



Clark Seif Clark is pleased to bring environmental, health & safety and information about building sciences to thousands of professionals each month. We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning is Preventable

In January, fire crews from Tempe, Arizona responded to a call regarding a forklift driver at a manufacturing plant who was suffering from chest pains. Upon arriving at the factory emergency personnel discovered the employee had not suffered a heart attack, but instead had been exposed to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide (CO).

The carbon monoxide came from two forklifts that were left running without adequate area ventilation. Tempe firefighters recorded carbon monoxide levels of 190 parts per million, far above the 30 parts per million threshold they use to determine if breathing apparatus is necessary before entering a building.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you detect its presence. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure."

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a real threat in both work environments and in people's homes. Anything that burns fuel has an exhaust, and that exhaust often contains carbon monoxide. Sources of carbon monoxide are all around us from fireplaces and gas water heaters to vehicles and portable gas space heaters. In industrial settings, carbon monoxide direct reading instruments and employee exposure monitoring helps determine OSHA compliance. In residential settings, carbon monoxide alarms and periodic homeowner inspections can help prevent CO catastrophes. Thorough assessment by an IAQ professional or industrial hygienist is often warranted to identify potential CO sources and to suggest control options in order to avoid tragic CO poisoning.

To learn more about carbon monoxide and detecting dangerous gases or how CSC can help with IAQ, mold and other environmental issues please visit www.csceng.com, email csc@csceng.com or call (800) 807-1118.

Vermiculite Insulation could be a Health Threat

Since 2002, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has been conducting evaluations of the public health implications from vermiculite contamination at various facilities across the State of California.

Vermiculite is a mineral that was heavily used in construction and consumer materials in the past. The reason for all the concern regarding vermiculite is that much of it may contain asbestos fibers. In fact, as many as 35 million homes across America may be contaminated with asbestos tainted vermiculite insulation. Many of these properties can be found across the West Coast and Southwest.

According to an EPA fact sheet on vermiculite insulation that was released in June of 2009, "A mine near Libby, Montana was the source of over 70 percent of all vermiculite sold in the U.S. from 1919 to 1990. There was also a deposit of asbestos at that mine, so the vermiculite from Libby was contaminated with asbestos. Vermiculite from Libby was used in the majority of vermiculite insulation in the U.S and was often sold under the brand name Zonolite. If you have vermiculite insulation in your home, you should assume this material may be contaminated with asbestos and be aware of steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from exposure to asbestos."

Clark Seif Clark, a leading provider of indoor air quality (IAQ) and environmental testing services, has extensive experience testing vermiculite insulation for asbestos. It's well recognized that exposure to airborne asbestos fibers can cause cancers and respiratory illnesses. If you suspect your property has vermiculite insulation, do not disturb the material. A quick assessment by a certified asbestos professional from CSC will help you determine a prudent course of action regarding vermiculite or any other suspect asbestos containing materials on site.

To learn more about how CSC can help with vermiculite insulation, asbestos, IAQ, mold and other environmental issues please visit www.csceng.com, email csc@csceng.com or call (800) 807-1118.

About Clark Seif Clark: CSC was established in 1989 to help clients in both the public and private sectors address environmental issues. CSC is a leading provider of these services with multiple offices along the western seaboard and southwest. The company believes in science-based protocols and has a strong background in engineering making them the preferred environmental consultants to healthcare facilities, architects, schools, builders, contractors, developers and real estate professionals.

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