

“How can I avoid carbon monoxide?”

The **Vision**: How to work safely and efficiently:

- By implementing a simple set of work procedures
- And then consistently following them!

The **Problem**: You (and your employees) are busy. (And very likely constantly running behind!) This is a two-edged sword! Sure, being busy is better than staring at the phone willing it to ring! BUT the temptation is to speed your production up by parking too close to the job which means you may wind up DEAD from carbon monoxide poisoning!

The **Solution**: Develop a solid and consistent work routine that avoids carbon monoxide. Remember, you can't see, taste or smell carbon monoxide. So for too many cleaners the first warning they have of the danger is when they end up DEAD! Seriously!

Now our QuickFIX program has lots of easy solutions to help you build your business while making tons of money. Wonderful! BUT none of this is going to matter if you (or your employee or customers) wind up DEAD! (NOTE: Nothing beats just being AWARE of the dangers!)

The quick**FIX**: This check list gives you some basic safety principles (and an important piece of equipment to buy) to consistently work safely and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

Let me know of any improvements you make to our “*Avoiding Carbon Monoxide Dangers!*” procedure.

Steve Toburen

If you like this Procedure you'll LOVE *Strategies for Success-*

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- [Dealing with employee cell phone usage](#)
- [Bill Yeadon's Cleaning and Restoration marketing checklist](#)
- [Tweak your price quote by phone script for more sales.](#)
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Remember, SFS has transformed the lives of almost 3,000 people in the cleaning and restoration industry. **Why not you?** I urge you to investigate SFS.

Steve Toburen

Procedure: *Avoiding Carbon Monoxide Dangers*

Purpose: Carbon monoxide is a very real danger to both our employees and our customers. It is essential that you both follow these guidelines and use your initiative to avoid carbon monoxide exposure.

Overview: Carbon monoxide is a tasteless, odorless and invisible gas produced during the combustion of fuels such as gasoline, diesel, and propane. Since victims of carbon monoxide poisoning cannot see or smell this gas they don't realize they are in danger ... often until it is too late. Carbon monoxide can poison you in just a few minutes. Unlike a fixed location factory as carpet cleaners we are working in a constantly changing environment. The wind may change, your customer may open windows or doors or children may start playing close to an operating unit. Therefore the need for constant vigilance and monitoring on your part.

Steps:

1. Recognize the danger- Carbon monoxide becomes toxic when it reaches a level higher than 50 ppm (parts per million) with continuous exposure over an eight hour period. This is a very low level and easily achieved with a running motor nearby.
 - A. Symptoms will vary depending upon length of time and general health.
 1. Low levels (70- 100 ppm) May include flu-like symptoms such as headaches, sore eyes and a runny nose along with general disorientation and tiredness. (Of course, we all get "tired" at the end of a long day on the scrub wand!)
 2. Medium levels (150 - 300 ppm) Symptoms will include dizziness, drowsiness and vomiting. This is a very dangerous stage and immediate action must be taken.
 3. High levels (400 ppm and higher) Unconsciousness, brain damage and death.
 - B. Long term problems can include physical, mental and emotional symptoms.
 1. Physical: Long term muscle pain, joint pain, chronic fatigue, dizziness, numbness, tingling in the extremities, blurry or double vision, buzzing in the ears, decreased coordination, seizures, inability to speak, tremors and speaking, eating and swallowing disorders and/or vertigo.
 2. Mental: Short attention span, multi-tasking problems, difficulty with vocabulary, short-term memory loss.
 3. Emotional: Irritability, stress, general fear, anxiety, lack of motivation, temper, difficulty sleeping.

NOTE: Always carry your "portable carbon monoxide gas detector" clipped on your belt. (Just google this term or do a search on Amazon.com) This sensor has been set by our office to vibrate when carbon monoxide levels hit 40 ppm. At this point you should take immediate action, including shutting off the cleaning unit and power ventilating the building with air movers. Do NOT start running again until after you have corrected the situation following these guidelines. Your monitor is set to sound a loud alarm at 50 ppm at which point you should evacuate the affected areas of the structure of all people including customers until the problem can be corrected.

2. Scope the job and take precautions accordingly- Once you drive up to the job look not only at production considerations but also examine potential carbon monoxide pitfalls.
 - A. Obviously look at building access re: exhaust direction of the truck mount and aim your exhaust away from the opening.
 - B. Note prevailing wind direction and park and/or aim your exhaust down-wind.
 - C. Especially notice open windows or doors higher in the building that may create a “chimney effect” which will draw gas vapors into the occupied area.
 - D. Remember that carbon monoxide is heavier than air and will sink to lower levels. (Assuming that the “chimney effect” is not happening.) So always try and park your van so the TM exhaust will be lower than the opening into the building.
 - E. Use a “Door Guard” on all single doors where the hoses entire. This will cut down dramatically on gases entering the building. (And will create a positive Moment of Truth for our clients when they see us trying to save them money on their utility bills.)
 - F. Limit potential C/M exposure by shutting off the van engine immediately upon arrival at the job and only starting up the TM when you are ready to start cleaning.
 - G. Never pre-vac a carpet using your TM. The fuel costs are MUCH higher than using your electric vacuum and the customer’s electricity plus it lowers the time when C/M can appear.
3. Modify your set-up accordingly. NEVER sacrifice production efficiency for safety. If it means using an extra length of vacuum hose do so. Here are additional procedures that may need to be implemented, depending upon circumstances:
 - A. If it is impossible to seal the opening with a Door Guard (such as a garage door, etc.) then place a running air mover inside the space with its snout pointing outside to exhaust the gases.
 - B. If you still have safety issues then clip in our 30’ long auto exhaust hose (the adapter has been permanently attached to our TM exhaust) and route the gases even further away and/or down wind.

Disclaimer: This information is offered to help cleaners avoid the very real problem of carbon monoxide. However, nothing replaces common sense on your part and this procedure is offered as general background information only. Each carpet cleaner must research the dangers of carbon monoxide and develop safety procedures for their own equipment and job circumstances.