

Fentanyl and General Safety Precautions

Due to the recent increase of illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and other synthetic opiates in Wisconsin, it is imperative that law enforcement personnel take proper precautions to protect themselves against accidental exposure. Fentanyl is 50-100 times more potent than morphine and carfentanil, one of the most potent fentanyl analogs, is 100 times more potent than fentanyl. Fentanyl related compounds have been seen in all types of evidence including powders, liquids, and tablets. Any suspected drug evidence should be treated as a potential hazard.

Law enforcement personnel should always take precautions to minimize their exposure to drug evidence. This includes wearing proper personnel protective equipment (PPE) and ensuring evidence is properly contained. When handling suspected fentanyl compounds, at a minimum, basic PPE should include nitrile gloves, N95 dust masks, and eye protection. Higher levels of PPE may be needed depending on the potential for exposure. Personnel should also be trained to recognize symptoms of opiate toxicity and be able to administer Narcan® if necessary.

General Precautions

- Wear PPE (gloves, masks, and eye protection)
- Take steps to minimize any exposure
- Incidental dermal exposures should be washed immediately with copious amounts of water
- Do not use alcohol based hand sanitizers as they may increase absorption
- Trained personnel able to administer Narcan® should be present

For more information, see the [DEA Safety Recommendations for First Responders](#) and the [Fentanyl Briefing Guide](#).

There are products such as Dahlgren Decon® that are available for cleaning fentanyl contaminated surfaces. Additionally, an Ohio University demonstrated that a common household product, Oxyclean®, was also effective in cleaning fentanyl spills (see the [Ohio BCI Criminal Intelligence Unit publication](#)).

Before submitting evidence to the Crime Laboratory for analytical testing, ensure the suspected fentanyl compounds are properly labeled and packaged. Packaging must have secure seals and should include an additional layer of packaging to eliminate any possibility of leakage. Labeling should alert others of potential hazardous material. This information should also be given to laboratory staff during submission.

Although there are field tests marketed for fentanyl related compounds, results are often difficult to interpret. Should it be necessary to perform a field test, law enforcement personnel will be permitted to utilize fume hoods at the State Crime Laboratory. Each laboratory will offer a two or three hour window on Tuesdays and Fridays each week that fits best with their schedules. Agencies are responsible for bringing their own PPE, packaging supplies, and field tests. If you have any additional questions or to schedule a time for testing, please contact the laboratory in your service area.

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