

SAFETY ALERT

Carbon Monoxide Dangers of using Portable Generators

The purpose of this alert is to remind workers and person's conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU's) of the dangers of carbon monoxide exposure when using portable generators.

Background

Two tradesmen were hospitalised due to high levels of carbon monoxide exposure whilst refurbishing a Darwin office building. Power to the building had been cut to allow electrical work to commence and a generator was setup in the buildings stairwell to power lights for the tradesmen.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas emitted during the use of petrol, gas and, to a lesser extent, diesel powered motors. Carbon monoxide is colourless, tasteless and odourless and exposure at high levels can lead to death.

Contributing factors

- The generator was set up and operated in an enclosed space (the stairwell).

Action required

- Before using a portable generator, workers and PCBU's should read and follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.
- Portable generators should never be operated indoors or in enclosed, or semi enclosed areas, even if ventilated.
- Portable generators should be operated outdoors and away from open windows, doors or vents that could allow the carbon monoxide to seep indoors.
- Workers who feel sick, dizzy, or weak while working near a generator, should get to fresh air right away.
- As an additional control measure, consider using a portable battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm.

Further Information

- Guidance Note - [Prevention of Carbon Monoxide poisoning from petrol and gas powered equipment](#) (WorkSafe Western Australia)
- Hazard Alert - [Portable Generator Safety](#) (SafeWork SA)

Contact Details

For further information please contact NT WorkSafe on 1800 019 115 or go to www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

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