Why Health & Safety Newsletter?

Health and Safety is a priority at BCIT. OHS newsletters contain monthly first aid statistics, compliance concerns, and updates of new legislation and interest articles.

Dangers of Opioids

Who is at risk of having an opioid overdose?

Anyone using prescribed or street opioids can have an overdose, but there are some things that put you at higher risk, such as:

- taking prescription opioids more often or at higher doses than recommended
- taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives, such as:
  - sleeping pills / muscle relaxants / benzodiazepines
- injecting drugs
- taking an opioid your body isn’t used to, or switching to a stronger drug
- taking higher doses than you are used to
- using drugs of unknown purity or strength
- other health conditions, like liver or kidney disease, or breathing problems

An overdose can also happen if you misuse opioids. For example, extended-release opioid tablets are meant to be swallowed whole. If you crush or break these pills before taking them, it may cause an overdose because too much of the drug is released at once.

All BCIT First Aid attendants are trained and equipped with Narcan.

Source: https://www.canada.ca
Signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose

Recognize the signs and symptoms of an overdose, including:

- Difficulty
  - walking / talking / staying away
- blue lips or nails
- very small pupils
- cold and clammy skin
- dizziness and confusion
- extreme drowsiness
- choking, gurgling or snoring sounds
- slow, weak or no breathing
- inability to wake up, even when shaken or shouted at

Response to an opioid overdose

If you think someone is overdosing, call 9-1-1 right away, or your local emergency help line.

Give the person naloxone if it’s available. Naloxone is a medication that can temporarily reverse an overdose if it is administered right away. You can give naloxone while you wait for professional help to arrive.

An overdose is always an emergency. Even if someone has taken naloxone, it can wear off before the person has completely recovered from their overdose. They may need more than one dose. Always call for help.

Follow the directions in your naloxone kit and from the 9-1-1 or emergency help line operator.