



PAWNEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF DARRIN VARNELL

Policy # Fentanyl: Preventing Exposure	Related Policies: Naloxone policy
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Oklahoma Statutes	
CALEA Standard:	
Date Implemented: 08/2022	Review Date: 08/2022

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide first responding officers and other members of the department with guidelines, instructions and procedures to prevent exposure to fentanyl and fentanyl related substances.
- II. **Discussion:** Fentanyl-related substances are designed to be absorbed into the body by all means, including injection, oral ingestion, contact with mucous membranes, inhalation, and via transdermal transmission (through the skin). As such, accidental exposure by first responders is a real danger.

 Accidental exposure can occur under a number of circumstances, including during the execution of search or arrest warrants, the purchase of fentanyl during undercover operations, the processing of drug evidence containing fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances, or the processing of non-drug evidence (e.g., drug proceeds, pill presses, scales, or drug paraphernalia) which may be contaminated with these substances.

 Due to the high potency of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances, exposure to small quantities can cause serious negative health effects, respiratory depression, and even death.

 However, fentanyl can be handled safely with proper training and equipment to include hazard recognition and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- III. The following job categories have been identified as positions where responders might come into contact with fentanyl or its analogues.
 - A. **Pre-Hospital Patient Care:** Emergency medical services (EMS) providers, including first responders, fire department, Police Officers and private companies who attend to

individuals with suspected fentanyl overdose. Responders may encounter drugs or drug paraphernalia on or near the patient.

- B. Law Enforcement:** Law enforcement officers who perform day-to-day law enforcement duties. Law enforcement officers may come into contact with fentanyl during the course of their daily activities such as traffic stops, apprehending and searching subjects, and responding to fentanyl overdose calls.
- C. Investigation and Evidence Handling:** Law enforcement personnel who conduct investigations related to fentanyl. Activities may include executing search warrants and collecting, transporting, and storing evidence. Evidence collection activities in the field have the potential to aerosolize powders. Also, law enforcement personnel who handle evidence in the chain of custody have the potential to come into contact with fentanyl unless controls are in place to prevent exposures.
- D. Special Operations and Decontamination:** Workers who conduct special operations where exposure to large amounts of fentanyl are expected. Examples include hazardous material incident response teams responding to a release or spill, and law enforcement officers executing search warrants on opioid processing or distribution sites or participating in other tactical operations. These activities may aerosolize powders.
- E. Jails and Booking Officers:** Arrestees who are transported to jails and booking stations pose a threat to the officer if these arrestees have been in contact with or using fentanyl.

IV. Procedures: Due to the hazardous nature of the synthetic opioids law enforcement personnel, Jail and correctional officers or any first responders, who encounter fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances should NOT take samples or otherwise disturb any powdered substances without employing proper PPE, as this could lead to accidental exposure. Officers should follow established work practices as well as the following recommendations when fentanyl or related substances are known or suspected to be present.

If the presence of fentanyl or any synthetic opioid is suspected, personnel should immediately contact the appropriate officials within The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office who have been trained to handle hazardous materials or contact the nearest DEA field office for assistance. Having specially trained law enforcement (or hazardous materials "HAZMAT" incident response team) professionals equipped with the necessary equipment, to include Level "A" PPE, on-site to assess the situation prior to exposure or contamination is recommended. This includes situations involving unknown powdered substances and/or pill milling or encapsulating operations.

When encountering unknown powders, personnel should use, at the minimum, Personal PPE to include nitrile gloves, N-95 dust mask, eye protection, disposable paper suit, or paper coveralls, and shoe covers. Naloxone should also be readily available for administration. **SEE agency stand-alone Naloxone policy.**



As matter of reference it has been determined that it would only take 2-3 milligrams of fentanyl to induce respiratory depression, arrest and possibly death (see photo of penny). When visually compared, 2 to 3 milligrams of fentanyl is about the same as five to seven individual grains of table salt¹

V. General Precautions:

- A. Do not eat, drink, smoke, or use the bathroom while working in an area with known or suspected fentanyl.
- B. Do not touch the eyes, mouth, and nose after touching any surface potentially contaminated with fentanyl.
- C. Field testing of fentanyl or its analogues is not recommended due to an increased risk of exposure to responders performing field testing. However, if detection and identification of fentanyl is critical to the incident response, develop an incident specific plan to perform the field testing in accordance with this department's policies and procedures. Personnel specifically trained to perform the field testing should perform the field testing in the appropriate **personal protective equipment (PPE)**. **Never** handle fentanyl or its analogues without the appropriate PPE.
- D. Avoid performing tasks or operations that may aerosolize fentanyl due to increased exposure risks. Activities that aerosolize fentanyl require higher levels of PPE and should be conducted by appropriately trained personnel and in accordance with agency policies and procedures.
- E. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after a potential exposure and after leaving a scene where fentanyl is known or suspected to be present to avoid potential exposure and to avoid cross contamination.
- F. Do not use hand sanitizers or bleach solutions to clean contaminated skin.
- G. Officers who come into contact with fentanyl should immediately use soap and water to thoroughly wash and rinse contaminated skin. They should take care not to break the skin during the decontamination process and to cover all open wounds. Do not use hand sanitizers or bleach solutions to clean contaminated skin.
- H. All contaminated clothing should be removed and laundered, being careful not to disturb any areas of contamination.
- I. Shower immediately after a potential exposure.
- J. Decontamination of **reusable** PPE and equipment should be done according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- K. Contaminated **single use** PPE should be placed in labeled durable 6 mil polyethylene bags and disposed of appropriately.²

VI. K-9 Working Dogs:

- A. Police K-9s performing detection activities, are also at risk of exposure to fentanyl and its analogues. Working dogs should be removed from an area where suspect synthetic opioids are encountered. If exposed, residual drug powder might remain on the dog's body; therefore, the proper precautions and procedures mentioned above should be employed by those handling the dog.

¹ U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration Fentanyl, A briefing Guide for First Responders.

² NIOSH Fentanyl: Preventing Occupational Exposure to Emergency Responders