



OSHA Releases New Guidance on Opioid Overdose Response in the Workplace

On Sept. 24, 2026, OSHA published a new fact sheet titled [“Opioid Overdose Rescue with Reversal Medications.”](#) The fact sheet gives employers and workers practical information on recognizing an opioid overdose and responding with reversal medications while waiting for emergency responders.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On Sept. 24, 2026, OSHA published a new fact sheet titled “Opioid Overdose Rescue with Reversal Medications.”
- The guidance recommends keeping FDA-approved reversal medications on hand and training workers to recognize overdose signs and respond.
- The fact sheet does not create a new OSHA standard or legal requirement. It is voluntary guidance, not an enforceable mandate.
- Reversal medications are temporary. OSHA emphasizes that 911 should be called immediately, even if the person regains consciousness.

Background

OSHA released the fact sheet as part of the Great American Recovery Initiative, a federal effort focused on addiction treatment and recovery. The guidance is framed as part of a broader push to help people return to work and help employers keep the workers they need. The agency points to the continued presence of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids in the illicit drug supply as the reason overdose preparedness now matters across industries, not just in traditionally high-risk workplaces.

What the Guidance Covers

OSHA’s fact sheet highlights key opioid overdose preparedness strategies, including:

- Keep lifesaving FDA-approved reversal medications, such as naloxone or nalmefene, on hand. These safe, lifesaving medications quickly restore normal breathing and generally have no effect if opioids are not present.
- Treat overdose kits like first aid by storing them in highly visible, easily accessible locations, just like automated external defibrillators or standard first-aid kits.
- Educate workers on how to identify critical symptoms of an overdose, such as slow or stopped breathing, blue lips or skin, pinpoint pupils, or unresponsiveness.
- Prepare for rapid action in an emergency by training workers to administer the medication, safely position the individual, and provide supportive care while waiting for first responders.

OSHA’s guidance emphasizes that while these medications are critical, they do not replace emergency services. Workplace responders should always call 911 immediately because professional medical care is still required.

What This Means for Employers

The fact sheet does not amend existing OSHA rules, including the Medical Services and First Aid standard or the Recordkeeping regulation. Stocking naloxone, training staff, or writing a response plan remains voluntary under federal law. Even so, in light of the guidance, employers may want to:

- Decide whether to stock reversal medications, and if so, where and how, following the placement and storage guidance in the fact sheet.
- Fold overdose recognition and response into existing first-aid or emergency training rather than standing up a separate program.
- Check state and local requirements to confirm whether additional obligations apply.