imi
Irving Materials, Inc.

"No Injuries" is Sublime;
Make That Your Goal in 2009!!

Volume 2, Issue 009

February 2009

# Environmental, Health & Safety News

## Signs and Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

***The Indiana Division recently had a gathering where Terry Jones recognized those Indiana locations with no reportable employee injuries and apparently I forgot the Kokomo location. Kokomo had no reportable injuries in 2008. Great job !***

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or if they are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result.

Carbon Monoxide poisoning most commonly occurs this time of the year. With all of the power outages that have been caused by our winter weather, this may be a good time to talk about the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

There are lots of people who are overcome every year by carbon monoxide poisoning, many of those people die. This happens even when signs and symptoms are present because people fail to recognize that the symptoms are caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. Too many times the symptoms are thought to be a common ailment such as the flu. It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can vary, depending on the level of CO in the blood. There are actually three levels of CO poisoning: mild, moderate and severe.

**Mild CO poisoning** occurs with low carbon monoxide levels in the blood. These symptoms are generally;

- Drowsiness
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Poor coordination
- Vomiting

Recovery from mild CO poisoning typically requires being removed from the area where the carbon monoxide is present and breathing fresh air. Mild CO poisoning generally would not require medical attention.

**Moderate CO poisoning** symptoms may include:

- Confusion
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Lack of Consciousness
- Coma

People experiencing moderate CO poisoning may not be able to move themselves out of the area where the gas is present. If the person is not removed from the area, moderate CO poisoning may escalate to severe. Moderate CO poisoning requires medical attention, and in some cases, hospitalization.

**Severe CO poisoning** is likely to result in death. There have been rare occasions when people on the edge of death from severe CO poisoning have been revived after being place in a hyperbaric chamber, and even then their recovery may involve memory loss, poor coordination, and delayed neuropsychiatric symptoms.

**Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning -** The simplest way to protect yourself is to install and/or use a CO detector wherever there is the possibility of CO gas build-up. As explained in the opening paragraph, that can occur wherever fuel is being burned. But, with all of the electrical power outages that have occurred, remember that the detector is most likely plugged into household current and may not be functioning when the power is out. With the power out, people may be using inappropriate heating sources and the possibility for CO build up. Therefore, it is important to recognize the symptoms of mild carbon monoxide poisoning and to take appropriate actions to prevent more serious poisoning.

**The life you save may be your own or the life of someone you care for.**

*(My thanks to TCA and EPA for the information provided in this month's EHS Newsletter)*

*Have a grand February and don't forget your Valentine!*

**Irving Materials, Inc.**

Environmental, Health and Safety News

Editor: Walt Tharp
Cell: 317-432-9604
Phone: 260-824-3428
Fax: 260-824-4422
E-mail: walt.tharp@irvmat.com

We're on the Web
www.irvmat.com

*We're Proud of Our Work*

**Safety is never an accident: it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution! It represents the wise choice of many alternatives!!**

**Location:** _____

**Supervisor:** _____

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed: **February 2009**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Slips, Trips and Falls

It is not possible to talk about this subject too much! Why you may ask, well, it is because we continue to have our major employee injuries in this category.

While regulatory agencies continue to hassle us about guarding issues, we are not having injuries that involve a lack of guarding or our failure to properly maintain guards. That is not to say that guarding is not important, it is important. I am saying that for the most part we do a good job with guarding. That may not be the case with slips, trips and falls.

Our injuries are all about falling from trucks and equipment or slipping and falling while working around our trucks and equipment. You will have to agree that controlling the causes of slips, trips and falls is much more difficult than guarding a belt and pulley, for instance. But slips, trips and falls can be prevented. But, in order for the efforts to bear fruit, every single person who works for imi has to be involved in the effort.

We have had a pretty severe winter so far with lots of snow and ice. Every time an incident report comes in with a report of someone falling on the ice, the question has to be asked; "Did someone consider the possibility ice was present and did they make an effort to control the hazard?" How many people passed over the ice and failed to do anything to mitigate the hazard? Recognizing that walking surfaces were slick, were three points of contact maintained at all times?

Keep these tips in mind, if you know you will travel over slick walking surfaces:

- Wear boots or shoes with slip resistant soles
- Walk consciously being alert to the surrounding conditions
- Use your arms for balance. Keep hands out of pockets and avoid carrying heavy items that could cause imbalance
- Walk "small" and look ahead for the best path
- Be extra careful at points of entry and exit - both building and vehicles.

When a fall occurs:

- Attempt to relax your muscles
- Avoid, if possible, landing on out-stretched hands, knees, or elbows. That is how bones are broken. Try to land on fleshy parts of the body. Roll to your side if possible.
- Protect your head. When falling backwards attempt to lift your head to prevent it from hitting the ground first. Twist your body if possible.

The best way to prevent a fall is to avoid the situation. That takes a conscious effort to seriously consider all of the possibilities. It takes planning and thought. When avoidance is not possible, consider these tips.