

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic drug that is similar to morphine and heroin, but is 50 to 100 times more potent. Fentanyl and its analogs are members of the class of drugs known as rapid-acting synthetic opioids that alleviate pain. Other drugs in this class include fentanyl analogs, such as acetylfentanyl, butyrfentanyl, carfentanil, alfentanil, sufentanil and remifentanil. Fentanyl acts quickly to depress central nervous system and respiratory function. Exposure to fentanyl may be fatal. (CDC.gov, 2016)

Fentanyl

Exposure Risk Levels

YOU SHOULD KNOW

Fentanyl can be ingested, inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or injected (intentionally or via accidental needle sticks).

Personal protective equipment (PPE) can protect you from the harmful effects of accidental fentanyl exposure.

Corrections professionals must remain alert while conducting routine daily tasks.

You should always evaluate the environment for unknown substances.

This is especially true when conducting cell inspections, pat searches, screening mail, or responding to or providing care during a medical emergency. Understanding your risk level and using appropriate PPE can keep you and your co-workers safe.

MINIMAL

Personal Protective Equipment – **GLOVES**

Response to a situation where it is suspected that fentanyl may be present but no fentanyl products are visible. (NIOSH)

Many Routine daily operations may pose what is defined as a minimal risk of potential exposure to fentanyl, synthetic opioids or related substance. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Cell Searches
- Pack-ups and handling inmate property
- Pat downs
- Mail Screening
- Home visits
- Staff response to a suspected overdose with no visible drugs noted (ODRC)

MODERATE

Personal Protective Equipment – **DOUBLE GLOVES, SAFETY GLASSES, MASK, SLEEVE PROTECTION** (long sleeve or Tyvek suit)

Response to a situation where small amounts of fentanyl products are visible. (NIOSH)

Any small amount of visible substance believed to be fentanyl, synthetic opioids or related substance renders the scene a moderate risk environment. (ODRC) This may include, but is not limited to:

- Packaging a substance believed to be fentanyl or one of its analogs
- Field testing a substance believed to be fentanyl or one of its analogs
- Responding to an overdose where fentanyl or one of its analogs is visible

CDC RECOMMENDED SAFE WORK PRACTICES FOR POTENTIAL EXPOSURE:

- Do not eat, drink, or use the bathroom.
- Do not touch your eyes, mouth, or nose.
- Avoid performing tasks or operations that may aerosolize the drugs.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after a potential exposure and after leaving the scene.
- **DO NOT USE HAND SANITIZER!**



SIGNS OF OPIOID EXPOSURE OR OVERDOSE

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow, Shallow Breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Pale, blue, or cold skin (ODRC)



WHAT TO DO

- Move to an area that is not contaminated and call for medical assistance
- Wash any skin that is exposed to the substance using soap and water.
- Ensure trained staff are present to administer naloxone if available.
- Monitor breathing and heart rate and perform CPR if necessary, until EMS arrives.



Missouri Department of
Corrections
Improving Lives for Safer Communities

Credit

- (ODRC) Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction
- Us Customs and Border Protection (www.cbp.gov)
- (CDC) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
- (NIOSH) The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (www.cdc.gov/niosh)