



TOOLBOX TALKS

TOOLBOX TALK

Fire Safety & Heating Equipment Checks – Cold Weather Safety

Please use this as it best applies to your job site. Add tasing points as needed.

Date: _____

Supervisor/Foreman: _____

Introduction

As temperatures drop, the risk of fire and carbon monoxide (CO) exposure on the jobsite increases. Temporary heaters, fuel-fired equipment, portable generators, and enclosed work areas all require careful attention to prevent fires, burns, explosions, and toxic exposures. Cold weather safety is not just about keeping warm—it is about ensuring proper ventilation, fuel handling, equipment checks, and emergency awareness.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that heating devices be installed, operated, and maintained in a safe condition (29 CFR 1926.154). Additionally, employers must ensure adequate ventilation to prevent harmful levels of carbon monoxide exposure (29 CFR 1926.55 & 1910.1000).

Key Hazards to Consider

- **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning:**
CO is colorless, odorless, and deadly. Common sources include propane heaters, gas-powered generators, fuel-fired equipment, and idling vehicles near work areas.
- **Fire & Explosion Risks:**
Heaters close to flammable materials, improper fuel storage, damaged electrical cords, and open flames add significant fire hazards.

- **Burn Injuries:**
Exposed heater surfaces can cause serious burns if bumped or handled incorrectly.
- **Oxygen Depletion / Poor Ventilation:**
Enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces can trap gases, smoke, and fumes, creating a dangerous work environment.

Safe Use of Jobsite Heaters (Per OSHA 1926.154)

1. Choose the Right Heater for the Space

- Use only **approved** heaters designed for construction sites.
- Confirm the heater's fuel type matches the designated supply (propane, diesel, etc.).
- Do not use residential heaters or improvised heating devices.

2. Ventilation is Mandatory

- Fuel-burning heaters must be **properly vented** to the outside.
- Keep fresh air flowing at all times—open doors, windows, vents, or install mechanical ventilation.
- **Never** run generators or gas-powered heaters inside enclosed areas.

3. Placement and Clearance

- Maintain the manufacturer's minimum clearance from walls, tools, tarps, or stored materials—typically **3 feet or more**.
- Keep heaters on **stable, fire-resistant surfaces**.

4. Fuel Storage and Handling

- Store flammable fuels in **approved containers** (OSHA 29 CFR 1926.152).
- Keep fuel storage **at least 25 feet** from heaters or ignition sources.
- Shut down and cool equipment before refueling.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness

CO Symptoms Can Appear Fast:

- Headache
- Dizziness or confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue or weakness
- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Loss of consciousness in severe cases

If Anyone Shows These Symptoms:

1. Move them **immediately to fresh air**.
2. Call 911.
3. Shut down the suspected equipment.
4. Do not re-enter the area until cleared.

CO Detectors:

Install CO monitors **where heaters, generators, or combustion equipment are used**. Test them daily before work begins.

Daily Heating Equipment Checklist

Before starting work each day:

Item	Check	Notes
Heater inspected for damage or leaks	☐ Yes / No	
CO detector functioning and tested	☐ Yes / No	
Fuel stored in approved containers	☐ Yes / No	
Heater has proper clearance from materials	☐ Yes / No	
Ventilation openings unobstructed	☐ Yes / No	
No signs of fumes, odors, or smoke inside workspace	☐ Yes / No	

Fire Safety Requirements

- Keep at least **one fire extinguisher** rated for the hazard within **50 feet** of any heating device.
- Inspect extinguishers monthly.
- Maintain clear pathways for emergency exit.
- Never leave portable heaters **unattended** during operation.

Worker Responsibilities

- Report any strange smells, headaches, or dizziness **immediately**.
- Do NOT move, modify, cover, or tamper with heaters or ventilation.
- Participate in daily safety checks.
- Know where fire extinguishers are located and how to use them (PASS: Pull – Aim – Squeeze – Sweep).

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Ensure heating equipment is maintained and inspected.
- Monitor CO levels where fuel-burning equipment is used.
- Train workers on fire response and emergency evacuation.
- Document inspections and fuel usage logs.

Closing Message

Cold weather work introduces serious hazards, but these risks are fully preventable. By ensuring proper ventilation, maintaining equipment, checking CO detectors, practicing safe fuel handling, and staying alert for signs of exposure, we protect ourselves and our coworkers. Safety is everyone's responsibility — **if something doesn't look right, speak up immediately.**

Sign-In Sheet – Fire Safety & Heating Equipment Toolbox Talk

Worker Name	Employee ID / Trade	Signature	Date
1			

2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			