

First Aid Advisory

Naloxone

The purpose of this first aid advisory is to provide information about the drug called naloxone and how the provision of naloxone may fit into an employer's workplace emergency response plan. We recognize the significance of the opioid overdose crisis and understand that employers may want their first aid attendants to be able to respond to a suspected opioid overdose at the workplace. In October 2016, regulations under the *Health Professions Act* and the *Emergency Health Services Act* were amended to enable anyone to administer naloxone, regardless of the administration route. Naloxone is available over the counter (OTC) without a prescription.

What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a medication that can reverse the effects of overdose from opioids, including fentanyl. It is a safe medicine with no abuse potential. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist, which means it ejects opioids from receptors in the brain, reversing the respiratory depression caused by an opioid overdose. The medication works within minutes to restore breathing — returning the victim to consciousness.

Why use naloxone?

An opioid overdose is a very serious condition. It may cause death or severe brain, heart, or lung damage. Similar to using an epinephrine autoinjector for an allergic reaction, anyone can administer naloxone intramuscularly (into the arm or leg, with a syringe), or intranasally (spraying with an atomizer up the nose) with brief and basic training.

Are first aid attendants permitted to administer naloxone?

Yes, the provision of OTC medications is within the scope of services that may be provided by

occupational first aid attendants. We recognize that this is a significant source of concern for many of our stakeholders.

The following points are considerations for employers including the provision of the drug naloxone in emergency response procedures:

- 1 The occupational first aid attendant must receive training to prepare the injection site and administer an intramuscular injection. This training could be the same training that a member of the public would receive to administer naloxone.
- 2 The employer has included the provision of this and any other OTC medications supplied (e.g., epinephrine, acetylsalicylic acid) in the emergency response plan.
- 3 The employer has included the provision of first aid to members of the public in the emergency response and first aid procedures, and has considered the risks to the attendant of providing this service.

For more information about naloxone and opioid overdose, visit these websites:

healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/naloxone
fentanylsafety.com