

Naloxone kits in the workplace

Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) requires workplaces to provide naloxone kits in certain circumstances.

Opioid use is a significant issue in the trades sectors. To prevent opioid-related harms, all workplaces that perform high-risk work should supply naloxone kits and ensure workers are trained to recognize an opioid overdose, administer naloxone, and identify opioid-related hazards.

Explain dangers

It is possible to overdose on any type of opioid, even if it was produced legally (e.g., OxyContin®, Vicodin®, codeine) and prescribed by a doctor. Taking illicitly produced opioids, such as fentanyl or carfentanil, increases the user's risk of overdose or death.

Signs of an opioid overdose may include:

- Slow, weak breathing, or an absence of breathing
- Blue (or grey) lips or nails
- Dizziness or confusion
- Choking, gurgling, or snorting sounds
- Drowsiness or difficulty staying awake

Identify controls

- Call 911 immediately if you suspect someone has overdosed on opioids.
- Administer naloxone as quickly as possible. If used right away, naloxone can help restore normal breathing and consciousness.
- Even if you do not know why a person is unconscious, administering naloxone will likely not harm them. However, it will not reverse an overdose caused by a non-opioid substance.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety offers the following guidance for employers:

- Develop naloxone-specific policies and procedures in consultation with your joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative.
- Ensure everyone at the workplace knows their responsibilities if an opioid overdose occurs.
- Designate workers to administer naloxone—and train them to recognize and respond to the signs of an opioid overdose. First aid training, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), is recommended.
- Make appropriate personal protective equipment available for employees who administer naloxone to protect against exposure to biological hazards.
- Provide support after a traumatic workplace incident, such as an overdose. Workers may benefit from mental health counselling.

Demonstrate

IHSA offers a **Naloxone training** eLearning program, which provides learners with the knowledge to recognize an opioid overdose and administer naloxone—and provides information about hazards related to the administration of naloxone. It can be accessed at [IHSA.ca/eLearning](https://www.ihsa.ca/eLearning).

Distribute information on how to administer naloxone nasal spray.

Download opioid-related resources from [IHSA.ca](https://www.ihsa.ca), such as the **Opioid crisis in the trades toolkit** and the **Frequently asked questions about naloxone kits in workplaces guide (W135)**.