposure.