

Workplace Safety

Overdose Meds May Be Coming to Your First Aid Kit

EFFORTS ARE afoot to create new laws and regulations that would require California employers to include the opioid overdose medication Narcan in their first aid kits.

Cal/OSHA's Standards Board has received a petition from a safety group asking it to create new regulations requiring workplaces to stock medications that can reverse opioid overdoses.

On the legislative front, two state assembly members have introduced bills that would require workplace first aid kits to include naloxone hydrochloride, the substance that can reverse overdoses.

More than 83,000 people died of an opioid overdose in 2022 in the U.S., including nearly 7,000 Californians, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Naloxone, sold under the brand names Narcan and RiVive, is available in an over-the-counter nasal spray or as an injectable.

These medications temporarily reverse overdoses from prescription and illicit opioids, are not addictive and are not harmful to people when administered.

In its Dec. 8 petition to Cal/OSHA's Standards Board, the National Safety Council asked it to add naloxone to the list of required items in both construction sites as well as general industry workplaces.

"With the number of workplace overdose deaths on the rise, opioid overdose reversal medication is now an essential component of an adequate first-aid kit," wrote Lorraine M. Martin, president and CEO of the NSC.

Legislation

Two bills are in play.

AB 1976: Authored by Assemblyman Matt Haney (D-San Francisco), this bill would require first aid kits on job sites to include Narcan. It would require the Standards Board to draft enabling regulations by Dec. 31, 2026.

AB 1996: Authored by Assemblyman Juan Alanis (D-Modesto), this measure would require operators of stadiums, concert venues and amusement parks to stock Narcan. It would not require Cal/OSHA to create new regulations as the measure is aimed at helping members of the public.

The takeaway

In light of the opioid overdose epidemic, more and more employers and operators of facilities that cater to the public have started stocking naloxone.

With opioid overdoses so prevalent in U.S. workplaces (18% in California alone), the simple addition of this over-the-counter medication can save the life of a worker.

Narcan is available for around \$40 at most major retail pharmacies. It's a simple and inexpensive addition to a first aid kit for any employer. It would be good practice to keep a pack in your safety kit ... just in case.

Meanwhile, if any of the legislative and possible regulatory efforts become law or regulation, we'll let you know. ❖



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Changes to Electronics Sector Class Codes in the Cards

The Bureau is also recommending merging class code 3070 (computer memory disk manufacturing) with 3681(2) (computer or computer peripheral equipment manufacturing).

If this recommendation is okayed, the higher pure premium rate of \$0.46 per \$100 of payroll for class code 3681 will apply

to the new combined code.

Class 3070 currently has a pure premium rate of \$0.25 per \$100 of payroll and the new rate would be phased in at 25% per year until class 3070 is eliminated and all employers are moved to class 3681. ❖