

SONOCO *Near Miss!*



Date: June 11, 2021

Activity: Opening a grocery container

What Happened:

A platform was receiving groceries and several containers were set on the deck. The customer had a routine of “all hands” helping with the unloading for a faster turnaround time. A contractor who was new to the location was in the group and didn’t know that SONOCO policy – for the protection of everyone – is that the Steward is to open all containers.

This hand went to a container, opened it, and immediately stepped inside without venting it first.



One of our hands saw this and went to him to warn him to exit the container, which he did. Our hand explained the danger to the man and the job resumed after waiting for the container to vent.

Why it Happened:

An untrained person was involved in the grocery process. Although the SONOCO crew did go over the JSA, some of the team were not there to participate and only arrived when the containers were set on the deck.

Typical Hazards/Causes:

- CO2 is heavier than air and displaces it. In a closed container, the amount of gas increases as the dry ice sublimates (“evaporates”).
- The danger of entering a container without venting it is possible carbon dioxide poisoning. Symptoms can include: headache, elevated pulse and blood pressure, unconsciousness.
- Fatal at high enough levels, and these are not difficult to reach in a closed container.

Corrective Actions:

The incident was reported to the Medic and the OIM.

At the next morning safety meeting, the Medic gave a short presentation on the dangers of CO2 exposure.

The team agreed that, going forward, all hands participating in the unloading procedure would report to the dining room for a JSA.