Washer Emits Lethal CO Gas



A 35-year-old man was found several hours after he died inside a barn he had been cleaning. He had been using a pressure washer with an 11-horsepower gasoline engine. He had apparently been working alone for about a half-hour before he collapsed. The doors and windows of the building were closed. The medical examiner determined he had died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Using a gasoline-powered pressure washer indoors is a deadly practice. Carbon monoxide gas is created when fuel such as gasoline is burned. This poisonous gas is colorless, odorless and tasteless, giving no warning of its presence. All gasoline-powered engines produce carbon monoxide. This gas can build up quickly in any indoor area and people can be overcome before they even realize they are being exposed. Symptoms include confusion, headache, dizziness, fatigue and weakness. Carbon monoxide, when inhaled, decreases the ability of the blood to carry oxygen to the brain and other vital organs.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur in the workplace or at home. For instance, people have died in recent months by attempting to cook indoors on barbecues during power outages.