



## **SAFETY ALERT - 01**

### **CARBON MONOXIDE**

On February 14, 2005, three employees finished their shift and returned to the support trailer for the evening. Upon arriving at the trailer they started the generator, which was housed inside a rear compartment of the trailer and exhausted to the outside. Approximately 1½ hours later two of the employees lay down in the bunks while the third guy went outside. Shortly after the third employee returned to the trailer, one of the guys in the bunk awoke and felt ill. When he tried to walk outside he fell to the floor. The second guy then awoke and tried to help and he was very unstable and had to steady himself against the counter. The third guy then realized there was a problem and called for help. All three employees received treatment for Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

#### ***Some Facts about Carbon Monoxide (CO) and CO detectors***

- It is colourless, odourless, tasteless gas – commonly referred to it as the silent killer
- Produced from the incomplete combustion of fuels – gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, wood, kerosene, stove oil (any combustible fuel)
- Symptoms are – dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, watery eyes (often mistaken for flu like symptoms)
- CO is approximately the same weight as air, so when it gets in a room it is everywhere there's air (high or low)
- CO can be present in a room equipped with a CO detector and the alarm may not sound for up to 90 minutes (UL Standard)
- CO may affect people in the same room in different ways

#### ***Recommendations***

- Never place a generator inside a facility that houses people, unless it was properly designed for that purpose.
- Generators must be placed far enough away from buildings as to not allow CO to enter. Ensure exhausts are facing away from entrances. (see manufacturers recommended locations)
- Install Carbon Monoxide detectors close to sleeping quarters. Best detectors provide a constant digital display of CO levels.
- Do not rely on electric CO detectors as the only source of detection. If the source of the CO is a generator, your detector is useless when the generator is shutdown, and CO will remain in the air.
- Check batteries in CO detector on a regular basis
- Regularly clean your CO detector with either a vacuum cleaner or compressed air (check owner manual cleaning instructions)

