



August 20 — When Something Doesn't Feel Right, Stop and Evaluate

We finished up retrieving our cart from the second floor. We headed out to the trucks. When we exited the building, we were immediately greeted by our breath getting taken away from the chemical smell in the atmosphere.	We immediately got in the trucks and left the area. We went to an area where the smell was not overwhelming and called the insulation foreman to let him know of the situation. We then called Jacob W. with fructose to let him know.
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Your senses are one of your best safety tools...

...if something doesn't seem right, pay attention.

After completing work and exiting the building, employees were immediately met with a strong chemical odor that took their breath away. The sudden change in air quality was an obvious indication that conditions outside the building were different than expected.

One of the first signs of a chemical release or process upset is often what we can see, smell, or feel. While we should never rely solely on our senses to identify hazardous substances, they can alert us that something has changed and prompt us to stop, move to a safe location, and notify the appropriate personnel. Ignoring those warning signs or assuming someone else has already reported them can increase the risk of exposure.

Situational awareness means constantly evaluating your surroundings not just the task you're performing. Every time you move into a new area, take a moment to look around, notice what's different, and trust your instincts when something seems out of the ordinary. Recognizing an abnormal condition early gives everyone the opportunity to respond before it becomes a more serious incident.

Hazards

- Chemical exposure
- Airborne contaminants
- Respiratory irritation
- Unexpected process release
- Reduced visibility or awareness due to strong odors
- Delayed reporting of abnormal conditions

Words of Wisdom

Your job doesn't end when the task is complete. Stay aware of your surroundings until you're safely out of the work area.

Pause and Think

- If you suddenly noticed an unusual odor or atmosphere, what would your first action be?
- Do you know how to report an unexpected chemical release or abnormal condition?
- What changes in your work environment should immediately get your attention?
- How can we avoid becoming so focused on our task that we miss hazards around us?
- What role does situational awareness play after the work is finished?

Closing Thought

The safest employees aren't just focused on the job, they're constantly aware of the environment around them. When something doesn't look, smell, or feel right, stop, evaluate the situation, and take action. Recognizing a hazard early may prevent a much more serious incident.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something