



# BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

## OSHA Adjusts Penalty Amounts for 2018

On Jan. 2, civil [penalty amounts](#) for violations of workplace safety and health standards increased by two percent from last year. In accordance with the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, the Department of Labor is required to adjust penalties for inflation each year. New penalties for willful and repeat violations are \$129,336 per violation; serious, other-than-serious, and posting requirements are \$12,934 per violation; and failure to correct violations is \$12,934 for each day the condition continues.

## BLS Releases Census of 2016 Fatal Occupational Injuries

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released its [National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2016](#), which reports 5,190 workplace fatalities in 2016 — a 7 percent increase from 2015. The fatal injury rate also increased from 3.4 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers in 2015 to 3.6 in 2016.

More workers lost their lives in transportation incidents than any other event in 2016, accounting for about two out of every five fatal injuries. Workplace violence injuries increased by 23 percent, making it the second most common cause of workplace fatality. The report also shows the number of overdoses on the job increased by 32 percent in 2016. According to BLS, a number of occupations recorded their highest fatality counts in 2016. This includes **first-line supervisors of construction**

**trades and extraction workers with 134 fatal injuries; landscaping and grounds keeping workers, 125 fatal injuries; roofers, 101 fatal injuries; tree trimmers and pruners, 84 fatal injuries; driver/sales workers, 71; automotive service technicians and mechanics, 64; and farmworkers, farm, ranch, and aqua cultural animals, 61.**

## Employers Must Post Injury/Illness Summary Beginning February 1

As a reminder, employers have an obligation to post a copy of [OSHA's Form 300A](#), which summarizes job-related injuries and illnesses logged during 2017. Each year, between Feb. 1 and April 30, the summary must be displayed in a common area where notices to employees are usually posted. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees and those in certain low-hazard industries are exempt from OSHA recordkeeping and posting requirements.

Visit OSHA's Recordkeeping Rule Page, <https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html>, for more information on recordkeeping requirements.

As a reminder, the deadline for Electronic Submission of Injury data for 2017 is July 1, 2018. For specific requirements visit <https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/finalrule/index.html>



# Monthly Toolbox Talk

## Working In Cold Weather – Carbon Monoxide Awareness and Safe Use of Generators

Plan to prevent injuries and illnesses this winter season. Remember, take precautions to avoid [carbon monoxide poisoning](#) when using gasoline-powered tools and [generators](#).

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas which interferes with the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood. CO is non-irritating and can overcome persons without warning. Many people die from CO poisoning, usually while using gasoline powered tools and generators in buildings or semi-enclosed spaces without adequate ventilation.

### Effects of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Severe carbon monoxide poisoning causes neurological damage, illness, coma and death.

### Symptoms of CO exposure

- Headaches, dizziness and drowsiness.
- Nausea, vomiting, tightness across the chest.

### Some Sources of Exposure

- Portable generators/generators in buildings.
- Concrete cutting saws, compressors.
- Power trowels, floor buffers, space heaters.
- Welding, gasoline powered pumps.

### Preventing CO Exposure

- Never use a generator indoors or in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, and basements. Opening windows and doors in an enclosed space may prevent CO buildup.
- Make sure the generator has 3-4 feet of clear space on all sides and above it to ensure adequate ventilation.
- Do not use a generator outdoors if placed near doors, windows or vents, which could allow CO to enter and build up in occupied spaces.
- When using space heaters and stoves ensure that they are in good working order to reduce CO buildup, and never use in enclosed spaces or indoors.
- Consider using tools powered by electricity or compressed air, if available.
- If you experience symptoms of CO poisoning get to fresh air right away and seek immediate medical attention.

### Using Portable Generators Safely

Portable generators are internal combustion engines used to generate electricity. They are useful when temporary or remote power is needed, and are commonly used on construction sites and during cleanup and recovery efforts following disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.



## Hazards Associated with Generators:

- Shocks and electrocution from improper use of power or accidentally energizing other electrical systems.
- Carbon monoxide from a generator's exhaust.
- Fires from improperly refueling a generator or inappropriately storing the fuel for a generator.
- Noise and vibration hazards.

## Shock and Electrocution

The electricity created by generators has the same hazards as normal utility-supplied electricity. It also has some additional hazards because generator users often bypass the safety devices (such as circuit breakers) that are built into electrical systems. The following precautions are provided to reduce shock and electrocution hazards:

- Never attach a generator directly to the electrical system of a structure (home, office, trailer, etc.) unless a qualified electrician has properly installed the generator with a transfer switch. Attaching a generator directly to a building electrical system without a properly installed transfer switch can energize wiring systems for great distances. This creates a risk of electrocution for utility workers and others in the area.
- Always plug electrical appliances directly into the generator using the manufacturer's supplied cords or extension cords that are grounded (3-pronged). Inspect the cords to make sure they are fully intact and not damaged, cut or abraded. Never use frayed or damaged extension cords. Ensure the cords are appropriately rated in watts or amps for the intended use. Do not use underrated cords—replace them with appropriately rated cords that use heavier gauge wires. Do not overload a generator; this can lead to overheating which can create a fire hazard.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), especially where electrical equipment is used in or around wet or damp locations. GFCIs shut off power when an electrical current is detected outside normal paths. GFCIs and extension cords with built-in GFCI protection can be purchased at hardware stores, do-it-yourself centers, and other locations that sell electrical equipment. Regardless of GFCI use, electrical equipment used in wet and damp locations must be listed and approved for those conditions.
- Make sure a generator is properly grounded and the grounding connections are tight. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for proper grounding methods.
- Keep a generator dry; do not use it in the rain or wet conditions. If needed, protect a generator with a canopy. Never manipulate a generator's electrical components if you are wet or standing in water.
- Do not use electrical equipment that has been submerged in water. Equipment must be thoroughly dried out and properly evaluated before using. Power off and do not use any electrical equipment that has strange odors or begins smoking.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas. Many people have died from CO poisoning because their generator was not adequately ventilated. Refer to CO Awareness Information at the beginning of this Tool Box Talk.

## Fire Hazards

- Generators become hot while running and remain hot for long periods after they are stopped. Generator fuels (gasoline, kerosene, etc.) can ignite when spilled on hot engine parts.
- Before refueling, shut down the generator and allow it to cool.
- Gasoline and other generator fuels should be stored and transported in approved containers that are properly designed and marked for their contents, and vented.
- Keep fuel containers away from flame producing and heat generating devices (such as the generator itself, water heaters, cigarettes, lighters, and matches). Do not smoke around fuel



containers. Escaping vapors or vapors from spilled materials can travel long distances to ignition sources.

- Do not store generator fuels in your home. Store fuels away from living areas.

#### **Noise and Vibration Hazards**

- Generator engines vibrate and create noise. Excessive noise and vibration could cause hearing loss and fatigue that may affect job performance.
- Keep portable generators as far away as possible from work areas and gathering spaces.
- Wear hearing protection if this is not possible.

