Carbon Monoxide Kills Two

Running a gasoline-powered engine in a confined space can have fatal consequences, as an incident at a home construction site clearly shows.

Two carpenters entered a basement where a gasoline-powered generator was operating and both were overcome by carbon monoxide. The generator was being used to power tools, since electricity hadn’t yet been brought to the site.

While the incident wasn’t witnessed, it is believed that one carpenter initially entered the basement and was overcome by the lethal gas. The second victim, his brother, was believed to have succumbed while trying to help him.

Someone had tried to punch out a window in the basement to provide emergency ventilation, but it was too late.

Investigators made two recommendations:

- Employers should conduct jobsite surveys to evaluate equipment and work processes and remove or control identified safety hazards.
- Employers need to develop and implement written general safety programs and train workers to recognize and control the encounter on the job.