

Diesel exhaust

List diesel exhaust-producing equipment on the jobsite.

Explain dangers

Burning diesel fuel creates diesel exhaust. This exhaust is made up of a number of substances, including:

- Carbon
- Carbon monoxide
- Carbon dioxide
- Nitrogen
- Nitrogen oxide
- Particulate matter

Exposure to diesel exhaust can result in negative health effects. Short-term exposure to diesel exhaust may cause you to experience symptoms such as:

- Coughing
- Eye irritation
- Nose, throat irritation
- Headache
- Nausea
- Light-headedness
- An asthma attack

When you are exposed to diesel exhaust over a long time period (i.e., weeks, months, or years), more serious health effects can occur.

Diesel exhaust is considered a cancer-causing agent: it increases your risk of lung cancer. An association has also been observed between exposure to diesel exhaust and bladder cancer.

Some common ways a worker may be exposed to diesel exhaust are:

- Operating diesel-powered equipment such as:
 - motor vehicles
 - railway locomotives
 - trucks
 - construction vehicles (scissor lifts, boom lifts, telehandlers, etc.)
- Working at mechanic shops/service garages, where vehicles may be idling.
- Working beside diesel generators, power equipment, or trucks.

Identify controls

- Where possible, opt to use battery-operated machinery or tools instead.
- Avoid standing next to operating vehicles, or standing within the loading area when trucks are running.
- Turn off vehicles when they are not needed.
- In indoor spaces, use additional hosing to vent diesel exhaust outdoors (e.g., local tailpipe exhaust ventilation).
- Promote natural ventilation of indoor work areas (by opening garage doors, bay doors, windows, etc.).
- Turn on exhaust fans wherever possible. Consider installing additional exhaust fans.
- Never turn on diesel exhaust-producing machines or equipment in an enclosed space unless controls are in place.
- Limit the number of diesel-powered vehicles that are running at any given time, if possible.
- For operators, keep cab door closed when diesel machinery is running.

Demonstrate

With your crew, go over the tasks involving possible exposure to diesel exhaust—and discuss any controls that are in place.