



COALITION FOR CONSTRUCTION(CCS) SAFETY MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL MEMBERS

FROM: GARY MARTIN, SAFETY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: OPIOIDS IN CONSTRUCTION

DATE: MARCH 14, 2019

Opioid misuse and overdoses have become a public health crisis and the construction industry is not exempt from the problem. In fact, some people suggest there's an opioid crisis in the construction industry, both with prescribed drugs and those taking them for nonmedical reasons. Anyone at a workplace is at risk of overdose if they use opioids, including workers, customers, visitors, etc.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that overdose deaths at work from non-medical use of drugs or alcohol increased by at least 25% annually between 2013 and 2017. The 272 workplace overdose deaths reported in 2017 accounted for 5.3% of occupational injury deaths that year, as compared to 1.8% in 2013.

Opioids include three categories of pain-relieving drugs: (1) natural opioids (also called opiates) which are derived from the opium poppy, such as morphine and codeine; (2) semi-synthetic opioids, such as the prescription drugs hydrocodone and oxycodone and the illicit drug heroin; (3) synthetic opioids, such as methadone, tramadol, and fentanyl. Fentanyl is 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine, according to the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. It is also to be noted the Center for Disease Control states, "1 of 4 people prescribed opioids for long-term pain becomes addicted."

I recently attended a workshop at the Indiana Safety and Health Conference & Expo regarding opioid misuse and the overdose epidemic. An Indiana State Police officer discussed emergency response using, purchasing, and administering Naloxone (also known by brand names Narcan and Evzio). Naloxone is used to reverse an opioid overdose but is only a temporary remedy so 911 should always be called in an overdose situation.

The following are a few of the takeaways:

Workplace Naloxone Use Program Considerations

There are several things to contemplate when considering implementation of a program. This link will assist in your consideration. - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2019-101/program.html>

Workplace Naloxone Use Program Overview

The following link can be used for considerations for program policies and procedures. - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2019-101/establish.html>