



SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN



OPIOID OVERDOSE REVERSAL MEDICATION OSHA FACT SHEET

OSHA released a new fact sheet, [Opioid Overdose Rescue with Reversal Medications](#), in September 2026 that provides employers with guidance on providing reversal medications and workplace training. OSHA describes opioids as a class of natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic drugs that include both prescription medications and illicit drugs. Prescription opioids are commonly used to treat pain and can be addictive. Opioid overdose in the workplace can be a serious health and safety issue.

The factsheet advises that managers, supervisors, and employees should know what to do if someone experiences an overdose at work. Training and education can prepare workers and the community on how to prepare and respond to opioid overdoses in the workplace. Having opioid overdose reversal medications (OORMs) on hand can save lives.

When someone takes more opioids than their body can handle, their breathing can slow down and stop. OORMs can help while waiting for emergency medical services to arrive. OORMs are generally safe and effective when used as directed. These medications attach to receptors in the brain to reverse and block the effects of opioids, allowing for normal breathing to resume. OORMs only work if someone has opioids in their system and will generally have no effect on someone who has not taken opioids. OORMs work quickly but are temporary. It may be necessary to administer an additional dose if the medication wears off while waiting for emergency responders.

The factsheet advises employers to consider providing OORMs at their workplace and training employees how to use them. It provides employers with a list of possible sources of free or low-cost OORMs. In New Jersey, pharmacies have a statewide [standing order](#) to dispense naloxone nasal spray or other FDA-approved means. Public employers should contact their local Health Department for a list of participating pharmacies.

Free or low-cost training is also available. Many Health Departments have trainers on staff. [Rutgers University](#) also offers free training. The Rutgers class offers free Narcan kits following completion.

The U.S. opioid crisis is a public health emergency driven by the misuse of prescription painkillers, heroin, and illicitly manufactured synthetic opioids like fentanyl. The [CDC](#) reports that nearly 80,000 people died from opioid-involved overdoses in 2023, accounting for roughly 76% of all U.S. drug overdoses. While 2023 marked the first annual decline in opioid overdose deaths since 2018, the Safety Director recognizes the importance of the availability of opioid overdose rescue medications and trained persons to administer them as part of a comprehensive plan to reduce deaths. Workplaces are not immune from the effects of drug misuse. Neither are the families and friends of employees. The benefits of providing rescue medications and training can extend beyond the employer. The Safety Director encourages employers to consider adding OORMs to their first aid programs.