The Bulk of Illicit Fentanyl Is Shipped into The United States; Placing Package Handlers at Risk of Exposure

The Opioid Commission report states most of the lethal fentanyl and fentanyl derivatives are entering the country through our mail system. What risks will shipping companies have to counter to protect their personnel? The two obvious incidents are exposures at 'hubs' or central processing centers involving numerous personnel and the other is an exposure of an individual carrier during a delivery. *Protecting Life* and *Preventing Additional Exposures* are the most important steps for these agencies.

Opioids such as Fentanyl and Carfentanil are lethal in amounts comparable to 3-4 grains of salt. They are trafficked as fine powders and are easily inhaled resulting in potentially lethal exposures. Opioid reversing drugs such as naloxone are important but DO NOT solve the overlying problems faced by the package handling industry such as; preventing exposure and controlling facility cross contamination.

Central Processing Incidents

Packages containing opioids leak or sometimes intercepted at the direction of a law enforcement agency. The packages are not commercially sealed, and leaking residues can be lethal. If there are no exposures; the package should be sealed with BLOC™ to negate possible mass exposures in the facility. The package or exposed personnel should not be moved to other locations in the facility, as this can result in cross contamination and possible mass exposures within the facility.

If an individual shows signs of opioid exposure, people administering naloxone risk personal exposure when the source of exposure is not mitigated. Consider this, the source may now be the individual suffering from the overdose when visible powder is on their hands or clothing. In this situation BLOC™ is applied directly to the clothing or skin, to prevent cross contamination of others.

Individual Carrier Exposure

If a carrier is exposed to possible fentanyl or other lethal white powders, the worst step to take is brushing the powder off the surface. This causes the fine powder to become airborne and inhaled which results in the exposure. The powder should be contained, whether on a surface or on the skin. Then medical personnel should be alerted for possible exposure. The pictures demonstrate white powder on a hand and after the application of BLOC™.

BLOC™ Encapsulation Device

The BLOC™ Encapsulation Device is a handheld unit placed in a pocket or worn on a belt. It deploys in seconds to contain suspicious powders, preventing additional exposures and cross contamination. The encapsulating liquid cures to a pliable membrane which can easily be peeled from non-porous surfaces or the skin. Personnel in central processing or in the field can rapidly prevent exposure and cross contamination of others. Free online training is available for personnel.

On April 21, 2019 a mail processing agent sorting mail was exposed to a white powder leaking from an envelope. She was equipped with BLOC™ which she applied to her hand and the envelope. The situation was quickly mitigated without exposure. The substance was later identified as methamphetamine.