Toolbox talk

Temporary heat and carbon monoxide

Running heaters in closed-in work areas: fresh air, carbon monoxide, propane and clearances.

When a building gets closed in for winter, the heaters come in, and every fuel-burning heater gives off carbon monoxide. This talk covers fresh air, the signs of CO poisoning, propane cylinders and keeping heaters away from anything that burns.

Key point **You can't see or smell carbon monoxide. Fresh air and a working monitor are how you know.**

Fresh air first

A heater burning fuel needs fresh air for the people working near it. When the space doesn't get enough on its own, it needs fans or ducting to bring air in. Small or tight spaces need extra care.

Don't run a generator, saw or other engine inside a closed-in area to save a trip. If the site uses CO monitors, keep them on and never silence an alarm.

Know the signs

The first signs of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, an upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. They feel like the flu. If several people in the same area feel sick at the same time, think CO.

Get everyone out to fresh air, shut the heater off if you can do it safely, and tell your supervisor. Call 911 if anyone is confused or passes out.

Propane cylinders

Spare propane cylinders are stored outside, never inside the building. Keep cylinders upright and secured, check the hose and fittings before you light the heater, and close the valve when it isn't running.

Keep it level and clear

Set heaters level unless the maker says otherwise. Keep tarps and canvas at least 10 feet from a heater, and tie them down so wind can't push them into it.

Keep the clearances on the heater's label from lumber, insulation and anything else that burns. Don't leave a heater running where nobody is checking on it.

Show me Walk to a running heater together, check its distance from tarps and material, and find where the fresh air comes in.

Ask the crew

1. Where are the spare propane cylinders right now?
2. What would you do if two people in the same room got headaches at once?

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.153(j); 1926.154(a)(1), (a)(2), (b)(4), (c); CDC carbon monoxide guidance

Crew sign-in

Temporary heat and carbon monoxide

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Presented by _____ **Company** _____

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Signing means you attended this talk and had the chance to ask questions.