

Naloxone in the Workplace



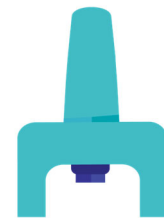
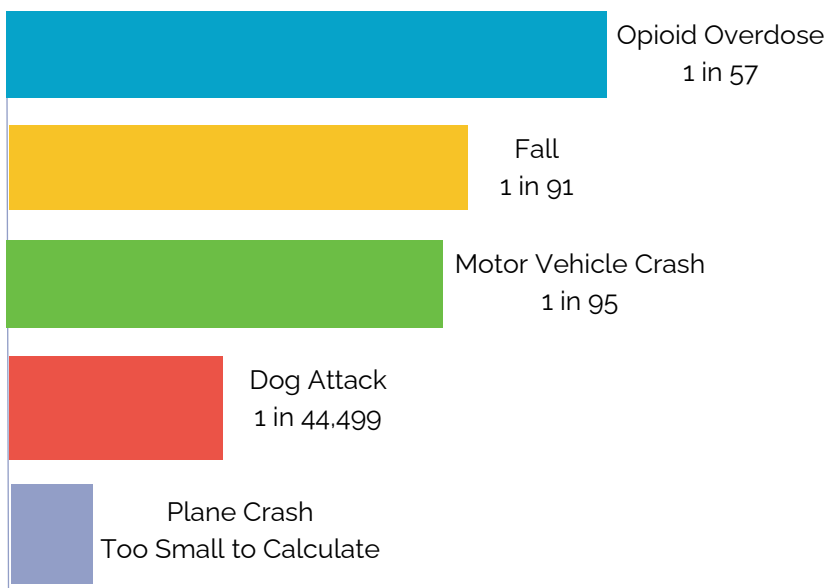
May 2025

Overdose fatalities, still a concern

In 2023, Indiana saw a decrease in drug overdose deaths across most demographic groups³. However, overdose is still a leading cause of death nationally and in Indiana, ranking among the top 15 causes of death². According to the National Safety Council, in 2023, poisoning (including drug overdose) is still the leading cause of preventable injury-related death in the United States for individuals 25-74 years old⁸.

Plane crashes, being struck by lightning, or being attacked by a dog are common fears, but what about everyday risks such as falls, poisoning (including overdose), or vehicle crashes⁶?

Lifetime Odds of Dying, 2023⁶



Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan®, is a non-narcotic that is an antidote for opioid overdoses. If administered in a timely manner, naloxone can reverse the life-threatening respiratory failure that is usually the cause of overdose deaths.

The workplace is not immune to opioid use and misuse

A 2024 survey by the National Safety Council of more than 500 employers and 800 employees across industries, found⁴:

79% of employers indicated opioid use is a problem in the workplace

50% of employers report opioid use causes more near misses and injuries

Only 30% of employees said their workplace had naloxone onsite

According the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2021⁵:

> 58%

of fatalities (798 deaths) within the category 'exposure to harmful substances or environments' were attributed to unintentional overdose from non-medical use of drugs.

Considerations

- In 2018, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published a resource supporting and encouraging employers to establish workplace naloxone availability⁵.
- In September 2023, a bill (H.R.5420) was introduced to congress that would direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), to take action to make naloxone available in workplaces¹⁰.
- Currently, OSHA, does not have any specific guidance about including naloxone in first aid kits; stating that first aid kits can be augmented to fit the needs of the worksite appropriately⁴.
- International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA) current standard regarding supplies that should be provided in first aid kits was developed prior to the U.S. Food and Drug Administrations over-the-counter approval for naloxone⁷. Pending the next update, planned for 2025, the ISEA encourages workplaces to add naloxone to first aid kits now⁷.
- Indiana has a statewide standing order that removes the need for a prescription to purchase naloxone. In Indiana, Aaron's Law, protects laypersons who have administered naloxone provided they contact 911 and cooperate with EMS and police when they arrive at the scene. To learn more about Aaron's law and what is covered under the law, visit: <https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/files/Aarons-Law-Primer.pdf>
- Currently there is not explicit legislation protecting employers in the case of naloxone administration. It is recommended that you review the workplace's general liability policy/insurance/etc. as some professional liability coverages may exclude naloxone administration.

Equipping your workplace

Many CPR and first aid courses have begun incorporating overdose response, including naloxone training into their training programs, both virtually and in-person. The Indiana Department of Health also has naloxone training available, please contact Laura Hollowell, the Naloxone Program Manager at LHollowell@health.in.gov to discuss training options for your organization.

Naloxone can be purchased through a number of channels including [NARCANWorkplace.com](https://www.narcannetwork.com) or [Narcannetwork.com/en/workplace](https://www.narcannetwork.com/en/workplace). Naloxone can also be purchased at most pharmacies. Many Local Health Departments in Indiana participate in a naloxone distribution program that provides free doses of naloxone. By visiting [OptiN.in.gov](https://www.optinregistry.org) you can locate a local naloxone distributor. Any entity that distributes naloxone in Indiana, whether for free or for purchase, is required to join the OptiN Registry.

The National Safety Council has developed some resources for creating a workplace Opioid Overdose Response Program, available here: <https://www.nsc.org/workplace/safety-topics/respond-ready-workplace/create-an-opioid-overdose-response-program1>

Sources:

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- 5 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (2018, October 5). Total worker health naloxone factsheet. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2019-101/default.html>
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- 9 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, August 14). Unintentional overdoses rose for the ninth consecutive year in 2021. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/unintentional-overdoses-rose-for-the-ninth-consecutive-year-in-2021.htm#:~:text=Unintentional%20overdoses%20from%20nonmedical%20use%20of%20drugs%20or%20alcohol%20represented,than%20in%20the%20prior%20year.>
- 10 Watson Coleman, B. (2023, September 12). H.R.5420 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Workplace overdose reversal kits to save lives act | congress.gov | library of Congress. Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/118th-congress/house-bill/5420>