Shared Economy and Gig Workers: Safety Beyond Traditional Employment Picture This



This image shows a delivery driver — a woman in her early forties — seated behind the wheel of a parked delivery truck on a quiet university campus on a warm summer morning. The truck's engine is off. The windows are fully closed. In the cargo area behind her, 71 bags of dry ice sit in coolers with lids that cannot fully close, slowly releasing colorless, odorless carbon dioxide gas into the enclosed cab. On the passenger seat, a delivery manifest lists the stops for the day. There is no hazard label on the coolers, no ventilation warning posted anywhere in the vehicle, and no instruction sheet about what dry ice releases in a closed space. She arrived at her first stop and never got out.

What is visible in this image is ordinary — a parked truck, a driver at rest, coolers in the back. What is not visible is the

gas that is already filling the cab. Carbon dioxide is colorless and odorless and displaces oxygen silently. A worker who has never been told what dry ice releases in an enclosed space has no way to recognize the danger before it is too late to respond. Independent contractor or not, every worker who transports, handles, or works near hazardous materials has the right to know what those materials can do. A single page of hazard information, a single training session, or a requirement to ventilate the vehicle would have kept this driver alive. The hazard was known. The information simply was never passed on.