



# Training Bulletin

Los Angeles Port Police

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## Fentanyl

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Training Bulletin is to provide information and resources to officers responding to Fentanyl related calls for service.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Fentanyl is a powerful and dangerous synthetic opiate painkiller that is like morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. The dosage of fentanyl is a microgram, one millionth of a gram which is like just a few granules of tablet of salt. Fentanyl can be lethal and is deadly at very low doses. It is sometimes mixed with heroin to increase the potency and effect. It is extremely dangerous to law enforcement or anyone else who may come into contact with it. If encountered, there is a significant risk to the health and safety of officers and the public.

### **RISK TO LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

Fentanyl can be dangerous in many forms including powder, blotter paper, tablets, and spray. It is not immediately recognizable and is known to give false positive results for heroin or cocaine. Exposure to fentanyl may be fatal as it depresses the central nervous system and respiratory functions. The onset of adverse health effects, such as disorientation, coughing, sedation, respiratory distress, or cardiac arrest is very rapid and profound, usually occurring within minutes of exposure. Canine units are particularly at risk of immediate death from inhaling fentanyl.

### **SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:**

Officers should consider the following:

- a) Field testing of exhibits suspected to be or suspected to contain fentanyl should be discontinued.
- b) Officers should wear protective gloves while in the performance of searching where illicit drugs may be encountered.
- c) Due to the possibility of inhalation, some type of protective covering for the nose and mouth should also be used.
- d) Any exhibit believed to contain any quality of fentanyl should be sealed in a double bag and appropriately marked to show the believed contents.
- e) Canines should not be deployed in any situation where fentanyl is suspected and should be used cautiously in other situations involving illegal drugs. Handlers should monitor canines for a period after deployment to determine any unusual behavior which may indicate exposure.

The increased prevalence of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids in the illicit drug market means that members need to understand how to protect themselves from exposure in the field. Members must balance safety with mobility and efficiency when responding to scenes where the presence of fentanyl is suspected.

The Fentanyl safety recommendations for first responders provides unified, scientific, evidence-based recommendations to first responders so they can protect themselves when the presence of fentanyl is suspected during their daily activities such as responding to overdose calls and conducting traffic stops, arrests, and searches.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

- a) Fentanyl can be present in a variety of forms (e.g., powder, tablets, capsules, solutions, and rocks).
- b) Inhalation of airborne powder is MOST LIKELY to lead to harmful effects but is less likely to occur than skin contact.
- c) Incidental skin contact may occur during daily activities but is not expected to lead to harmful effects if the contaminated skin is promptly washed off with water.
- d) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is effective in protecting you from exposure.
- e) Slow breathing or no breathing, drowsiness, or unresponsiveness, and constricted or pinpoint pupils are the specific signs consistent with fentanyl intoxication.
- f) Naloxone (Narcan) is an effective medication that can rapidly reverse the effects of fentanyl.

### **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:**

- a) Wear gloves when the presence of fentanyl is suspected.
- b) AVOID actions that may cause powder to become airborne.
- c) If members suspect the narcotics may contain Fentanyl, they shall notify the on-duty supervisor. The supervisor shall contact the on-duty hazmat supervisor, who will assess the situation and determine the appropriate response.

### **WHEN EXPOSED:**

- a) Prevent further contamination and notify other first responders and dispatch.
- b) Do not touch your eyes, mouth, nose, or any skin after touching a potentially contaminated surface.
- c) Wash skin thoroughly with cool water and soap if available. Do NOT use hand sanitizers as they may enhance absorption.
- d) Wash your hands thoroughly after the incident and before eating, drinking, smoking, or using the restroom.
- e) Symptoms:
  - o Slow breathing or not breathing.
  - o Drowsiness or unresponsiveness.
  - o Constricted or pinpoint pupils.

## **FIRST AID:**

- a) Move away from the source of the exposure and call EMS.
- b) Administer naloxone (Narcan) if available. Multiple doses may be required.
- c) If naloxone (Narcan) is not available, rescue breathing can be a lifesaving measure until EMS arrives. Utilize universal precautions to protect against blood borne pathogens and other communicable diseases.
- d) If needed, initiate CPR.

## **REFERENCES:**

*Fentanyl Safety recommendations for First Responders:*

<https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/Publications/Final%20STANDARD%20size%20of%20Fentanyl%20Safety%20Recommendations%20for%20First%20Respond....pdf>

*DEA Briefing Guide for First Responders:*

[https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020\\_0.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020_0.pdf)

<https://www.dea.gov/fentanylawareness>

If you have any further questions, please contact Support Services Division.

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